

RCN #42

NOV/DEC 1997

# RCN

RECUMBENT CYCLIST NEWS



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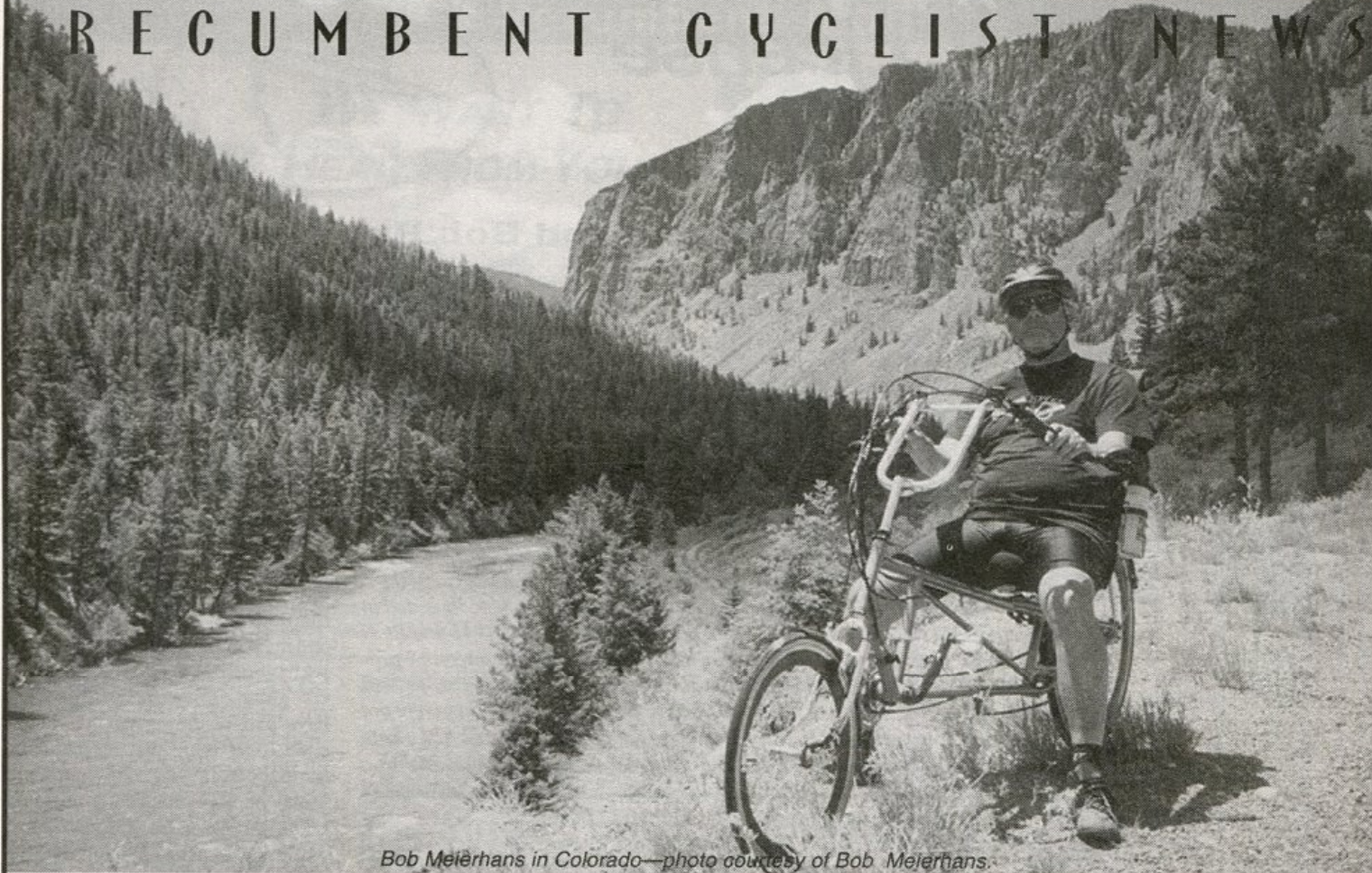
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Bob Meierhans in Colorado—photo courtesy of Bob Meierhans.

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## What's Coming Up!

**RCN#42 COVER:** The RCN Crew Goes Slum'ing: The Slumgullian Tour from Gunnison, Colorado this past Summer. Bob Bryant (left/Angletech V-Rex GL63) and John Williams (right/Rocket S5).

**RCN#43 JAN/FEB '98** will be our first edition of the new RCN SuperGuide Buyers' Guide. See page 4 for more information on our new '98 schedule.

**We have many tests planned for 1998.** You can expect articles on the Easy Racer Tour Easy, Gold Rush "Black Gold," Comfort Cycle, BikeE Air Tech, Rans Vivo, V-Rex, Gliss tests and many more. To subscribe to RCN see page 48. People Movers handles some RCN subscription options at Tel. 714/633-3663.

### RCN PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Recumbent Cyclist International is a sole-proprietorship in the state of Washington. Recumbent Cyclist News is 100% dedicated to promoting recumbent bicycles and providing and encouraging communications between HPV enthusiasts, home-builders, dealers and commercial recumbent manufacturers. We are the only recumbent-specific publication in the world today.

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**RCN#42 Cover:** Bob & John Go Slum'ing: The Silver Thread Slumgullian Tour from Gunnison Colorado (Bob Bryant and John Williams. Cover and layout design by Mark Colliton, Kensington Heights Design.

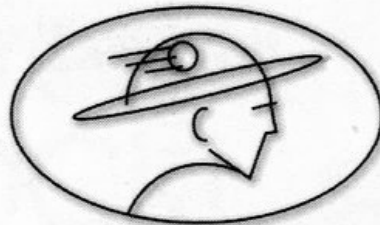
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# Editorial License

by Robert J. Bryant

Email: DrRecumbnt@aol.com Voice mail#206/630-7200 Fax#206/631-5728



## ABC's 20/20, Pain in the.... and Bob Rants.....

**D**ear ABC News 20/20: Thank you for airing the segment on men's cycling and penile numbness. The story was very well done, with one minor exception. There was no solution offered to the problem. And I have a solution. RECUMBENT BICYCLES.

Recumbent bicycles are sit-down, laid back bicycles that put the rider in the same familiar sitting position as that of an automobile. The recumbent position takes all of the pressure off the neck, wrist, back and especially the crotch/vital parts of the human anatomy—both male and female—while at the same time offering unequaled comfort. Recumbent bicycles are comfortable. They have lightweight seats, breathable suspended mesh and the best offer 0-pressure points for comfort that can last as long as your muscles hold out. Even on a week-long tour, it's possible to have total comfort with no painful road rash or numbness.

Recumbent bicycles have been around for nearly 100 years. Most recently they are enjoying the largest "grassroots" growth in their history. In an otherwise stagnant bicycle market, recumbent manufacturers have up to a 3-month backlog. Recumbents have enjoyed phenomenal growth in health clubs and fitness centers where lines are formed for use, while upright stationary bikes go unused. The next major trend in the bicycle industry is recumbent bicycles for the road. Additional proof of this is shown by the hot growth within the recumbent bicycle industry including the purchase of ReBike (recumbent manufacturer) by Huffy Bicycles, one of the largest bicycle manufacturers in North America. The industry 'buzz' has several manufacturers looking at recumbents as a viable (and comfortable) addition to their bicycle lines.

Redesigning the upright bicycle saddle is not going to solve the problem completely. If you widen the seat base, you chafe the back side of the legs/thighs. By stretching out the riding position to that of a recumbent position, you can distribute the rider weight prop-

erly, in comfort and obtain true 0-pressure point comfort on a bicycle.

I would hope that you will consider offering viewers a solution to this common problem. Recumbent bicycles are the most sensible solution. It works for *Bicycling's* Ed Pavelka, as well as thousands of comfort-seeking (recumbent) bicyclists every year.

*After watching the ABC 20/20 Special, Thursday September 18th, 1997, we sent this letter to ABC 20/20, our local ABC affiliate, Lisa Gosselin—Editor at Bicycling Magazine and Dr. Goldstein in Boston, MA. Included in the packages were a copy of our 1997 Buyers' Guide, an RCN#41 and RCN brochure. Lisa Gosselin called to say that during her 20/20 interview process, she discussed solutions including alternative bike seats and RECUMBENTS. The other day 20/20 sent us a form letter that they were not interested in our story idea.... So, don't expect any solutions from ABC. Late word is that Ed Pavelka is leaving Bicycling. We wish Ed our best wishes.*

## ...Bob Rants...and 'bents get better....

### 1997 ROAD TESTS

This year was a tough one for RCN road tests. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Rans Stratus and Rocket, but most others took their toll on me and several companies benefited from my **FREE** R & D and consulting services. One long-time reader joked that one issue should have been called the "dog bike issue." There were lots of problems and bikes that were not finished products. The benefit to readers is when Bob Rants, bikes get better. Well, most of the time. There are still a few manufacturers who don't seem to care what we say.

I take my job as recumbent critic seriously. If an advertiser gets upset and pulls ads (like Turner did), too bad. I **WILL NOT** compromise my editorial integrity or RCN's reputation. These guys are told to send the **BEST** example of what they do, and many still don't. There are many recumbent manufacturers who don't even read, subscribe or advertise in RCN. RCN needs manufacturer advertising to survive in its current form and we appreciate our advertisers—as long as they don't think they are buying "good press," because this **IS NOT** the case. The benefit for competitive manufacturers is that they have a direct-line to the 'bent enthusiasts of the world.

My company publishes the only bimonthly recumbent bicycle publication in the world. We also publish a yearly buyers' guide for on-the-road recumbent bicycles. I would be happy to discuss recumbent bicycles with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Bryant

Recumbent Cyclist News

### BENT BOB IS COMMITTED

I am 100% committed to the RCN reader/recumbent-rider enthusiast. For 1998, you can count on accurate, pointed tests with honest criticisms, Rants, Raves, as well as credit where credit is due. We plan to rate all bikes tested, as well as a bold new rating system.

### NEW FORM UPDATE

We've come up with a new order form/envelope on page 47/48 that will save paper, envelopes, trees as well as speed up the order process. Please don't forget to tape the edges and and put your check in before you drop it in your local post box. Thanks in advance for using the new form and supporting RCN.

### NEW RCN T-SHIRTS

The new Low Down & Laid Back: Recumbent Cyclist News T-shirts are now available. They are Beefy-T's in Navy and Forest Green with white ink in size L or XL. **The cost is \$13 + \$3 S/H.** (See page 39 of this issue for ad.).

**SPECIAL DEAL:** Subscribe or renew to a **Deluxe 2-Year subscription**, and we'll give you an **RCN T-SHIRT or a 1997 Buyers' Guide.** (we will prorate any existing subscription to your new

deluxe level). This offer is only valid on orders **MAILED** direct to RCN in Renton, WA by 12-31-97. The cost is \$77+ \$3 S/H (T-Shirt or buyers' guide).

### 1998 RCN SUPERGUIDE

For 1998, we **WILL NOT** have a traditional buyers' guide as in years past, but a instead a new **RECUMBENT SUPERGUIDE!** With the idea of bringing more current up-to-date coverage, larger, more attractive regular RCN issues and in favor of subscription growth, we have opted out of the yearly buyers' guide format. Instead, we will have part of the buyers' guide in each RCN issue that we publish throughout the year. Our goal is to bring the non-subscribing buyers' guide purchasers in as subscribers while showcasing the bimonthly RCN issues. This is an essential element of our long term growth and direction which includes more frequent and larger issues per year.

•RCN#43 Jan/Feb '98 CLWB Buyers' Guide/'98 Editors Choice Awards

•RCN#44 March/Apr '98 SWB Buyers' Guide

•RCN#45 May/June '98 LWB Buyers' Guide/'Bent Seat Shootout

•RCN#46 July/Aug '98 Tandem/Trike Buyers' Guide/Accessory Guide

•RCN#47 Sept/Oct '98 Super-Guide Update

•RCN#48 Nov/Dec '98 1999 Season Preview

Along with the SuperGuide, there will be all of your favorite regular features in each and every newly expanded RCN issue.

If you want to get your RCN issues faster, we will upgrade your subscription to Deluxe/First Class for \$1 per outstanding issue (this saves 4-weeks). Mailed to our PO box in Renton, WA, ONLY.

Remember, keep the faith in your off-season training and **"Just Ride...!"**

Viva Recumbent!  
Robert J. Bryant



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HEAR FROM YOU!**

**Directions for use:** Send your cards, letters, RANTS, gum wrappers, feedback, responses, pictures, articles, newsletters, newspaper clippings and whatever to:

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**Email to:** DrRecumbnt@aol.com. If you disagree with an RCN opinion or have a differing viewpoint or experience—we want to hear about it! RCN reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, content and space limitations. If you write to RCN and *DO NOT* want your letter published, please make this request in the letter.



Joe "The Road Warrior" on his Urban Assault Vehicle

## WEDGIE HORSY BIKE RANTS

The latest issue of RCN sent me scrambling for Bill Edwards' address. I love recumbents but, do not relish the thought of MYTHS! I must say that I am not wild about horsy bikes. I read Bob Bryants "Bob Rants" editorial and he brought out many concerns. Here are my concerns about WEDGIES/HORSY BIKES:

1. Bad in headwinds.
2. Can't descend hills, (too slow - despite what the ads say).
3. Too many horsy bike thieves.
4. No choices (all look alike).
5. Can't pick up lost coins or valuables on ground (low 'bents).
6. More susceptible to road rash.
7. Too cold and wet (no fairing).
8. No respect from motorists.
9. Jumping on curbs and riding on sidewalks give bicycling a bad reputation.
10. Design restricted by UCI to evolve (1800's technology).
11. Difficult to brake efficiently, could ENDO (only place to go is on your head).
12. Have to get off wedgie saddle at stops.
13. No wedgie trikes can corner.
14. And mostly: MAY BE ABLE TO GET IT UP HILLS, BUT RIDERS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET IT UP IN BED!

For a more complete list see "Joe's book of reasons on why he'll never ride a horsy bike again."

Joe "Road Warrior"  
Kochanowski  
Seattle, WA

## 'BENT MYTH RESPONSE

Here's my answer to Bill Edwards... You said that recumbents can't climb hills. You're making NO SENSE! Can't you get it through your "LITTLE NUMB HEAD" that it's all about the motor, or are you wedgie riders in so bad of shape that you can't climb hills riding a recumbent? We recumbent riders do it all the time. While riding the 200 miles of Seattle to Portland, I lost count of how many wedgie bikes I passed uphill. You don't hear me preaching, wedgie bikes can't climb uphill do you? So, what's the matter?

STRAIGHT UP!

Tony Licuanan  
Seattle, WA

## HALUZAK FOLLOW UP

I liked the write-up on the Hybrid Race generally! When I read that you use the seat in a more reclined position, I realized why the tire was striking the day bag. It's not very fair to imply that the flex alone was sufficient to cause this problem. The Day Bag was not really designed to be used in the more reclined position, a shortcoming I must admit. Overall, it was a pretty good article.

A few other corrections that I might make:

1. Our new email address is: sidwindr@pacbell.net
2. Our web page is located at <http://www.BikeRoute.com>
3. The Day Bag is made by Rolling River Designs in Healdsburg, CA.

Sincerely,  
Don Kunce,  
Bicycles By Haluzak

## BENT SAFETY CONCERNS

While enjoying your #41 issue, I came across the letter "Bent safety concerns" by Mr. Jim Sharp. As I am now back in the recumbent saddle again, with my R-45 Vision, I thought I would add one other important safety component, vital to recumbent rider's existence on the streets, in traffic. I unfortunately ride my recline bike in the single most bicyclist-killing field in the world; Broward County, Florida. I feel that the second most important safety item is a rear view mirror! I can't tell you how many times, mine has actually saved my life! I'm one of those people, that need to see and know where vehicles coming and going are at all times! A wedgie bike accident long ago taught me this lesson! Bicycle shops sell them, for helmet and handle bar mounting. I'm surprised dealers don't advertise in your publication more often.

Recline Ken  
evansk@bellsouth.net

## 'BENT HISTORY

I'm a relative newcomer to the world of recumbents and RCN. Have you done a piece on recumbent history? A linear sequence of images depicting these developments would do a lot to tell the story.

Warren  
HoHumRX@aol.com  
Warren, The best article that we have done in RCN is "The Development of Modern Recumbent Bicycles" by David Gordon Wilson. It is available in RCN#29 for \$6 postpaid. We should put together a complete his-

torical article. Any freelancers want to give it a shot? I suggest that you get ahold of these books:

- Cycling Science by David Gordon Wilson
- Human Power by David Gordon Wilson and Allan Abbott
- Das Liegerad by Gunnar Fehlau (German only)—Bob, RCN

## 'BENTS CAN CLIMB

Under the category of "Who says recumbents can't climb?", my V-Rex and I just completed this year's Boston-Montreal-Boston ride, 750 miles with 30,000 feet of climbing. As far as I could find out, this is the first time a 'bent completed that ride. My middle-of-the-pack time of 79 hours 39 minutes leaves a lot of room for improvement, but perhaps a young stud (I'm 53) will show what a finer-tuned engine than mine can do on a 'bent.

David Bundrick,  
dbundric@legis.state.ga.us

## ZZIPPER OVERSIGHT

It seems that all the pictures that I see of the Zipper fairings show the top of the lexan below the eye level of the rider. Wouldn't the bike be faster if the fairing were high enough to direct the air flow "over" the rider's head?

Wally Kiehler  
Kiehler@Juno.com  
Wally, You are supposed to look just over the top of the Zipper fairing. Looking through would distort vision. With the curvature of the fairing, the airflow should brush your hair. Some manufactures are not set-

ting up their fairings with this correct setting in mind—Bob.

### COROPLAST SPEED SECRET

I'm really enjoying my new coroplast fairing on my Presto. It is very fast! Coroplast also makes great fenders. Your review on the 3x7 hub was right on. It does seem to be indestructible. I find that it is easier to shift than the chainrings. When going up hill I give the pedals several hard pushes, let off, click, and resume pedalling.

If possible, I would like to see a road test on the new ReTrike, S & B trike and the Wiz Wheels trike. Maybe a showdown?

Randall Phillips

Randall, we highly recommend the People Movers Ed Gin Coroplast Fairing seminar video to anyone looking to make their bikes faster. Unfortunately, we have not been offered any ReBike test bikes. We'll work on S & B and WizWheels.

### UNAWARE RCN READERS

The T-Lite is gaining popularity and made a fine showing against the racers in San Diego, California. The poor unaware readers might believe your rantings but true bikers and web site folk see through you. I made and sold recumbents before you existed and will sell after your demise.

Milton Turner  
Turner Enterprises,

It seems as though Milt Turner did not agree with our review, though he did not offer any specifics. At this time, Turner no longer advertises in or reads RCN. You can see how much we have to gain by giving a bike a bad review. We hope Milt continues on his quest for a perfected Hypercycle and keeps us posted.

### SPINSKIN UPDATE

It was an unexpected surprise to find a photo of my new Moulton/HED/Phil Wood front wheel in the new issue of RCN. Thank you!

As a follow up, though I have not had any problems as of this point, I have heard of some reports of riders using SpinSkins having flats because of the outer covering on the Kevlar in SpinSkins was weakened causing the Kevlar to wear through the inner-tube. This recently happened to a friend who rides a Lightning Stealth here in Fort Collins. Kelvin Clark is looking into this I understand. I hope that these problems will be resolved soon.

Friendly thoughts & safe riding

Dave Yust,

davyust@lamar.colostate.edu ☐



Randall Phillips and his faired Presto—Photo courtesy of R. Phillips



### Have you received your RCN#41 yet?

All active subscriber issues should have arrived by this time. If yours has not—give us a call today. The postal service occasionally misplaces a bulk mail issue or two.

Call 253/631-5728 if you've had a problem.

With our new 1998 schedule, now would be the perfect time to upgrade to first class RCN mailings. (See page 4.)



### MISTAKES/UPDATES

The HUMAN POWERED MACHINES trike is called the TRITAN, not the Titan as published in two spots in the last RCN. Jan Vander Tuin called to say that he is in the process of widening the Tritan's track 5" to 32"-33." Jan also is in the process of updating the dual 26" wheeled Hale Runner LWB (and maybe Hale Runner tandem) for a 1998 model. If you're interested, give Jan a call at: Tel. 541/343-5568.

### REALLY TALL MOUNTAINS

In the RCN#41 editorial, I mistakenly printed that Slumgullian pass was 13,352 feet, and that was a mistake (wishful climbing brag). The altitude is 11,530 feet according to the road sign at the top.

## GLOSSARY

**ABOVE-SEAT STEERING (ASS):** Handlebars above the seat, knees or frame-Above-Seat-Steering. A standard bicycle type steering similar to that of a hot rod/Stingray type bicycle of the 60s.

**ALUMINUM:** AL, or Alum. A lightweight ductile, tarnish resistant material.

**BMX:** Bicycle-Moto-Cross.

**BAR-CONS:** Bar-end shifters.

**BAR-ENDS:** Mostly used on USS bikes to bring the controls closer to the rider. They are similar to those found on MTB's.

**BOTTOM BRACKET:** (BB) pedal axle & bearings, sometimes called boom-bracket.

**BRAZING:** A frame joint is created by flowing brass (usually) around the tubing junctures. Builders then either file/sand the joints smooth or leave them natural.

**CARBON-FIBER:** A high tech, high strength composite material that is black in color.

**C.G.:** Center-of-gravity

**CHAIN-IDLER:** A modified skateboard wheel, derailleur pulley or custom-made wheel that carries the chain slack on short and some long wheelbase recumbents.

**COMPACT:** CLWB or MWB recumbent

**COROPLAST:** Plasticized cardboard that works great for homebuilt recumbent fairings

**CLWB:** Compact Long Wheelbase 47"-60."

**CroMo:** Chrome-moly steel.

**DELTA:** Two-wheels in the rear trike design.

**DOM:** Drawn-over-madrel. This is a type of higher quality HiTen steel.

**FWD:** Front Wheel Drive

**GEAR INCHES:** A formula used to determine range of gears: front chainring divided by rear cog multiplied by drive wheel dia.

**GRIP SHIFT:** A trademark of the SRAM Corp. A brand of twist-grip shifter.

**GRR:** Gold Rush Replica

**HiTen Steel:** High tension or mild steel.

**HPV:** Human Powered Vehicle.

**INDIRECT STEERING:** Undersat steering via a rod, linkage or cable that connects the handlebar to the fork.

**KEVLAR:** A high strength, bulletproof composite material that is gold in color.

**LWB:** Long wheelbase 60"-71"+ (crankset low and behind front wheel).

**LOW-RACER:** A SWB recumbent built as low as possible for HPV racing (may exceed our wheelbase range for a SWB).

**MAGURA:** A high quality, strong German hydraulic caliper brake.

**MID-DRIVE:** A mid-ship mounted, two-chain drive freewheel shifted by a rear derailleur offering very wide gearing.

**MOULTON:** An English full suspension conventional bicycle using 17" & 20" wheels.

**MTB:** A dated abbreviation for mountain bike.

**MWB:** The same as CLWB. Formerly used to describe longer SWB bikes.

**NEXUS:** Shimano's internal 4/7 speed hubs.

**PEDAL STEER:** Pedal-induced steering input that makes the bike harder to track in a straight line. This generally happens on SWB recumbents in with wheelbases of less than 39" or a laid back head tube angle.

**RCN:** Recumbent Cyclist News founded by Robert J. Bryant in 1990.

**RWS:** Rear-Wheel Steering.

**SWB:** Short-Wheelbase 33"-47" (crankset high and in ahead of front wheel).

**TIG WELDING:** Tungsten-Inert-Gas; a proven no-lug process common with MTB's.

**SACHS 3 X 7:** This is the Sachs Internally geared three speed with 7-spd. freewheel (21 speed total).

**STEERING ROD:** The steel or aluminum rod that connects the fork to the bars.

**STEERING STRUT-RISER:** An ASS extension that rises from the stem or head tube to raise the bars over the legs.

**TADPOLE:** Two-wheel in the front trike design.

**UNDERSEAT STEERING (USS):** Steering via handlebars beneath the seat.

**V-BRAKE:** A new very strong (and controversial) style of cantilever brake the has high arms in a "V" formation.

**X-SEAM:** A measurement used for recumbent fitting. This measurement simulates the distance between the seat back/base out to the farthest reach of the pedal stroke.

**ZIPPER:** A Lexan fairing by Zzip Design.

## The Silver Thread Slumgullian Tour

### From Gunnison to Gunnison, Colorado

by Robert J. Bryant

As the plane touched down in Colorado Springs, I just had a feeling it was the trip of a lifetime. If you get off the plane and look east, you could be in Kansas or Nebraska or any place known for gently rolling grassy plains. Look west and see the majestic Pikes Peak and the front range. Colorado Springs is set snug up against the mountains where my journey was to start.

#### THE SPRINGS

The Springs is a fast growing city of 300,000, though it seems like a small town. I easily tracked down a decent book store, Starbucks and a bagel shop. The natural beauty of this place is overwhelming matched only by the friendliness of the people. It is a conservative town known for right wing politics and family values. The Springs was rated as one of "Fifty Fabulous Places To Raise Your Family," from a current book by Melissa Giovagnoli (Career Press), which caught my wandering eye. It's also home to the Air Force Academy, Olympic Training Center, Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame and the Pikes Peak Cog Railway—a tourist mecca. There is enough action to keep vacationers busy for weeks. It is a well planned community dating back over 100 years. The Springs was built up as a playground for the rich and famous looking for clean mountain air. The city had a cosmopolitan reputation with visitors coming from Europe and the east coast. The city earned the nickname of "Little London." Several sanatoriums were built in the early years for tuberculosis patients moving to the area. This is still evident today with wide tree-lined streets and houses with large porches to take advantage of the clean air.

In Colorado, people don't ask your town's population, but they can't wait to find out the elevation. At 7,000 feet elevation Colorado Springs was the lowest elevation of the trip. The Springs is an easy town to get around. The drive to Angletech is around the southeast side of town and up Ute Pass to Woodland Park. The drive gives you a good perspective of the town. The mountain (Pikes Peak) makes for easy navigation. I



Roads that Zig—Slumgullian Pass just outside of Lake City, Colorado—John Cunningham.

did the fast tourist tour and hit all of the hot spots the first day while acclimating to the elevation. Since training so hard to become aerobically fit, my above-the-clouds transition took just about four days. I started riding the second day in town. By the start of the tour I was up to about 90% of my sea-level power, but I felt great in the thin and dry Colorado air.

#### ABOVE THE CLOUDS

The drive from the Springs to Woodland Park takes you through Old Colorado City, by Garden of The Gods, ancient Indian ruins, the North Pole (kids amusement park) and Manitou Springs all while hugging the base of Pikes Peak. In 18 miles and twenty minutes you roll into the town of Woodland Park. At 8,800 feet, you know you're moving up in the world. The air is thinner, cleaner and this bedroom community to the Springs has a laid back feeling. Woodland Park receives 300 days of sunshine each year and double the snowfall of the Springs. Woodland Park is a unique town. The houses

can be turn-of-the-century cabins or million dollar mountainside estates. The views are breathtaking, with seemingly another vista around every corner. To 'bent heads, this is the drop off point for the best custom spec recumbent shop on the planet—Angletech which was to be our home-base for the few days before the tour.

The RCN Colorado Crew for the start of the trip included Ron "Ronster" Schmid, RCN Goodwill Ambassador, Magura Guru, Presto fanatic and all around good guy. When he's not hanging with the crew, Ron works as an airplane mechanic for Horizon Air in his hometown of Portland, Oregon. Ron was co-piloting Dale Clark's S & S coupler-equipped Counterpoint Opus semi-recumbent tandem. Ron was the lucky guy in the 'bent position. Next was Mark "Mr. McGu" Colliton. Mark is the co-designer of the V-Rex and other bikes. He rides with the WHIRL group in his home territory of Washington, D.C. where he works as a graphic designer. Mark does all of the RCN covers and scans most

of the pictures for RCN. Mark and I met as pen-pals years ago when he called me to ask about Roulants (an odd Dutch high LWB 'bent). Mark also built a series of BMX based SWB bikes written about for an early RCN issue. Mark would be riding the top secret Rans prototype LWB (Gold Rush killer) "Limbo." John "Rocket-Man" Williams is an animal. He's the most fit of our group. This 40-something family man is a health teacher from Philomath, Oregon (down the street from BikeE). John is a quiet understated guy until you get him on a bike. He's an HPV racer on his really low SWB bikes, time-trialer and NW Cannonball Racer. John came in 6th in a field of 24 in this semi-outlaw race from Seattle to Spokane over Snoqualamie Pass. John rode a new Rans Rocket Saturn-V on the tour. His Rocket ride will be legendary for years to come. Little did Rans know they'd elevate the status of this pocket speedster by loaning it to John, the fastest guy on the tour. Myself, the RCN-guy, I took this ride seriously and overtrained for it. My training was written about in

previous RCN issues and I am happy to say—it paid off. My wheels were prepared by Angletech—a '97 Angletech V-Rex GL63, suspended 63-speed fat-tire beauty.

Crew members John and Janice Schlitter of the Rans company rolled into Woodland Park late Wednesday night before the tour. In the back of the Suburban were four glorious Rans bikes slated for tour use. We had to see, but could not ride until meeting the next day in Gunnison, Colorado, a three hour drive from Woodland Park. The group hit Tres Hombres, a rowdy Ute Pass Tex-Mex hangout for a group feast, then onto the Country Inn's (best place in Woodland Park to stay) to crash for the night.

During the week in Colorado, the RCN Colorado Crew would grow larger. As RCN readers, Angletech customers and Slumgullian riders met for the first time, Colorado Springs Cycling Club (CSCC) riders mixed with us 'bent heads and as strangers became friends.

## GUNNISON or BUST

The Silver Thread—Slumgullian Tour starts in Gunnison, Colorado. We climbed into the team car (rented Geo Prism) for some last minute pre-ride preparations—a Gu-Stop at Team Telecycle (the other bike shop in Woodland Park). The last stop in Woodland Park was the Doughnut Mill. They serve some of the best round powerbars I've tasted, or maybe it's that I hadn't had a round powerbar for awhile. In a post-ride strategy session, our group was made to feel right at home sitting at the 'Mill's "Liars Table" telling tall 'bent tales and psyching each other out for the four days, nearly 300 miles and 12,000 feet of climbing on the tour known as "Silver Thread—Slumgullian."

Driving at altitude is different because cars lose power above the clouds (at altitude). With our anemic little Geo Prism the squirrels under the hood were definitely working overtime. Four guys, bags and a V-Rex hanging off the back climbing Ute Pass, pass through Divide, Florissant, center of the known universe according to a bumper sticker, and some of the most breathtaking scenery you'll ever see. Mountain vistas with wide open valleys that stretch for miles and the views are magnificent. In the thriving town of Buena Vista we stopped for refueling at the local sandwich shop. The clerk said if we had come through in another month, the lunch lines stretch down the block. Buena Vista is on



*RCN Crew Specialty—hangin' in the parking lot with friends (front to back, left to right): Mark Colliton (Limbo), John Schlitter (sitting), Bob Meierhans, Janice Schlitter and Randy Johnson (Lu Lu).*

the Arkansas River which is well known for whitewater rafting. It's also a tourist pit stop and the town is known to be booked solid on some summer nights.

We motored toward Gunnison by way of Salida and Monarch Pass. The squirrels were really working overtime under the hood of the Geo and I was about to ask the crew to punch holes in the floor for Flinstone power. Then in the rearview mirror—a Suburban bearing down on us—the Rans crew who took a morning mountain diversion to the bear-infested woods of Guffey, Colorado were coming up on our tail. We let them pass.... and tucked in to draft them for the downhill stretch into Gunnison—giving the squirrels a break.

Gunnison is one of those seemingly perfect small towns. It has a population of 5,000 and no traffic problems. It's located in the wide Gunnison River Valley, a college town, farming town and outdoor mecca. The Gunnison area was a primary Ute Indian buffalo hunting ground. In 1853 a famous expedition led by Captain John W. Gunnison passed through the area while looking for a suitable transcontinental railroad route. All four members of the group were brutally killed by a band of Paiute Indians later in Utah. Captain Gunnison was shot with 15 arrows before his arms, tongue and heart were removed.

Nearby Crested Butte is considered one of the last ski resorts not

<yet> overtaken by development. It's also known as the mountain bike capital of the world. No trip to Gunnison or Crested Butte would be complete without a day trip up the bike path that stretches 26-miles in between the two towns, so next year we'll do it.

## HANGING IN GUNNISON

We stayed at the Holiday Inn on Tomichi Avenue. The staff was extremely accommodating as the RCN Crew checked in early (while really messing up Kelvin Clark's plans). Once settled, it was time to get into the back of that Suburban and ride the new Rans bikes. In the parking lot, we met Randy Johnson with his pristine Presto, "Lu Lu the cow bike," an Angletech masterpiece painted in a white wet spray with cow spots. On the head tube was a cow glaring at you with shades, a tie and a Lu Lu-like attitude. The Presto was a rare skinny tire "451" model with Magura's and a 3x7 for 63 speeds. Randy had driven down from the Chicago area with Silver Thread/Slumgullian veteran Bob Meierhans (who wrote the Slumgullian story in RCN#37). Bob did the tour on a V-Rex last year, but had just taken delivery of a new Angletech/Easy Racer Gold Rush Replica. This rolling kinetic masterpiece was outfitted with one of those new White Industries drivetrains, a Sachs 3x7 built into a HED wheel, a Rans seat and was painted gold.

Out of the back of the Rans

crew vehicle came a gorgeous metallic green Screamer that John and Janice would ride on the tour. Next was the Saturn-V. If you like Rockets, the S5 will knock your socks off: Magura brakes, taller gearing and skinny 406 wheels with the new Primo "Comet" 1-3/8" hi-pressure tire (there's something about those dual 20's....). Next came the new production Rans Gliss. It's in production and in a word, incredible. The bike was brought out for Buffalo, New York RCN reader, recumbent rider, Ed Weiss to ride. Ed owns an Angletech Ryan Vanguard with a 3x7 hub and a Vision Metro Nexus. Finally, the top secret "Limbo." This is a concept bike—a long-and-low performance machine utilizing Stratus and Gliss technology. It looks like a Gliss pushed low to the ground. It has a 26/20 wheel combo, tall gearing, V-brakes and is painted school bus yellow. The final dialing of this bike came in the Holiday Inn parking lot as we tweaked the steering. I had been experimenting with lean/stretch-forward riding positions on the new Black Gold test bike, and Rans had been having a dial-in dilemma with the Limbo. The Gliss bars brought the controls too far back and created too much leverage on the steering. The Gliss stem is inverted when used on the Limbo. We pushed the bars way forward and found a unique new aggressive riding stance for this top secret prototype.

Once all the bikes were prepped, we rode through Gunnison. Mark in search of Gu, Janice in search of the Wal-Mart and John and I along for the tour de Gunnison. We hit the local bike shop and then found that the bike trail that runs 26-miles to Crested Butte Ski Resort also leads directly to the Wal-Mart. I didn't have the privilege of shopping there, but we did find a machine out front where you could score a Pepsi for 35 cents. I was riding and totally enjoying the laid back, ergonomically perfect riding position of the latest greatest Gliss. The chain stays now run out to the bottom bracket, but they do not connect to the head tube. This creates the necessary frame stiffness, but allows some "give" in the front end of the frame so as to not beat up the rider. Ed was going to like this primo machine.

Later that evening we dined at Garlic Mikes. The management seemingly punished us for being late by separating our group. The service and food were only mediocre, or maybe more so because it was a pricey joint, but the company was terrific.



## DAY 1 GUNNISON AIRPORT TO SAGUACHE

It is 75 miles to Saguache over North Pass. My personal goal in this ride was to enjoy old and new friends, the Colorado scenery and not be the last guy up the pass. I've always been a decent rider, but never an athlete. With my training this year, I was not sure what to expect, but as of six weeks ago, I knew I was ready. I had reached the pinnacle of my training. At home, I can ride straight up James Hill in Kent; true, it's only about 300 feet of vertical rise, but it's very steep.....and a wimp hill by Colorado standards.

Our day started early. Those heading off for the GLANT PANCAKE restaurant left at 7am. It may have been preride jitters, but our crew hung out at the Holiday Inn for the continental breakfast. Six or eight riders ate cold cereal, round powerbars, some fruit, coffee and bagels—power breakfast!? In retrospect, we should have done the giant pancake thing. V-Rex rider Steve Freeman from Maine reminded us of that all day long as he'd whip out his boxed pancake throughout the day for power-breaks.

This day would have us really out in the middle of nowhere. This would mean lunch of whatever you had in the sag or on your bike. A late night trip to Safeway had us stocking up on Gu, Power Bars, Fig Newtons and Gatorade. Around 9am, some motored, and others rode to the Gunnison Airport where we parked, and hit the pavement.

With 25 riders, it doesn't take long to disperse the crew. I tucked in behind John Cunningham (JC) on his Gold Rush Replica. John is a well known recumbent cyclist ('bent roadie animal) in these parts and I knew he'd be the guy to keep up with. Shortly after, Mark Rowe came zooming by on his Guerciotti Dura Ace equipped criterium racer, maybe he was the true animal of the tour due to his choice of torturous machines. I had instant respect for the guy when I realized that he had 14 speeds in a road "corn-cob" array. I kept the fact that I had 63-speeds to myself as I tucked in behind the Schlitter's Screamer tandem. I lost track of Mark Colliton, Ron Schmid and John Williams and wouldn't see them until later at the sag stop halfway up North Pass.

The riders separated with John Cunningham and Mark Rowe up front. For these two, the race was on. Later we were passed by lady roadies Sue Martin (Trek 2120) and Barb Butler (Cannondale R500 triple) with



The gang at Moose's in Lake City, Colorado: (left to right) Randy (Lu Lu) Johnson (Opus stoker), Dale Clark (Opus Capt'n), Sue "Roadie Lady" Martin, John "The Rocketman" Williams, Bob Bryant, Mark "Dr. Evil" or "Mr. McGU" Colliton, Ed Weiss, Mark "Guerciotti" Rowe, Steve Freeman, Kelvin "The Kelvinator" Clark and Doug Luttrell (front) —Ed Weiss.

Suki on her metallic pink Stratus wearing her bright orange jersey.

My new V-Rex had a drivetrain skip that I could not adjust out of the system. I was blaming the mysterious innards of the 3x7 hub. Finally I got so perturbed with this hi-tech gizmo that I disconnected it. What this means is climbing in the 3x7 3rd gear, a 136% overdrive of whatever gear that you happen to be in. In this case, 30 gear inches for a low. This was especially annoying because the advertised benefit of the 63-speed bike is the really low lows—17 gear inches is what it should be.

As the miles rolled along John, Janice and I were seemingly the only cyclists on this gently climbing road along the Cochetopa River. We enjoyed good conversation in a place that was far from the phones, faxes and everyday bike business. We came upon an actual bathroom with Suki, the lady roadies and fast guys all taking a break. I looked at John and Janice and they looked at me. In unison, we put the power to the pedals and took this brief chance to hold the lead. The day was a postcard perfect Southwestern Colorado sunny day and we were blessed with a gentle tailwind. Life is good.

The river-hugging canyon Hwy 114 eventually plateaus into some beautiful farmland near Buffalo Pass. This was our sag stop. Mark Colliton caught up and had to have his Gu. I

ate some form of energy wood pulp that I wouldn't eat again. Ed, Randy, Steve and many others met here. Just as we were settling in for a break, like a scene from a road race we'd all like to see, "Rocket Man" John Williams comes racing through the sag area with Roadie Lady Barb Butler pacing behind. Well, my new found mission was to catch these two. I paced out of the sag area with Mark Colliton and the Schlitters. The wood pulp energy bar lit my after burner, stoked me up and I was off. The fast guys Mark "Guerciotti" Rowe and JC (Gold Rush Replica) were out in front of me. Rocketman Williams and Roadie Lady Barb were as well. For the next few miles I would see nobody, except Suki wearing her neon orange jersey riding her metallic pink Stratus in my rearview mirror. At this point I hadn't really talked much with Suki, but I knew she was a strong rider. That first day up North Pass, she was my motivation for keeping going. I kept her safely in my rearview mirror. Later in the week, we had a neat conversation about how she kept my orange/blue Giro Exodus RL helmet as a target to make it up the pass. Unknowingly, we helped each other up the pass, and we hadn't even met yet.

My new V-Rex is an Angletech built 24/20 GL63 with a Ballistic suspension fork, custom fit to me via the AngleFit™ (recumbent fit

kit). My first ride on the bike had been just a few days before. The bike had been going through a series of break-in woes since the second ride. While in Woodland Park the new Sachs Quartz derailleur broke and had to be replaced (at the cable bolt, the same place my Centera broke on the Turner, hmmm. Another glitch was a drivetrain gear-skip. Each day, we thought we had it worked out, only to find it still happening. A truly annoying problem that would haunt my climb over North Pass.

I was within 1.25 miles of the North Pass summit at the elbow and stopped. Climbing with the drag of the 3x7 locked in 3rd gear and a 30 gear inch gear, the 7% grade was wearing on me. I was bound and determined NOT to walk a single hill on the Silver Thread—Slumgullian—and I didn't. I took a short break, ate some chocolate wood pulp in the form of a power bar. You know you're having some kind of a spiritual experience when you actually LIKE the taste of these things. The Schlitters on the Screamer rolled by. I relieved myself behind the bushes, first time in four hours. I reconnected my 3x7 and put it in low, low 17 (gear inches) for the final ascent. My bike's drivetrain had an attitude, but I needed that low gear. I was reenergized and Suki was coming up the hill. It was time to make my move for the summit and I got

back on the bike, spinning to the top at 4.5 mph and fantasizing about the down hill back side of North Pass.

At the top was the sag and reception committee, and cheering for every rider who came in. What an accomplishment! North Pass in Colorado at 10,149 feet, more than 2,500 feet of climbing. It was easy! Actually, it wasn't. This was my longest cycling day and most vertical gain of my life—a turning point in my cycling career.

The fast guys and lady-roadies were just leaving. Wow, are they something. John Williams is hanging out with me for awhile. We wait to see many of the gang come in. Ed Weiss is having a blast on his Gliss, there goes Steve with that cold pancake again. Here comes Mark "Mr. McGu" Colliton walking the last few blocks to the summit. That Limbo doesn't have low enough gears or something..... John and Janice run out to take a picture of Mark walking in. Mark says to me, "Don't be calling me for this ride next year, Bob." Mark would eat these words later, though he and the Schlitter's want to Bike Across Kansas next summer. A bit later Kelvin Clark rolls into the summit. Kelvin is riding the Angletech Altitude full-suspension SWB. It was set up just two days ago. I pulled the ball-o-food out of my Angletech seat bag. The tastiest part of my lunch was the bagel with strawberry Fig Newtons melted to the top—an unexpected culinary delight. I am pretty much self contained. I have two water bottles filled with Gatorade and a Blackburn hydration system full of ice water. I refilled the water bottles, gobbled of my ball-o-food, bummed a pop-tart off of the Rocketman just in time for John to ask if I'd like to descend with him. Roadie Barb had gone out with the fast crew, followed by the Schlitters on the Screamer, Fast Ed on the Gliss, Steve on his V-Rex and Randy on Lu Lu the cow painted Presto. Rocketman Williams was holding back waiting for me.

Rocketman John is a rider who is definitely out of my league, but he was here because I got him interested in this ride. He also seemed interested in just how fast I had become with my training. For John, it was preCannonball training. For me, it was learning from a master. On the road, John is thinking, planning and executing riding moves all of the time. I have to say that the only person I've learned more from about recumbent riding is Gardner Martin, so that puts John in good company.

We headed off down the hill in



*Suki climbing up North Pass on her Rans Stratus—John Cunningham.*



*John and Janice Schlitter at the top of North Pass.*

a descent with about 35 more miles to go. We both hoped it was all down hill. The road was rough, with many twists and turns, but predictable. I had disconnected the 3x7 hub on the V-Rex once again, but was still experiencing drivetrain skip. When working perfectly, the 3x7 equipped drivetrain and 139 gear inch high gear allow you to pedal at speeds not normally possible. My old school training had me pedaling down the steep hills. Rocketman John does a

really low with laid back seats. Even with the seat laid back all of the way on the Rocket S5, it was too upright for John. His answer was to sink down in the seat 4-6" and raise his knees up. This coasting speed-tuck was equivalent to my pedaling in 139" high gear, on most of the hills we rode on together. The only way I could hang with him was to ride a pace-line tucked in behind that 20" drivewheel. Don't ever let anyone tell you that small drivewheels or Rans Rockets are slow bikes. As it

would turn out, John and I spent a lot of time together on the roads of the Silver Thread—Slumgullian.

My top speed on the descent was 48 mph. John's was over 50. The fastest descent speed was JC on the Gold Rush Replica at 59 mph. The descent flattened into a new picture postcard view of Colorado as we neared Saguache. Our pace was very fast—18-22 mph with a gentle headwind. We soon caught up to Ed, Steve and Randy taking a break on the side of the road. We guessed that we were 15 miles out. Rocketman volunteered to lead a pace line into Saguache. We started rolling and at times were pacing a tight all-recumbent paceline at 25 mph. We were passed by the Saguache Sheriff who did a double take. What a sight this must have been. I kept thinking of how cool it would be to have a video of this scene. The last few miles went quickly. Soon we saw the big "S" on the side of the oasis of Saguache. Somebody said turn right at the liquor store and find the motel. We rode around town and only saw a boarded up motel. We ended up at the Saguache County Sheriff's office/city Jail. We met the Sheriff and he mentioned passing us. He asked about our top speeds coming down. I was unsure if I should answer. After fifteen minutes of pleasantries, we were off in the right direction. Go south out of town and the Saguache Creek Lodge is a mile or two out of town. With North Pass and the Rockies at our backs and the flat fertile lands of Saguache in front of us we rode our last mile of the day in the ever changing Colorado scenery. We rolled into the Lodge parking lot at about 3:15pm. We were told that JC was the first bike in on his *RECUMBENT* Gold Rush Replica, though Mark "Guerciotti" and JC basically rode in together.

After the usual afternoon cheering in of the riders (the last rider seems to get the biggest cheer, whereas the first guy gets nothing—go figure) and a quick shower. We hurried off to explore Saguache's culinary delights. In a word—Oasis, yes, that's the name of the only restaurant in town. In any other town on any other trip, I wouldn't eat at a place like that, but boy, oh boy was that food good. My Southwest adventure had the fire breathing taste buds perked up. Mexican food was the order of the day, and it was terrific. The solo waitress at the Oasis had taken care of the first batch of hungry cyclists very well indeed.

Back at the Lodge we learned that the last riders had come in about

5:20pm. Dale and Ron and Dave and Dot on the Opus IV's. Nobody that I had talked to had seen Dave and Dot actually pedaling, so we all assumed they had landed down the street from the lodge and decloaked prior to reentering earth's atmosphere and the Saguache Creek Lodge parking lot. They are a really nice couple from San Diego. They swap captain/stoker, recumbent/upright positions on their Opus and in their own words, "We stop a lot." You couldn't find any more friendly folks on this tour.

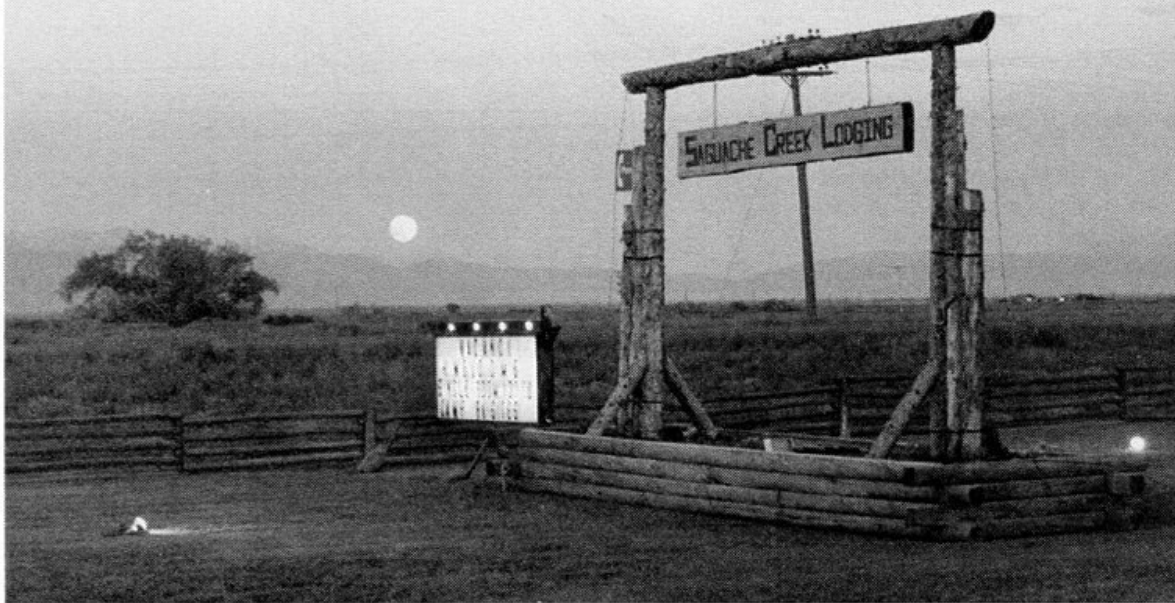
After everybody had reenergized at the Oasis, we rounded up the best minds in recumbency (at least those in Saguache, Colorado) to figure out what was wrong with the RCN V-Rex dream bike. "It's bad karma, Bob, I wash my hands of it." "It's that damn 3x7 hub, Bob, put the final nail in the coffin of those things." These are just some of the comments heard while working on the bike. "I would never put another one of those things on my personal bike," is what I was thinking and words I will undoubtedly eat later. I wasn't a happy camper as far as this bike was concerned, nor was I the poster boy for the Sachs 3x7.

It was a full moon over the fields of Saguache and the motel parking lot. Kelvin Clark rode the V-Rex while John Schlitter diagnosed the problem. Both came back certain that it wasn't the 3x7 hub. "It's a stiff link that you can't see." Hmm. Kelvin sat there in the dark, hand working every link in the chain. By the light of a full moon, I KryTech'ed every link on that chain.

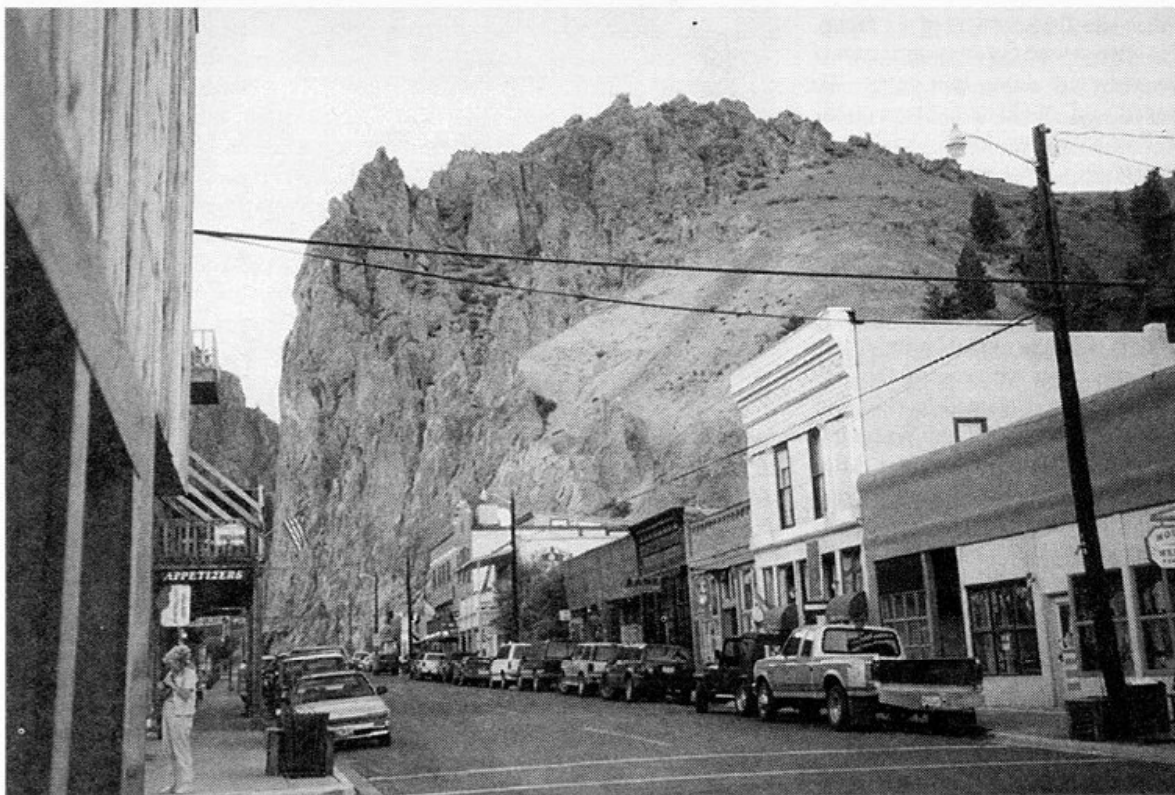
We were told to have a sense of humor about the Saguache Creek Lodge. We would be packed into just a few rooms in a very open concept bunking arrangement. The Lodge was like a scene that could have been played in 1960 or even 1950—an old style side-by-side strip motel in the Southwest a la Route 66—vintage Americana at its finest? By most standards this place was a bit run down, though tonight, it was home. I have nothing but the fondest memories of this place. Except for maybe the bruise I have from Mark Colliton elbowing me in the ribs. He said I was snoring. Yes, it was tight shared quarters. John and Janice in one sunken-down twin bed, Mark and I in the other and our wives were at the two opposite ends of the country from Saguache, Colorado.

#### DAY 2 SAGUACHE TO CREEDE

An early start at 7:30am. Heck, my kids get up at 6am. That's what time my computer goes on as well. I



*Fixing the V-Rex chain, testing mosquito repellent and hanging in the Saguache Creek Lodge parking lot John Cunningham.*



*The thriving mystical metropolis of Creede, Colorado—Bob Meierhans.*

was up at 4:30am, but laid in bed not to disturb the snoring and restless sleep of my bunk cohorts. We were up and ready to go in a half hour. Janice scored us some coffee from the motel owners. They also let Barb and some others use their personal hot tub the night before. We said a quick good bye to our neighbor, a retired man who lives in a

motorhome, but spends time in Saguache looking for Indian ruins. We shared mosquito repellent while hanging in the parking lot the night before. He had the strongest mosquito chemicals known to man.

Many of the riders left early. Some were as much as thirty minutes ahead. John, Janice, Mark Colliton and I all left for the flat run

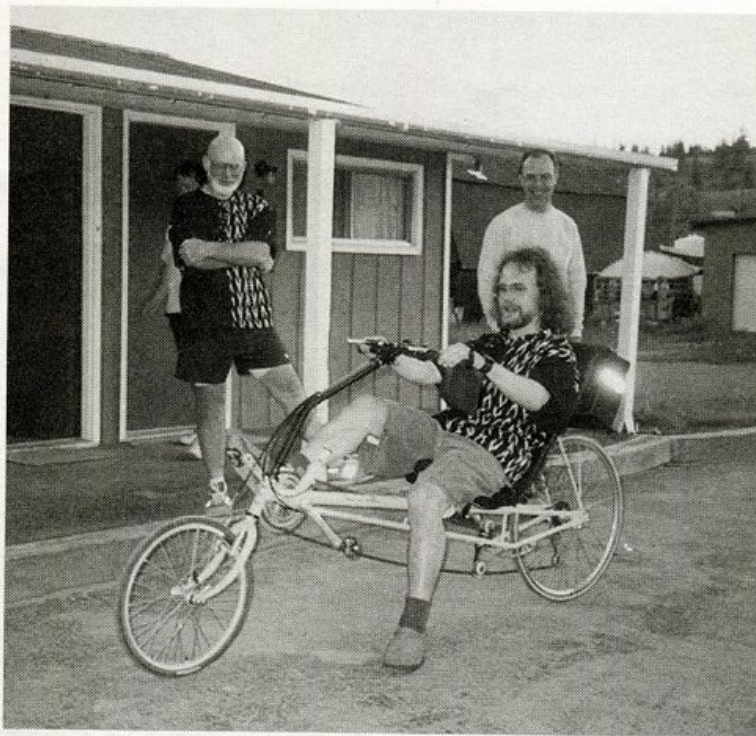
out to Del Norte for a breakfast. We slammed some Gu, Power Bars, melted Fig Newtons, bagels and fruit, but needed real food and it was 36 flat miles to breakfast in Del Norte.

As my power bar pulp kicked in, I led the pack and found nobody interested in my pace, so I turned up the volume. A while down the road I met Dale and the Ronster. I drafted

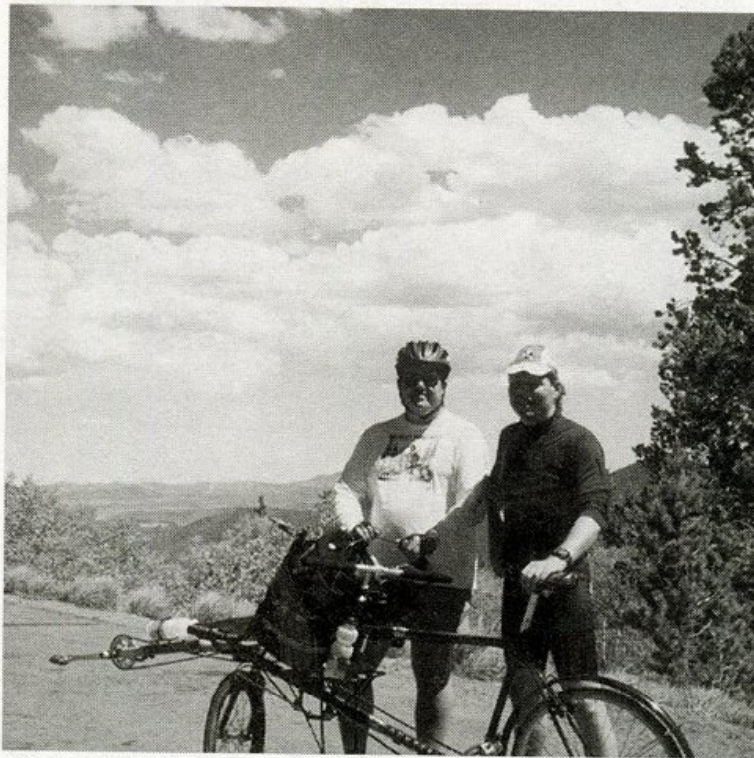
for a bit to recoup, and then pulled in front of the Opus to offer a draft, but realized our paces were going to be different. 23 miles out, at the junction of Hwy 285, I took a right at Hwy 112 for the 13 mile stretch into Del Norte. It was later that I learned that this was where the Ronster got off the Opus and became the unofficial co-sag. Ron just wasn't adapting to the Colorado altitude as well as the others. Later in Creede one of our sags quit the ride and went home. Ron was a welcome help to the Slumgullian crew.

I caught up with Fast Ed on the Gliss. Ed is not your stereotypical technowecnie 'bent head. He doesn't use clipless pedals and he doesn't like derailleurs (his Ryan has a 3x7 and his Metro has a Nexus). Ed is a strong rider and he was having a great time. I really enjoyed meeting Ed. We'd corresponded briefly about the Gliss prior to the ride and I was happy that he was able to get a factory Slumgullian demo for the tour. Ed and I paced for several miles at 18-20 mph and he stopped for a water break. I kept rolling and met up with Allen, a wedgie rider on a Trek 1500. Allen was the lone wolf of our group. He often started out early and seemed to prefer *not* riding in a group. We paced and caught up to Steve on his V-Rex just outside of Del Norte. Randy on Lu Lu was the only one out in front of us. I could see him once briefly, but lost out due to a head wind coming into town. The giant "D" on the hill (do all small towns have letters on hills behind them?) told us we were in Del Norte. Coming into town we crossed the Rio Grande river. I wanted to stop, but was in hot pursuit of food. We caught up to Randy at the restaurant. After many of us had ordered, Sue stopped in to tell us that in our haste (or race) for breakfast, we were at the wrong place. The majority of the crew ate next door. Our group breakfast timing hasn't been good so far this trip. The group meals are among the best times of the trip. Next year I will stick with the gang.

We used the early bird/wrong restaurant scenario to our advantage and baled out of town in a big time hurry. Again, I paced and conversed with Mark Colliton and the Schlitters who have all become good friends over the years of bike shows, rides to the beach and now Colorado. We rolled along the Rio Grande for a fast 17-miles into South Fork. We found an antique car show at a huge gas station/deli mart (Loaf-N-Jug) and Fast Ed, Randy and Steve were there waiting for us.



*Kelvin Clark on the prototype Rans "Limbo." Randy Johnson (Lu Lu) and Mark "Guerciotti" Rowe look on—Bob Meierhans.*



*Ron "The Ronster" Schmid (left) and Dale Clark—Bob Meierhans.*

Heading out of South Fork, we start to gain elevation. This was an easy day of 70 or so miles with only about 1000 feet of elevation gain. We rode in and out of canyons, farm land along the Rio Grande river in what looked like a scene out of a John Wayne movie. Fast Ed, Steve, Randy and Mark Colliton paced with us for awhile and then decided to take it a bit slower. I was, again, pacing with the Schlitters on the Screamer. Janice had some oranges in her pack and

was able to peel and ride at the same time, while sharing orange slices with John and me. It's funny how little things like that seem important when all you are doing is pedaling across great open spaces in a world that seems very far away from where I am today.

The ride up to Creede was beautiful, though this location plays tricks on bike riders. You can't tell whether you're going up or down hill. I could have sworn that it was a descent

down into Creede by the way it looked from outside of town, but it wasn't. It was a slow, grinding few miles with a headwind. Just as we didn't think we could make it, around the bend and there is the Snow Shoe Motel. Another old style strip motel, though remarkably more upscale than the night before. The innkeeper told us the first people in would get the best rooms and was he right. Rocketman John was the first in to Creede, followed by myself and then the Schlitters. The riders would trickle in over the next hour or two. The V-Rex was 90% perfect today, only a half dozen or so missed shifts. The KryTech chain lube soaking seemed to be the temporary cure for this ailing chain. I doused every link again for good measure. I was starting to feel at one with this bike and realized that I had made the right choice in bikes for the Slumgullian.

We were dying of hunger, so four of us went out in search of food. While walking down the main street of Creede, the aroma of home-made pizza sucked us in. After filling up on a few pieces each, we continued our culinary tour over to the espresso stand next door. The co-owner was from the Ronster's hometown of Portland and filled us in on the comings and goings in Creede, while serving the best espresso of the trip. Out on the boardwalk were more of our cohorts, showered, refreshed and playing tourists, though all had a secret inner-glow of two days and nearly 150 miles in the mountains of Colorado— "Rocky Mountain High" as Fast Ed quoted from an old John Denver tune.

Kelvin caught up to us and reminded us that we had dinner reservations and the Creede Hotel at 6pm. Later half the crew barked at us from the second floor bar/sun deck where I am told the Margueritas were good. I guess it's a lucky thing we only ate one pizza for late lunch. Dinner at the Creede was not to be missed. This was the best food of the trip. Creede is a unique town in the Rockies as it has no winter economy (no skiing). Creede's main claim to fame was the discovery of silver back in 1890. 8,000 people once lived in Creede, though the population today is just 400 (less in the winter). They say that drops in half or better when winter sets in. Even in the summer, the stores are all closed by 5pm. JC said he'd move there if he won the lottery. I noticed a few vacant store fronts myself. This is a mystical place, the town itself sits at the bottom of this narrow canyon and rock wall. The scene becomes a bit eerie

as the sun goes down and the day's light disappears quickly.

Creede has a checkered southwestern cowboy past with such characters as Bob Ford, who was one of Creede's early entrepreneurs, who shot Jesse James (in the back). Ford was murdered in Creede in 1892. Frank James, Martha "Calamity Jane," pal Poker Alice, Bat Masterson and bunco artist "Soapy" Smith gave the town its reputation as one of the wildest camps in the state. Modern entertainment now centers around the culinary delights of the Creede Hotel and the Repertory Theater next door. At the end of town there are two very large cliffs with a narrow road running along a creek out of town. A mining museum, the community center and fire department all are built into the cliff.

This was the turning point in the tour for me. My performance far exceeded my expectations and the group was getting to know one another better. We watched the sun go over the Rockies in Creede while swapping stories of the day and sharing rides on the top secret Limbo, Altitude and Gliss with our roadie friends. Barb, Sue and Mark, we have pictures of you riding recumbents. I hope you'll convert, you'd be some fast hammering 'bent roadies.

### DAY 3 CREEDE TO LAKE CITY via SLUMGULLIAN

For me, the day of reckoning was here. This is six months of training coming to a head. Creede is at 8,852 feet elevation, we would ride up Spring Creek Pass to 10,901 feet, back down and then back up to 11,361 feet of the Slumgullian, the namesake, nemesis, soon to be conquered. This is the true test for a recumbent cyclist. Your life and view of the world will change once you've ridden the Slumgullian.

We enjoyed a fantastic breakfast at the Creede Hotel (I love this town). I had the peak performance power-breakfast of hot grain cereal and a Creede Hotel sticky bun. Even though I was having delusions over those breakfast burritos, I had to pass. Today I needed rocket fuel. Many of us told the cyclists' lie that we were going to hang back and cruise up the pass, others said the same. I don't think anyone believed it. Alan and the Opi (two Opuses) left early. Today, the metallic pink Stratus was on the roof as Suki was stoking the Opus as the Ronster co-sagged in the van. Dale would have fun. Suki is lively and energetic as well as a strong rider. She wears color-coordinated cycling apparel and wears



Ed Weiss (Gliss/left) and John Cunningham (Gold Rush/right) on the last hill of the tour.

perfume making an impact with all of the other cyclists she meets. Suki had only been recumbent cycling for a year or so. She is a runner CSCC member and lives with JC in Peyton, just outside of Colorado Springs. Her bike, the metallic pink Opus was built up by CSCC rider and trip wise guy, Doug Luttrell. Doug is a former Vision owner who has a Rans Rocket and surprised everyone with a new Tour Easy for the tour. Doug is a fun guy beneath all of the wise cracks. We'd have been in real trouble without his sag support van and willingness to pull double duty.

9am was like the start of a horse race, but in slow motion. Heading out of town I paced Mark Colliton and the Schlitters. I was feeling like a race horse in the gate and sped off to catch JC on the Gold Rush Replica. JC was after Allan, and the early crew who were up to an hour out in front. Rocketman John was back in the pack, though I knew he had his eye on where I was. While speeding through the countryside, I heard a thunk and a loud noise on my rear tire. I stopped to find my Angletech bag on the ground. One of the envelope seams that hold it to the top of the seat had ripped. Quickly I remounted it using the side straps. Okay, so I had it packed pretty good—call it RCN torture testing. Just then Rocketman John and Lady Roadie Barb (on her Cannondale) came by pacing me. I could see what

was happening. This was a group on the fast track to the top of Slumgullian. I needed to make a decision. Hang back, or get in with this fast crowd that was just a bit out of my league. Hell, this was the best ride of my life, and could be the best cycling day of my life. I thought to myself, I am going for it! Rocketman John, Barb and myself quickly started a routine where we'd operate a systematic paceline to the benefit of us all. Soon we were in the front of the pack with only JC and the early birds out front. Within an hour we motored into one of many beautiful Rocky Mountain vistas which was the decloaking port of entry for Dave and Dot, swapping Opus riding positions so as not to punish either rider too long on that one wedge seat. Ed and JC were there as well. Preparing for the ascent up Spring Creek Pass, I slammed some wood pulp in the form of a power bar. Bizarrely, it tasted good...deja vu.

The trio was rolling. John "Rocketman" Williams from Philomath, Oregon, Barb Butler on her Cannondale R500 triple, from Colorado Springs and myself on an Angletech V-Rex headed for the cycling ascent of our lives. The day was perfect, not a cloud in the sky and we had a tailwind. Some of the riders were talking about a waterfall in between passes that was not to be missed. John, Barb and I were on a mission and rolled out. It is difficult

to climb in the Rockies, but with training and adequate gearing, it was not as hard as you would expect. I could not use my 3x7 granny or Barb and Rocketman John would leave me in the dust. I had to spin in the middle chainring, draft them and only drop into granny when they did. We climbed, and we climbed and we climbed. Surprisingly we passed JC on the Gold Rush. The only rider out front was early bird Allan on his Trek. Fast Ed on the Gliss was in hot pursuit of us, but enjoying his own Rocky Mountain (fast) pace.

At this point in the game, the lead three bikes on the Slumgullian are a 31.5 pound (+ junk in the bag) V-Rex GL63, a Rocket Saturn-V and a Cannondale 500. JC lost us in the climb because of a gearing glitch. Many 'bent riders want big gears and don't realize that they may be able to keep faster speeds spinning in lower mid range gears up hills. I learned this from Gardner Martin last year when I thought my test SWB was fast up hills. He asked me to compare gearing and I was climbing in a much lower gear on the SWB. I had a 24/46/53 crankset on my old Gold Rush Replica. Gardner suggest I change my gearing to a 24/40/53 and learn to spin in my middle chainring. This along with better fitness has allowed me to spin in the middle chainring up all but the very steepest hills and use my large chainring more often for flat land

cruising. The moral of this story is select an adequate middle chainring to allow easy spinning/climbing. Don't be too quick to put huge gears on a bike. If you dump into your granny too early, you'll climb slow regardless of what kind of recumbent you are riding. It can make a difference between climbing at 7-9 mph or 3.5-5 mph. John Forester in *Effective Cycling* says a road racer can spin at 26mph in a 94 gear inch gear. And be sure to spend more time tweaking and fueling the engine.

The Spring Creek summit was a welcomed sight. We took some fast pictures and hit the road. As we descended I was in the #3 pace position (back). Rocketman John was already in his speed tuck and Barb was on his tail. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Allan in the bushes holding his tube in the air while having a smoke. The sag was behind us so with this opportunity to take the lead, so we left early bird Allan at the top of Spring Creek with a flat tire. Barb was really getting an effective draft off of our low bikes. I had forgotten just how torturous a head wind can be on a wedgie. They hardly even affect 'bent riders by comparison. We named Barb's effective draft the "Recumbent Vortex."

We raced down the windy backside of Spring Creek Pass. It was here that we missed the turnoff for the waterfall, but getting to the top of Slumgullian was our mission. Rocketman John, Barb and I had made a pact. We would climb together, pace each other, help one another and cross the summit as a team. It sounded like a plan, but I still thought I was a bit out of my league. This was serious business now. The downhill was over and now we're climbing the Slumgullian. At some points, it's a 7% grade and it goes on for miles. The air is getting thinner as we approached 10,000 feet. The Rocky Mountain air has me in a constant buzz. I am actually feeling quite high and loving every second of it. The adrenaline, the endorphins, and the camaraderie of our 3-rider Slumgullian ascent team. At one point, we're climbing with a tail wind and keeping a 16-18 mph paceline at times while climbing up the pass. Besides riding and climbing, we did manage to talk quite a bit. At times, we had to remind ourselves to be quiet, ride and climb. We worked as a good team. It's funny how close you can feel to other riders in a situation like this. Before today, I had probably only spoken a few words with Roadie Lady Barb. Now we're climbing the last few hundred feet



Doug Luttrell climbs Slumgullian Pass on his new Easy Racer Tour Easy—Bob Meierhans.



Mark Colliton on the prototype Rans Limbo (missing from the hanger in Hays, Kansas) motors along outside of Lake City, Colorado.

up the pass and its getting harder as the air gets thinner.

A diesel truck and Airstream went by with the smoke-screen option on full blast. Nothing like a dose of reality to let you know why these roads were built, certainly not for cyclists. We were now climbing in granny low (not using the 3x7) at 5-6 mph. At about 11,000 feet I started

to lose it. I got too close to the cliff and gravel and lost my footing almost falling down. Starting out on a 7% grade can be tricky and my team mates were losing me. It was sink or swim time. I needed to catch up. I was now a block or so behind with a few miles and a few hundred feet of elevation to go. I quickly shifted into 3x7 granny low, acceler-

ated up to speed. A shot of adrenaline got me up with the team. We can see around the bend that we are almost there. The rush, buzz and high running through my body was beyond words. I was ranting and raving (so what else is new...). Rocketman John and Barb weren't paying much attention. I started singing the theme song from the Monkees, "Hey, hey, we're the Monkees." Barb starts talking about eating an orange from her pack. While I'm humming this odd 60's TV tune, she keeps talking about this orange. Rocketman John is our rock of Gibraltar. He gets us into procession as we round the corner and see the sign, "Slumgullian Summit 11,361 feet." We cheered, ranted, raved. Our celebration timed perfectly as the sag pulled in. We took pictures, ate some pop tarts, and the best apricot Newtons that I've ever had, though I don't think they'd taste the same at sea level. And Roadie Lady Barb ate her Orange.

So much for life at the top of the world. We're going down. The descent into Lake City is a world class downhill event. It's nearly 3,000 feet down in ten or so miles. The switchbacks, cliffs, gravel, rough pavement and natural A/C (wind). At this point I wished that I had my Gold Rush Replica, though I was at a new spiritual level with my V-Rex. Rocketman John did the speed tuck and was gone. At one point, I saw him a mile or so down the pass. Barb stayed with me for a bit, as I obeyed the speed limits in the nearly circular switch backs. It's a lucky thing the local police didn't have radar or speed traps set for the Rocketman. That Saturn V was on rails around the corners and the 107-inch high gear didn't mean anything to Mr. Speed Tuck himself. At one point I slowed way down for a tight switchback with a particularly nasty cliff because I was feeling a bit of headwind. Barb was way back at this point and I wondered if she was okay. On a straight run, Barb tucked in behind me, the next thing I know she is letting out this happy scream WOW! She goes ripping past me like I was standing still. Later she said it was my draft, it grabbed her and catapulted her around me...the Recumbent Vortex again. Rolling into Lake City was like a surreal roller coaster. Looking right and looking left, I took the fast tour and was #3 behind Rocketman John and Roadie Lady Barb into Moose's Western Bell Motel. Our rooms were ready and we had a gorgeous vista point from the deck to cheer in the other riders.

Rans' John Schlitter is an animal. He's an old roadie, airplane pilot, motorcycle rider and he's just too damn competitive for his own good. I am sure his wife Janice will agree. They experienced what has come to be known as Slumgullian road rash. In one of the tight switchbacks, John pushed it too hard, lost it, tried to correct and the road limo Screamer went down in the gravel. A few bandages and a bruised ego and all was better. It's a lucky thing I was carrying that first aid kit (thanks to my Girl Scout co-leader wife, Marilyn). Janice has a new command over her drag-brake. Having spent lots of 'bent time with Janice, she's a real trooper and really co-powers that Screamer well.

Somewhere near Slumgullian Randy Johnson lost his footing and snagged his Magura line with his shoe. He lost his front brake and nobody had a syringe or Magura service kit. Lu Lu (cow painted Presto) was due for a break. Lu Lu rested out the rest of the tour from the roof of the sag van. Randy would ride stoker on Dale's Opus for day 4.

Since we had missed a real lunch again, we snacked at the local grocery store. Dinner was late, so some of us ventured into town and found a delectable establishment called Poker Alice in downtown Lake City. Mark Colliton, John and Janice Schlitter and myself ate another gourmet meal in another Rocky Mountain paradise. I had the Cannibal pizza named for the lurid side of Lake City where Alfred Packer ate his prospecting party in a snowstorm back in the winter of 1874. The pizza was very good.

Back at Moose's motel, the crew was having dinner on the veranda. We crashed the party, sat down and enjoyed their company and spinning our yarns. So ends the best cycling day of my life.

#### DAY 4 LAKE CITY TO GUNNISON

At this point, we're trying to make it last. Nobody wants to go home. The gang is much closer than any previous day and we're having fun. At breakfast we anticipated our final day on the road back to Gunnison. The folks at Moose's treated us exceptionally well and the food was great. I finally ate enough breakfast and decided I'd just hang back and enjoy the ride today.

Later in the morning we were taking group pictures out front and realized some of the riders had left already. The Schlitters had snuck out on the Screamer, early bird Allen

actually made it back to Gunnison *before* breakfast (that doesn't count). But that's what you get for leaving before the sun comes up.

Mark Colliton told me that he changed his mind and I could call him for the "Slum" next year. He's acclimated to the elevation and mastered the Rans Limbo on Slumgullian Pass. He says it's a fast bike and handles well, for a long bike..... (what do you expect from the co-designer of the V-Rex). We joke that the Limbo won't see Kansas again. We'll just keep our fingers crossed that Rans will build the Limbo (1999?).

Rolling out of Lake City I had a feeling that this perfect trip was too close to being over, and too soon. Rocketman John and I got together and tried to recruit a recumbent pace line, but couldn't get enough interest. This is one of the most beautiful rides in the world, as our tour winds out of Lake City and along the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River. Kelvin told me this stretch of the road had been a really spiritual journey for him last year and he was right.

We climbed another pass or two (small ones), had a near-run in with a bull while passing through a free range. A lonesome downhill ended at the Blue Mesa Reservoir. And then the dreaded sight—cars and traffic.

I was trying to catch up with Rocketman and the Schlitters. Barb stopped to talk with early birds Dave and Dot decloaked at the rest area. We were re-entering civilization—culture shock as I rode the last 7 miles into Gunnison alone.

This sunny Colorado day quickly came to an end as I rode into the Gunnison Airport parking lot. Some of us were not anxious for the trip to end, so we had an early dinner at Mario's in Gunnison that turned into a fun goodbye party. We then drove back to Colorado Springs through one of the most intense thunder storms I've ever witnessed.

While out on the road aspects of your life seem to take on a clearer perspective. The mountains, the air, the sun, good friends and the mystical state of Colorado that you just have to experience for yourself. I learned just how few possessions a person actually needs. No TV, no radio, no computer... just a good 'bent, some water, food and maybe somebody to chat with as the miles roll by. Life can sometimes feel too complicated, but it's really not.

And so ends the tour they call the Silver Thread—Slumgullian.

#### SILVER THREAD TEAM

The Slumgullian Tour is a tra-



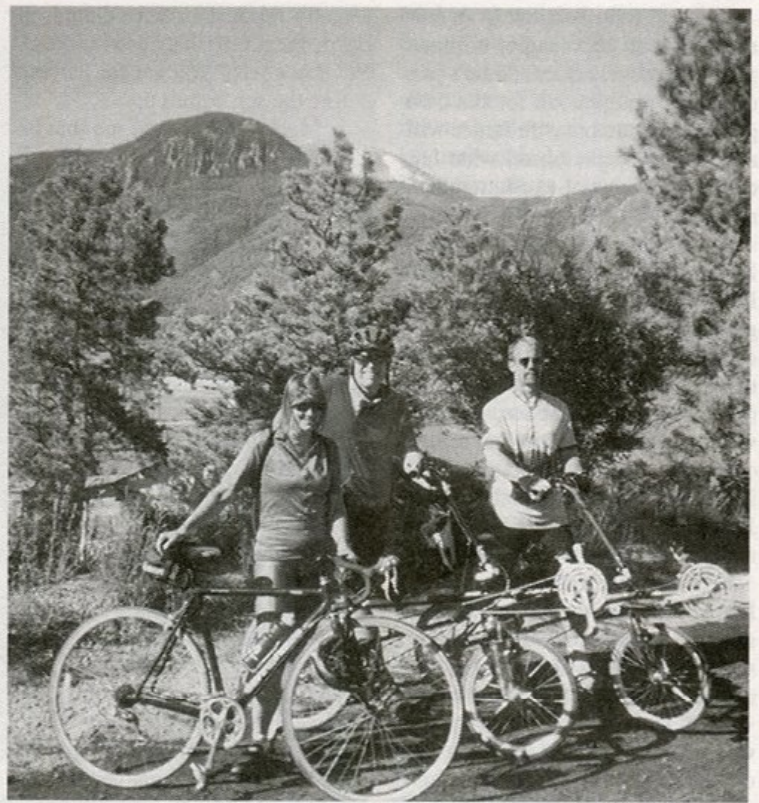
*This is the proof that I, Robert Bryant, made it to the top of Slumgullian Pass. The bike is a '97 Angletech V-Rex GL63.*



*This is John "The Rocketman" Williams in a rare shot when he wasn't 20 miles in front of the pack. The bike is a '97 Rocket Saturn V.*



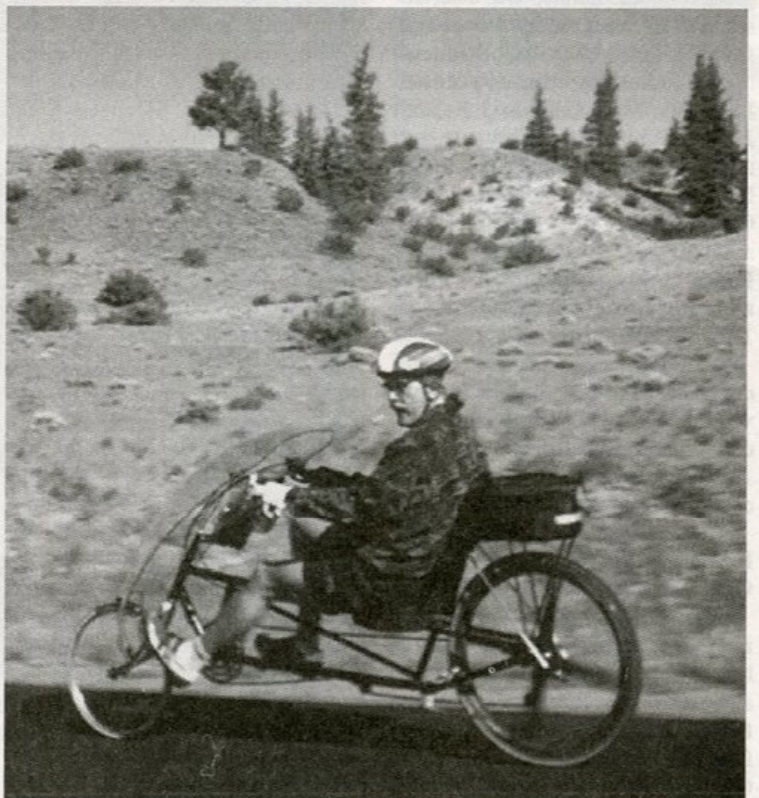
Bob Meierhans (left), Dave Kievit & Dot Harrop cloaked in on the Opus tandem and Doug Luttrell on his new Easy Racer Tour Easy relax at the summit.



Barb "Roadie Lady" Butler on her Cannondale, Bob Bryant on his Angletech V-Rex GL63 and John "The Rocketman" Williams on his Rans Rocket Saturn-V were the first three to make the Slumgullian Summit. John was the first to make it down the mountain to Lake City.



Ed Weiss (left), John Schlitter and the Gliss at the Gunnison Airport after the ride. Ed and other riders got new Rans loaners for the tour.



Fast JC (John Cunningham) on his Easy Racer Gold Rush Replica. John had the fastest speed of the tour—59mph down North Pass.

...ition for the Colorado Springs Cycling Club (CSCC). It's a low key, relatively low cost event for 25 riders. It started as one couple's private tour and is now considered the highlight of the cycling year by many CSCC riders. CSCC members John

Cunningham and Sue Martin have been riding the silver Thread for years. John and Sue brought Kelvin Clark (Angletech) into the Silver Thread Team. Kelvin has now made it his yearly event and spear-heads, coordinates everything and is the

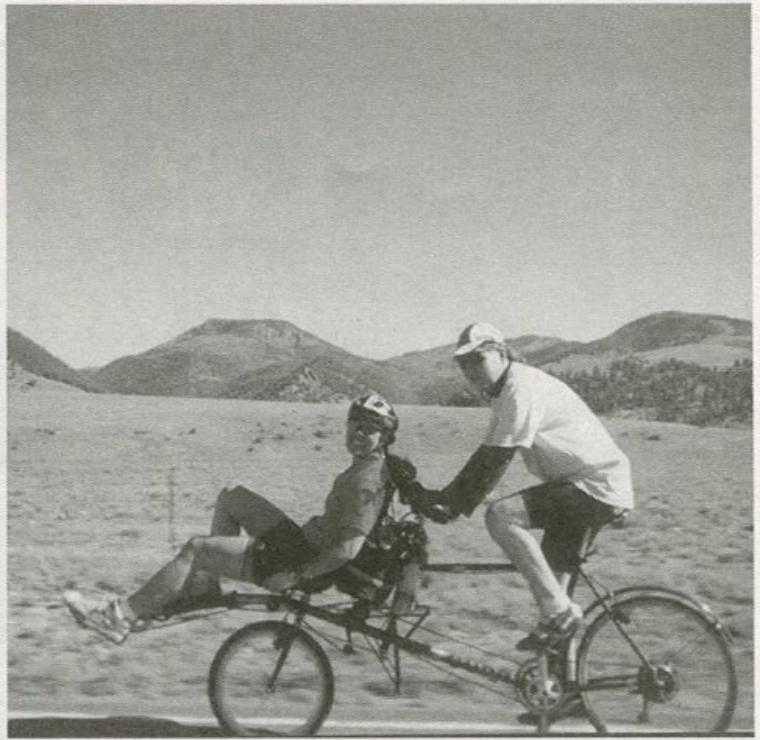
problem solver, peace-maker and proved that patience is indeed one of his strongpoints. A special thank you to our new friends in the CSCC, Doug and Alicia Luttrell (sag) and especially to our fearless leader Kelvin Clark. If you want to ride the

Silver Thread Tour in 1998, planning starts the first of the year. Previous years' riders and CSCC riders are offered first preference and then Angletech customers. Those interested should contact Kelvin Clark at Angletech ph#719/687-7475. □





Bob Bryant, Janice Schlitter and John Schlitter at the Gunnison Airport.

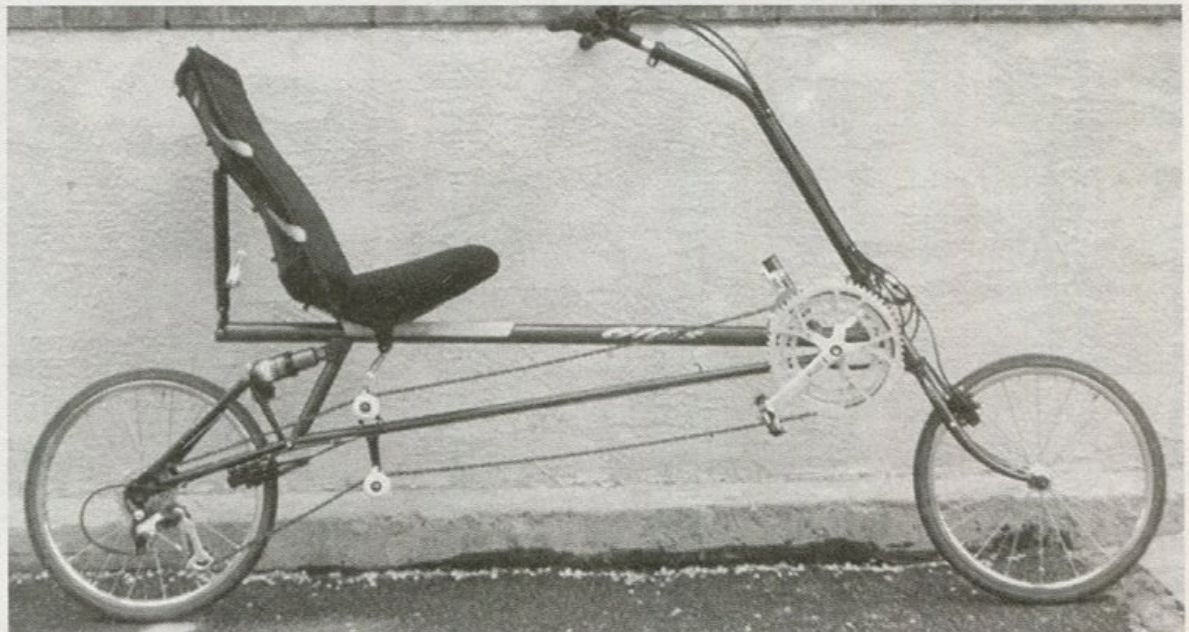


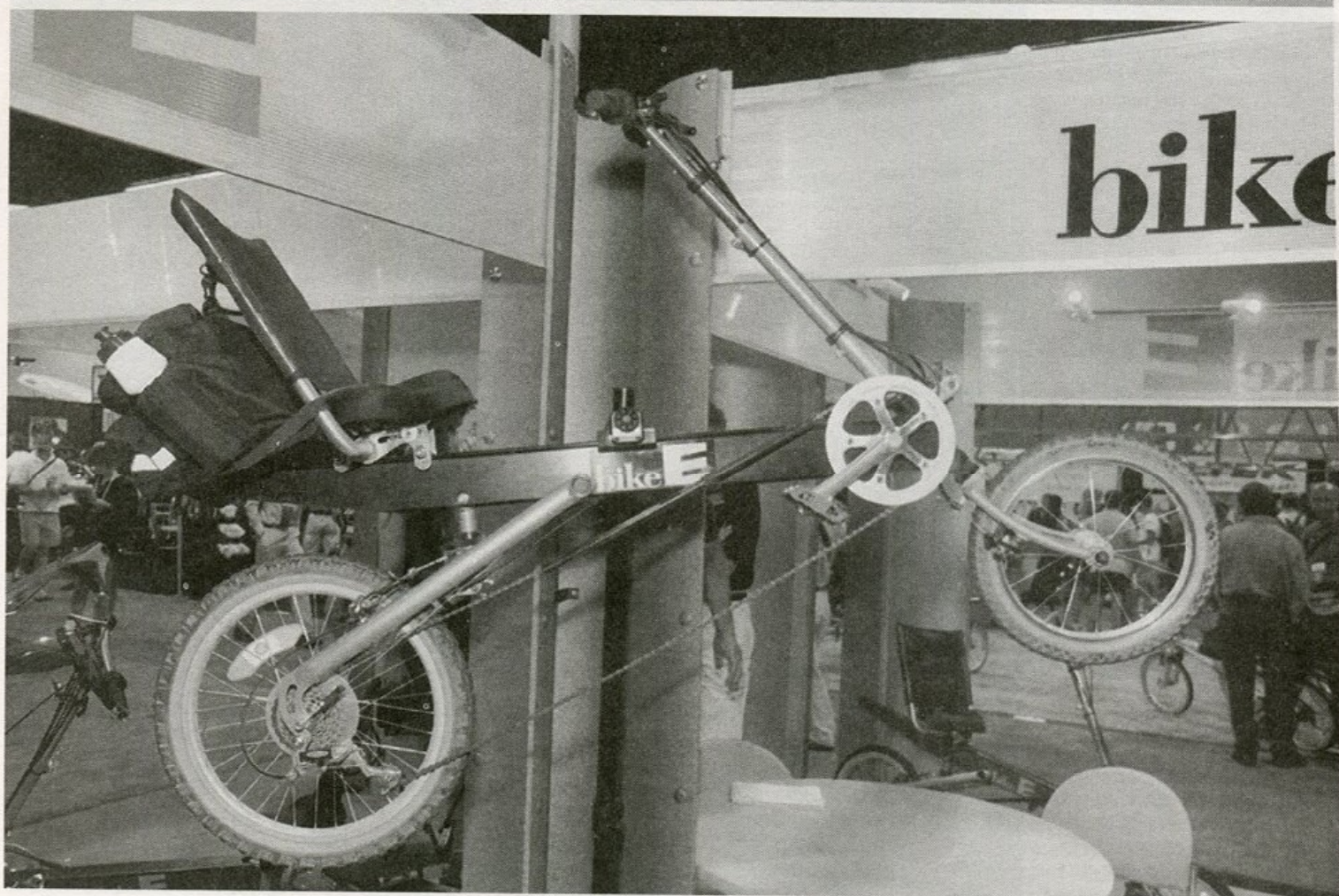
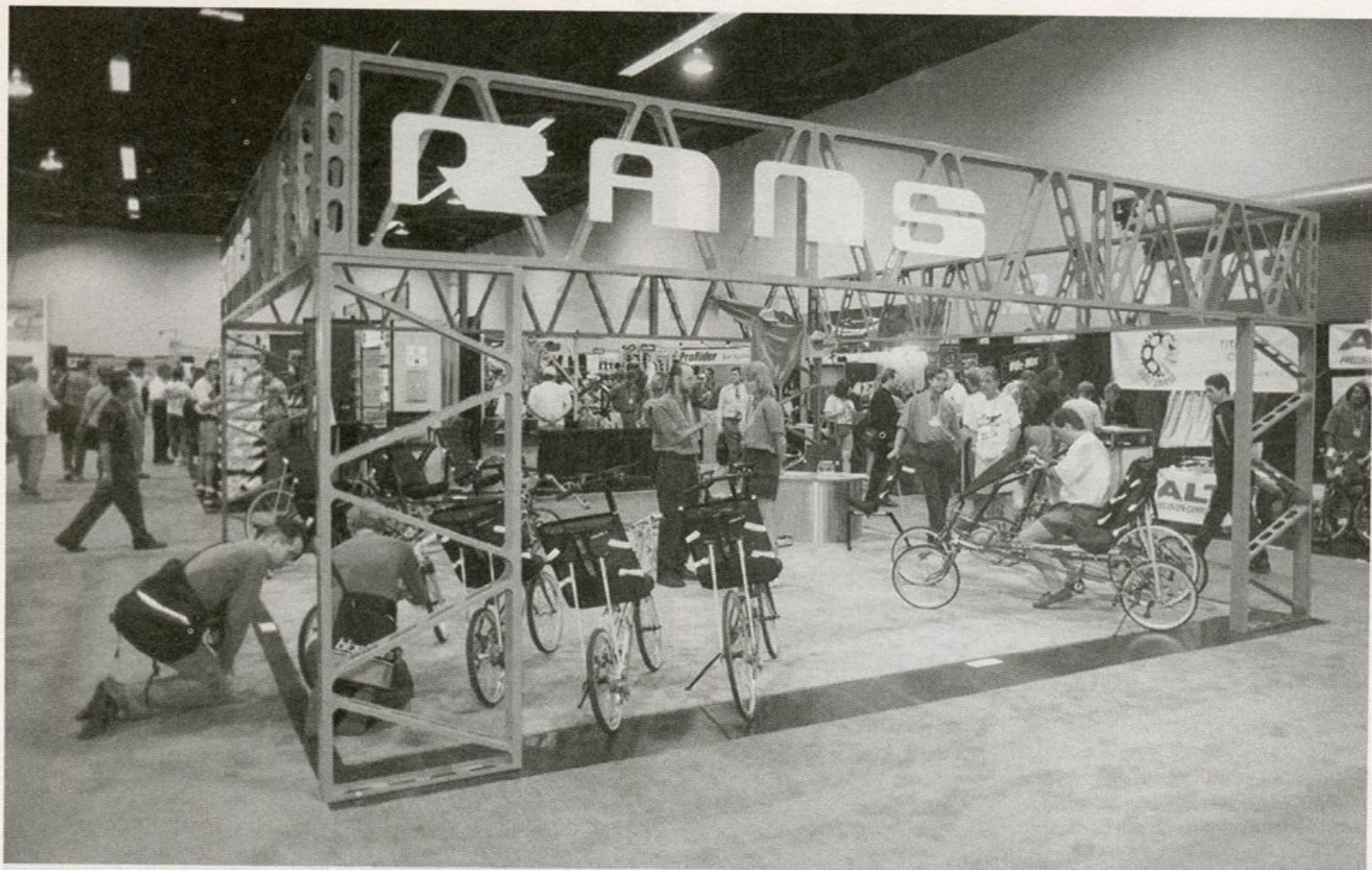
Dale Clark and Suki Sommervold somewhere in Colorado.

**RANS LIMBO:** The top-secret Rans Limbo (Gold Rush Killer). The Limbo is a lowered hard-tail version of the Gliss with a lean-forward performance riding position and higher bottom bracket than other LWB machines. Be sure to write the Rans Company if you would like them to build this bike. JC was lucky to sneak this shot of the Limbo while it wasn't hidden away under lock and key (or Mark Colliton and many others weren't riding it). Spy photo courtesy of John Cunningham.



**RANS GLISS:** This is the 1998 Rans Gliss LWB ASS rear suspension. The Gliss is a phenomenal new bike and undoubtedly the shape of LWB 'bents to come. The trick is in the seat to bottom bracket arrangement that offers near perfect ergonomics in a very adjustable riding position. The comfort of a LWB, the slightly higher BB and compactness of the dual 20's, and the near perfection of the Rans seat. Photo courtesy of John Cunningham.





## Interbike Or Bust.....RCN Does LA

*"Hot New Downhill Racing Products, Hurl, Bob Celebrates his Birthday....and 'Bents rule"*

by Robert J. Bryant

Interbike is the yearly bicycle industry trade-show. What goes on here never ceases to amaze me. There's always something new, cool stuff, blatant sexism, stuff you'd never use and other stuff you gotta have. From a recumbent standpoint, this year's show theme seemed more ridiculous than ever. The primary trend is downhill mountain bike racing. Nearly every company that sells mountain bikes had a new downhiller. These look more like moto-cross motorcycles with pedals than anything else. Not knowing much about the scene, I asked RCN staff mountain biker, Mark Colliton, what the hell this was all about. Mark says downhill racing is popular because it's exciting, but mainly because its easy to televise as they race down ski slope-like tracks. I don't know anyone who will buy a downhill bike or race them.... So why all the effort for such a limited market is beyond me.

The retro-cruiser style bikes are still very popular. *Schwinn* and *GT* seem to have the biggest Harley-like lines. Heck, *GT* even makes a Harley bicycle. They even have gas tanks. I'm told they cost \$1800 and sell out every year. The stretch cruisers were harder to find this year, though *GT* still makes one under the *Dyno* label. The best micro-trend in the retro field is that this style is expanding into real city and mountain bikes in many of the lines. There were many comfort-oriented SUB's (Sport Utility Bikes) at the show. This is a great trend and it may actually lead to recumbents at some point.

Another sub-plot of the show were the companies entering the high-performance wheel-chair market. *GT* and *Cannondale* have high performance wheel chairs, hand-crank trikes and other special needs vehicles. Apparently, this is a profitable market, though marketing them at a bike show seemed a bit strange. An imaginary pitch might go something like this, "If you get maimed on your downhill racer—we have we got the bike for you."

The show swag was noticeable. *Gary Fisher* was doing his thing. He's dressed up in drag, as a nerd



*Pashley hostess Veronica Marie Te Velde shows off the new Pashley PDQ (former Presto)—John Riley.*

and posing with a morphed Barbie in his latest catalog. And then there's the babes and puking guys. More on that later. The show seemed more corporate this year. Small companies doing fringe development were noticeably absent.

### 'BENT ACTION

*BikeE* was truly the hit of the Interbike show with the new Air Tech Suspension model. They were a *Bicycling Magazine* Editor's Choice nominee and have won the award (see current issue). The *BikeE* Air Tech is also RCN's Best New Bent of Show. At the Dirt Demo, *BikeE* was one of two manufacturers offering 'bent demos—on and off road (*Pashley* was demo'ing the *PDQ*).

*BikeE* has been working on the Air Tech for 18 months and it shows. The refinement level is incredible

and it rides wonderfully. The Air Tech utilizes the Cane Creek AD5 air shock with a full 2.5" of suspension travel. The design goal was to avoid suspension pogo and they have succeeded. The pivot point is farther forward, nearly under the seat. The aesthetic appeal of the *BikeE* has been increased tenfold with this update. Air Tech models are available in All-Around and RoadE models in two frame sizes with the XL fitting riders to 6'9".

What *BikeE* doesn't know is that they have single-handedly invented a new sport, offroad recumbent riding. Now, I know others have offroad models, but none work as well as the *BikeE* Air Tech. There is no "offroad" model, though *BikeE* shows an Air Tech getting air in promo material and the fat 20/16 knobs are a perfect fit and match.

This slick new suspension *BikeE* is available now with prices starting at \$995—which is the deal of the year! *BikeE* has a new web site at [www.bikee.com](http://www.bikee.com)

*RANS*, the recumbent industry powerhouse, has been working overtime perfecting the 1998 line—which is available now! The *Vivo* is the new SWB 44" wheelbase ASS with dual suspension: Cane Creek AD4 shock, Ballistic suspension fork with Flip It riser, Magura brakes, ESP 9.0 24 speed drivetrain and a Ritchy Logic crankset (\$2050). I've been riding the *Vivo* now for over a month and am spoiled rotten. It is a combo dual 20" wheeled *Rocket/V-Rex* with the best full suspension in the 'bent industry. The new 1998 *V-Rex* (\$1645) has a lower seat, Campy Mirage crankset, GripShift ESP 7.0 drivetrain, ESP brake levers, Shimano LX V-Brakes and a Flip It stem standard. The classic *Stratus* is dressed in gorgeous *Mystic Violet* (metallic purple), has a Campy Mirage crankset, GripShift ESP 7.0 drivetrain and Shimano Deore LX cantilever brakes. The *Gliss* (\$1930) is in production and has the same drivetrain as the *Saturn V Rocket* and *Vivo* and is the shape of LWB recumbents to come. The feedback so far is this bike is special and quite possibly the smoothest riding LWB available. RCN's Ron Schmid rode it to the beach at the Bent Bash and absolutely loved it....and Ron can be hard to please.

Not to be left out is the hot new *Tailwind*. This compact has dual 20" wheels, a GripShift ESP 5.0 drivetrain, Alivio cantilevers front and rear and the *CroMo* round tube frame has been updated with rear stays that run out to the bottom bracket. The *Tailwind* has been perfected for 1998. The balance and ride are incredible. The best part about the *Tailwind* is the price—\$995! This is bar-none, the best entry level enthusiast recumbent deal on the planet. Not to be outdone, the *SWB Rocket* (\$1150) costs a bit more and has similar specs to the *Tailwind* and has an upgrade version called the *Saturn V* (\$1750). Two tandems in the *Screamer* and *Screamer IC* (independ-

dent coast) are available for 1998.

According to his wife, **S & S Couplers** Steve Smilnack is a recumbent fanatic. S & S couplers are these neat aluminum torque couplings installed by sawing your bike in half. Actually, this must be done by licensed S & S builders. The couplers are silver brazed or TIG welded in place allowing the bikes to come apart. In the booth were S & S equipped Ryan DuPlex, Vanguard, Greenspeed trike and a Lightning P-38. Couplers are available in these sizes: 3/4", 1", 1-1/8", 1-1/4", 1-3/8", 1-1/2", 1-3/4", 1-7/8" and 2." (S & S: ph#916/771-0235).

Ian Sims from **Greenspeed** flew in to do the show. Ian is a friendly, soft-spoken recumbent tricycle expert. I was able to try out the Schlumph Mountain drive, ride the new S & S coupled Greenspeed (removable seat and Conti GP tires). The new model retails for about \$3800 USD shipped. I have yet to see another recumbent trike that even comes close to the Greenspeed.

Steve Hansel had the new **Linear Compact Long Wheelbase Mach III** (also known as the EvoGLIDE) and two LWB models. Linear now uses 3x7 hubs on all models with no front derailleur, unless you opt for the 63-speed upgrade. Also on display was an optional chain idler and headtube/stem computer mount. Travel bags are coming, as are seat-back bags.

"A Cycle for the next Millennium" according to the brochure about the new **SideWinder** trike. This is a 55-pound 3x20" wheel recumbent trike with front-wheel drive, rear-wheel steering, an inboard disk brake, and dual joy-stick steering that connects via rod to a front fork on the back of the bike. Some readers may have seen or tried this trike at People Movers.

**Huffy/ReBike** had a slick booth with newly updated ReBikes and ReTrikes as well as the usual dose of "warm fuzzies." The bikes are entry level compacts with 20" and 26" rear wheels matched with 16" front wheels. ReBike models are listed in the '97 RCN Buyers Guide and available from recumbent dealers throughout North America.

Matt Dekker finally received the new **Pashley PDQ** (formerly the Counterpoint Presto). Riding the PDQ brings strong feelings of déjà vu. This Brit bike is British Racing Green with all of the accouterment of the final Presto in the lower seat, gutter-pipe seat suspension and a Pashley fold forward handlebar. The drivetrain is a Sachs 3x7/ 21-speed



The '98 V-Rex has a 26/20 wheel combo with the 24/20 steering geometry and a 2" longer wheelbase—very dialed!



ReBike showed updated versions of the 707, 818, 2600 and ReTrike, all of which are in production—John Riley.

and the bike has V-brakes. The '98 PDQ is nicely done and Presto lovers will be proud. The new bikes are noticeably nicer than my Moulton APB in finish quality.

The French Canadians were in attendance and had the **Peugeot Quetzal** parked outside the booth. The '98 line includes the T-105, 105-speed STX/Alivio/GripShift, aluminum framed bike (\$1799); the C-105 105-speed Altus/Acera-X/GripShift equipped model has a CroMo frame (\$1099); and the C-90 Shimano Altus/Ty22/GripShift equipped model *only* has 90-speeds (\$939). All models have a mid-drive (intermediate cassette cluster).

After the show, Quetzal shipped us a test bike, but in a frame-size that is too small for me to ride. The aluminum model doesn't have any adjustment in the steering rod. They will be sending the new CroMo

C-105 for testing soon.

The full **Comfort Cycle** crew from Ohio and Texas were in attendance, talking to lots of folks and giving lots of test rides on the Chaise 3 (Interbike demo floor and 'Bent Bash). The Chaise 3 is a unique 36-speed, two wheel in back trike with a hammock sling seat, mid-drive and 3x20" wheels. I am expecting a Chaise 3 test bike any day now and a test will be done soon. This trike was a hit at the Interbike test track.

The **Para-Cycle** is a recumbent trike (two wheels in back) that is taking cycling to new heights, literally. This is a flying recumbent parachute trike that will cruise at 26-28 mph in the sky under gas power. This interesting flying recumbent trike sells for \$8995 (407/877-7129).

The **ATP Vision** crew was in attendance but keeping a low profile. They were not at the Dirt Demo, nor

were they at the 'Bent Bash, and there was no place in LA to preview or ride the updated models. The big news is that suspension has been added to all SWB/LWB models. The wheelbases have been increased as well. Unfortunately, much of the added length is in the hind end. Vision will offer 16" and 20" specific models, ASS or USS. The new VR41 (\$1195) is an R-40 SWB with an elastomer rear suspension and weighs 31-pounds. The VR43 (\$1790) is an R-42 SWB with an elastomer rear suspension and component upgrades, weighing in at 29-pounds. The VR46/47 (\$2025-\$3275) is the R-45 light-weight frame with a Cane Creek AD8 Air Dampened rear shock, RX100 or XT/Ultega parts, weighing in at 25.5 pounds. The new high end R-45/46 has narrower USS bars with STI brake lever shifters. The suspension rear ends have a high pivot point with Haluzak-like monostays. Suspension forks are an available option on all single models for about \$155 upgrade. The Metro is basically unchanged aside from a few much needed drivetrain tweaks and another price increase. The Vision crew has been working overtime nearly doubling the size of their lineup for '98, moving into new digs in Seattle and bringing powdercoat painting facilities in house. The '98 models will not be available for a few months.

#### TECH STUFF

**Shimano** has a new commitment to SUB/city bikes and has a bunch of neat stuff. The best is probably the **Nexave** group with a super-wide 11-34 cassette which will offer a super-wide gearing range. Nexave has an interesting new reverse shifting button/lever system with a readable gear indicator dial and dual roller brakes. Shimano's 105 and Ultega triple components are beautiful. The Ultega triple crank has hollow crank arms. The Ultega even has an optional computer to go with the gruppo. Angletech has already announced an Ultega/Nexave equipped model for 1998, as well as a Rapid Fire option. Vision will be using the Shimano STI brake lever shifters on high end models.

The **SRAM GripShift ESP** line of derailleurs/shifters is the best I've seen. They work particularly well on the new '98 Rans models. The shifting is quick and precise with the shortest cleanest throws of any system. Even the entry level 21-speed 5.0 on the Rocket and Tailwind are awesome. Angletech will be spec'ing ESP for '98 including the 9.0 SL



The new '98 Rans Vivo has full suspension, GripShift ESP 9.0 and Magura brakes, all for \$2050. We brought the twin of the show bike home and are enjoying every moment on this very smooth, stable and excellent handling full suspension SWB.

which has cold forged parts. There are ESP brake levers as well and they are stock on the Rans V-Rex. There is a rumor that SRAM GripShift has purchased Sachs which will make it the industry powerhouse. Watch out Shimano!

**Rohloff** debuted the Speedhub 500/14, a 3-pound internal 14-speed hub designed for road racing bikes. They plan to start delivering in 1998 with prices starting at \$740 just for the hub alone (510/527-6650). We'll be waiting for Zach's review.

I was finally able to try the **Schlumph Mountain Drive** 2-speed bottom bracket/crankset internal gear on a 1998 **Greenspeed trike**. This set-up is fantastic and perfect for riders wanting a totally internal drivetrain (when matched with a Nexus-7 or Sachs Elan 12-speed or Rohloff-14 speed hubs). The low-gear is very low. When you want to shift it into high range, you tap an easy to move button (where the crank-bolt dust plug would be) with your heel or toe. It only takes a few minutes to get it down and it works wonderfully. Greenspeed's Ian Sims reports that there is very little friction loss and

he has been using the Schlumph with no problems.

**Ballistic International** has a full line of 20" recumbent-specific suspension forks. They are forged CNC machined 6061-T6 aluminum with a 6-point fixing brace and steel coil/MCU elastomer suspension in each fork leg. They come set up for cantilever or V-brakes and will be available on Rans and Vision recumbents for 1998. Available options are fittings for Magura brakes, oil-cartridge unit, and even a 16" wheel version. Ballistic forks come in black, yellow, red, blue, green and high polish. Just across the hall from Rans was RST who said that they will also produce a recumbent fork.

Another serious trend in the bike world is electric powered bikes. The industry leaders seem to be **GT Charger Bicycles**. These are in production and available from GT Rightway and designed by Dr. Paul MacCready of AeroVironment, a long time RCN reader. Riding the Charger was an incredible experience. The system requires pedalling before it starts up. The faster you pedal, the more electric assistance

you get. On the 21-speed mountain bike version, the system taps out at 20-mph, which is California Law. However, the RCN crew was able to sneak out of the test area with a special Police version that most definitely winds up faster. The developers of the Charger had a Lightning F-40 with the guts of the Charger built into it. I don't see any recumbent possibilities, unless you want to only use the system guts (complete bicycle only).

For the first time ever, I was able to try a ZapFlash (Zap electric motor equipped mountain bike) with dual motors and a toggle power button on the handlebars. Again, the system is designed for power assist, but boy was it fun. The dual motored Flash will cruise, albeit short term, at 20 mph with no assist. I rode it on grass, off-road and on road. The Zap system has definite recumbent possibilities. In fact, if somebody out there is mounting them on 'bents, let me know. Recumbents could be the perfect platform for a Zap motor. The Flash mountain bike model is \$1575, the Electric Cruiser is \$899. The drive-system is \$449-\$499 in

three versions.

#### MORE COOL STUFF

Have you had problems finding a decent pump. My Topeak Joe Blow blew up at three months old, so I am back to using my 20-year old Schwinn pump. In the 1998 Schwinn catalog they are offering a new **Schwinn Typhoon pump** with a polished brass barrel, oil filled pressure gauge and a leather wrapped hardwood handle. I am surprised at how few good bicycle pumps are made.

**Timberwolf** has a trick new trailer to tow your bicycles on. The trailer frame is designed for personal watercraft use, so it has bearing-buddies, larger diameter wheels, powdercoat finish and some neat additional storage options. Bike mounting options can be customized as well as options for canoes, kayaks and hauling other junk. Prices start at just \$795 (ph#916/652-6759).

**BOB Trailers** introduced their new "COZ" (COZmopolitan). This is a medium priced urban assault trailer. Its distinguishing feature is a Rubbermaid Action Packer box that the trailer disassembles and folds



The 1998 Rans Gliss LWB. Our test Gliss arrives very soon—John Riley.

into. The Coz will sell for \$199 and be available this fall.

#### WEDGIE-FEVER

After my season's road bike experience, I almost completely ignored the dying segment of road-racing bikes. The only ones that look really cool to me are the new *Schwinn Paramount* road bikes, *Rivendell All Arounder* and I am a closet-fan of the tricked out beach cruisers. Schwinn and GT/Dyno/Harley have full lines, but my favorites are the *Electra Cruisers* (ph#760/632-7094/www.

electrabike.com). Benno and Jeano are two German guys who dig the California beach scene and build cool bikes for others who dig it too. They make traditional 1-speeds, Nexus bikes (internal gears), adult BMX cruisers, mountain bike cruisers and even a kid's cruiser. They also have a full line of clothes and options. Other models worthy of mention are the retro-cool Breeze Ignaz X with two-tone paint, a Nexus-7, CroMo frame and styling reminiscent of a 1937 Excelsior.

There was an odd cruiser/semi-recumbent called the *Seven-40-*

*Seven*. Its a stretch cruiser with a raked cantilevered X-frame, long chrome "chopper" forks and super high-boy handlebars. These are fairly inexpensive bikes. They are distributed through J & B in Miami (Gary Silva/J & B, ph#305/238-1866).

#### FOLDERS

The coolest upright folder that I saw at the show was a prototype from *Brew Racing Frames*. This X-frame dual 20" wheel bike had full suspension and a Nexus-7. The bike comes apart in 5 minutes. It has a Risse rear shock, Answer suspension

fork, weighs just 26 pounds and will be priced at \$1599 (ph#910/385-6847).

In a surprise move from the *Burley* (tandem and trailer fame) company, they have reintroduced the *Birdy* folder into the US market. The *Birdy* is a German high performance folder with a 7000 series aluminum frame, 18" wheels and available in 7-speed or 3x7/21-speed versions. The *Birdy* folds in 20-seconds, has full suspension and weighs 22-24 pounds. The prices will range from \$995-\$1250, which is more than the previous Jeep versions, but less than

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importing one from Germany (Burley/ph#541/687-1644).

**Dahon** is in the process of revamping their line of low priced folders. People Movers is a dealer and I've ridden the Nexus equipped 20" wheel cruiser and it's very nice. For 1998, Dahon has gone to more traditional headsets on all models (so you can now weld on a 'bent boom for a conversion). The new Novel model has 451mm 20" wheels, a CroMo frame, folds in 10-seconds and weighs just 26.5 pounds. The similar Omega has a Nexus-7 and weighs two pounds more (ph#626/305-5264). Dahon's are noticeably less expensive than the fancier competition.

### PUKING LOW LIFES

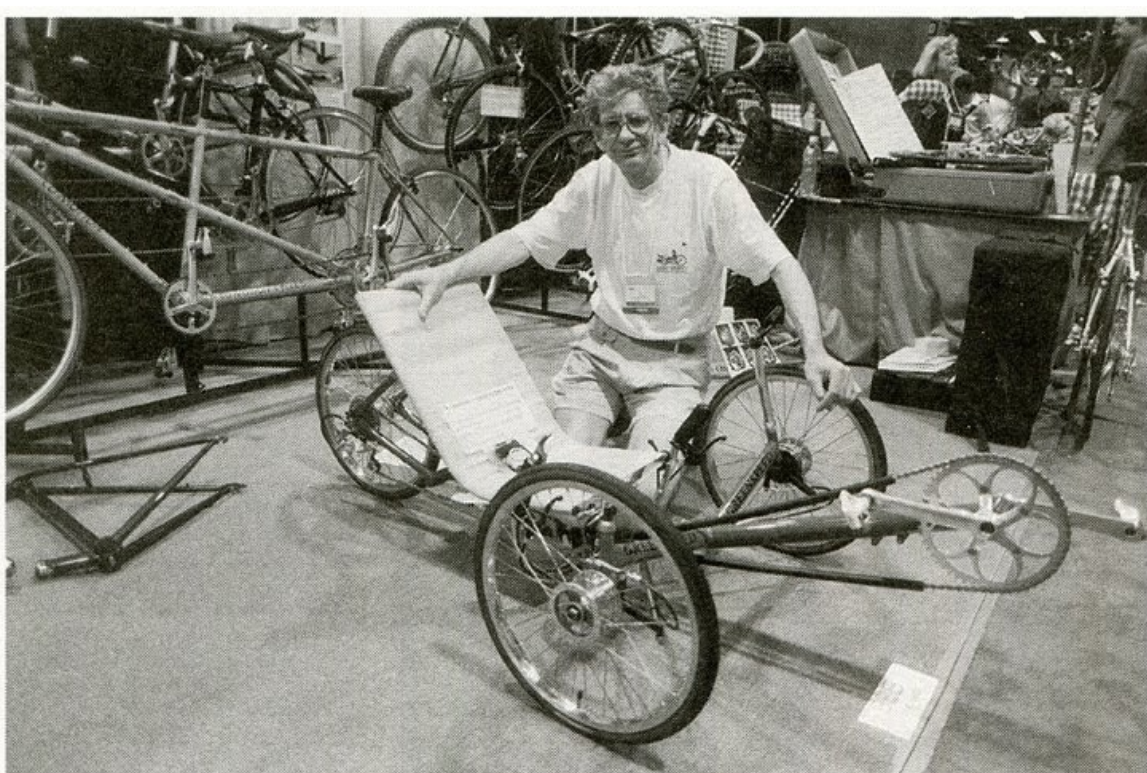
I first noticed the crowd ooh and aah while taking my afternoon siesta (in the Rans booth) stretched out on the new Rans Gliss. I was awakened from my Gliss bliss. Some low-lifes down the hall were standing on a table hurling to the howls of the crowd. The Puker was dressed wearing shorts and had bare feet and reggae-man hair. As it turns out, this questionable company was having a contest to see who could puke the most. The prize, it was reported, was an MTB brake bridge. This disgusting behavior went on for several minutes. The guy was obviously well practiced and good at his chosen vocation. The next thing we noticed was this guy running down the hall and around the Rans booth with Interbike security hot in pursuit. Some fellow puk-ees came running around the other side of the Rans booth and ram-blocked the guards to let their hurling cohort get away from the Interbike law. This kind of behavior is considered, by some, to be counterculture cool, though I am not in this group. We didn't read about this in the *Bicycle Retailer Show Daily* and I'd be willing to bet it won't turn up in *Bicycling*.

### BABES IN BIKELAND

The **Marzochi** camp wins the award for trashiest babes. The gals wore short, tight, green swirl dresses, with spike heel boots that came up above the knees and made some nasty espresso.

The **Dekker Service** booth had official hostess Veronica wearing a red union-jack dress to match the British Pashley/Moulton product line—a classy touch that undoubtedly increased booth traffic.

Dare I mention in this same paragraph—two really nice ladies that really ride bicycles—recumbent



The world's foremost trike builder, Ian Sims and his S & S coupler take-apart Greenspeed—John Riley.

bicycles that is. Michelle Eckroth is the wife of Lee Eckroth of **BikeE**, and Janice Schlitter is the wife of John Schlitter of **Rans**. They both put in their time at the show working their company booths just across the hall from each other. Both ladies really know about the bikes too. Michelle and Janice did a fantastic job both demo'ing bikes at the People Movers 'Bent Bash and answering questions of show attendees. They both rode out to the beach too. Janice and Michelle added a much needed female respectability at this show that is seemingly geared mainly to guys.

### 'BENT FAMILY

This was a really good trip for me. Stress levels were low and people were nice. Many of the 'bent manufacturers, dealers and RCN crew spent a lot of time together when away from the show. Several nights we had groups of 15-25 people together for dinner. The likes of **Rans, BikeE, Easy Racers, Ryan, People Movers, RCN** and many others were in attendance. With the successes that the industry has had this year defenses are down and friendships are forming. Unfortunately, there are still a few folks noticeably absent and seemingly in defense mode. The time for recumbents is coming. There will be enough customers for everyone and it's time to work together.

### BOB'S 'BENT BIRTHDAY

When on a bike, I am *not* an

easy target. My new found fitness has me at the front-end of the pack. Off the bike, I am a very easy target. Everywhere I went for dinner—for the 5 days of Interbike—somebody in our group told the waiter it was my birthday. I was used and abused and the target of mass humiliation. At the 'Bent Bash Gardner announced that it was my birthday and 150 people sang to yours truly. Throughout the course of the day, several people came up to offer personal birthday wishes. Over the week my acting job got better and better (as did the free desserts). I have now reached a professional level of surprise—pretending that it's my birthday. To those of you who are having a great deal of fun at my expense (Linda Wronski and Janice Schlitter)...just wait until next year.

### BEST NEW 'BENT of SHOW:

BikeE Air Tech suspension (\$1100). I rode it for an hour at the pre-Interbike Dirt Demo Day at the Irvine Regional Park in Orange. I had the dirty black Kobby tire demo (pg. 18) and rode it on-road, off-road, on single track, thick dusty dirt, up hills, on river beds, over rocks and I'm hooked. BikeE has invented a new sport with this bike—'Bent offroad. This was also my favorite mountain bike of the show. Riding the BikeE Air Tech was just near a religious experience. You can count on a full report upcoming in RCN. Lastly, these bikes are really available now! **First Runner Up:** Rans Vivo SWB

full suspension. I raced this one to the beach along with 50 or so other 'bent riders—awesome is the word. A Ballistic front fork, Cane Creek AD5 rear shock, Rans seat, Flip It stem, Magura's and ESP for about \$2,050. Recumbent enthusiasts, Rans has your number for the 1998 season. Pay close attention and plan ahead if a new bike is in your future.

### BEST 'BENT MFR. of SHOW:

And the awards goes to.....BikeE for taking a full fleet of BikeE's to the Dirt Demo and being so active in this Interbike tradition that some 'bent manufacturers shy away from. Inside the show, the island booth was very well done with one of each model, the (my) offroad version, all of their accessories and a video loop with their new TV commercial! The BikeE folks 'bent attitude and positive energy was contagious and it also caught the attention of the *Bicycling* Editors...and RCN.

**First Runner Up:** Rans for a full line of revamped and very cool bikes in the Vivo, V-Rex, Gliss and Tailwind. The pepto-green Rans booth structure is very cool. I was present when somebody tried to buy it off Randy Schlitter.

**BEST DRIVETRAIN of SHOW:** Greenspeed with Schlumph Mountain Drive (2-speed bottom bracket internal gear).

**BEST COMPONENT of SHOW:** GripShift ESP on the new Rans bikes.

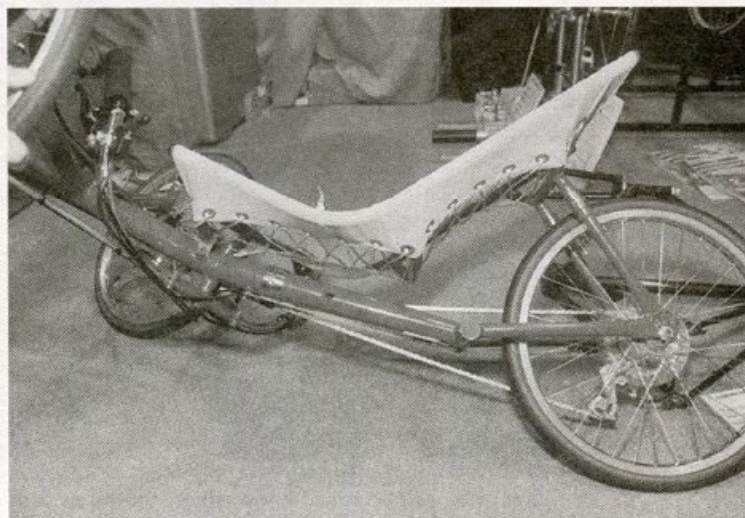
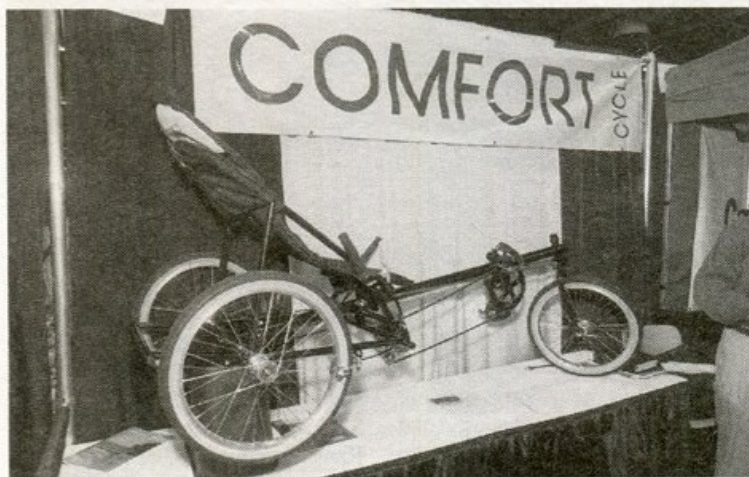
**BEST 'BENT PAINT JOB of SHOW:** Stratus Mystic Violet



ABOVE: The new 1998 Vision R-46 SWB full suspension—John Riley  
BELOW: The Comfort Cycle Chaise-3—John Riley.



The new 1998 Vision LWB full suspension—John Riley.



The Greenspeed GTC 20/20 Coupled (S & S) Touring Tricycle sells for approx. \$3700 USD—John Riley.

(purple wet spray/clear coat).

**BEST SURPRISE of SHOW:** Ian Sims of Greenspeed attending the show with a few of his cool trikes in the S & S booth and at the People Movers 'Bent Bash.

**BEST 'BENT PERSONALITY of SHOW:** Dick "The Godfather of Recumbency" Ryan is a piece of work. Dick worked (if you can call it that) in the S & S Coupler booth showing his bike, though I don't think the bike he raced to get completed for the show, the one that UPS lost, was ever set-up in time to be in

the show booth.

**BEST 'BENT EVENT:** People Movers 'Bent Bash, of course! 200 strong and growing! A few manufacturers from the show were not in attendance, this is a big boo boo. In regards to the bash, one manufacturer reportedly stated, "This isn't our market." Well, this is the RCN southern California readership (and well beyond), People Movers customers, recumbent manufacturers and dealers from around the world! Heck, *Bicycling's* Jim Langley and Ed Pavelka even came by to say hello.

The RCN Crew is always in attendance, heck, it was Bob's Birthday Party. If you attended Interbike and didn't go to the 'Bent Bash, shame shame. You have until next year, find a way to come.

**BEST RIDE:** Bob Bryant (Rans Vivo), Wild Bill Volk (custom S & B with tail box and Zzipper), Jim (P-38 rider from Las Vegas) and Steve Nash (custom long and low racer from Seattle) drag raced to the beach. Our average speeds were over 21+

mph! Remember, this was not a race, but a leisurely recumbent ride to the beach (yeah, right)....

**BIGGEST BENT HAM:** Gardner Martin at the Bent Bash for attempting wheelies on the Rans bikes.

**BEST 'BENT MYSTERY:** Which bike manufacturers have contacted Giant about building 'bents in Taiwan...the imports are coming.

**DUMBEST SALES PITCH:** Anybody trying to sell regular folks on downhill MTB racing. □

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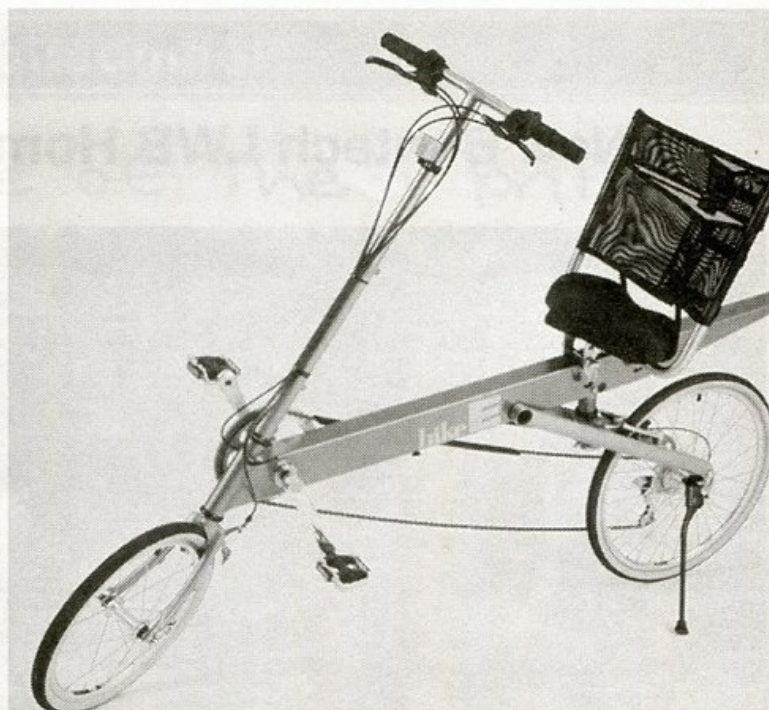
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## **BikeE got our attention at the show in a big way....**

**BEST NEW 'BENT of SHOW:** *BikeE Air Tech suspension is an incredible buy for just \$1100—besides this, it's an awesome machine that is in production NOW. The Air Tech is available in the All Around and RoadE versions. The "MTB" version is not official, but is an All Around with miniature hefty knobs. BikeE doesn't know it yet, but they've invented a new sport with this bike—'Bent MTB! By the time you read this, we'll be splashing about in the NW rain on an Air Tech. Read all about it in RCN#43. The positive recumbent energy level at the BikeE booth was contagious and noticed by many. This along with an enthusiast presence at both the Dirt Demo and People Movers 'Bent Bash made the difference. We are awarding*  
**BEST 'BENT Manufacturer of SHOW to BikeE.**

## **RCN Interbike Anaheim Crew**

The Interbike media passes have the phrase, **WORKING MEDIA** on the pass holders...and this is a stretch. For bikie's, this is Christmas and your birthday—bike heaven (well in this case, it really was my birthday....or was it...). And next year there will be a consumer day, so make your plans and pack your bags to come to LA and hang with the RCN Crew at the 'bent bash '98.

The RCN Crew was out in force at the Dirt Demo, the full run of the show and the People Movers 'Bent Bash. My special thanks go to:

•**Ron "The Ronster" Schmid**  
 Portland, Oregon  
 Ron is our goodwill ambassador, friend, International Distributor

and all around good guy.

•**Mark "Dr. Evil" Colliton**  
 Kensington, Maryland  
 Mark does all of the scanning for RCN, designs the covers and is basically the RCN art department. Mark is the co-designer of the Rans V-Rex and many other bikes. Mark's current dream bike is the Rans Limbo (Gold Rush Killer) prototype that he rode on the Slumgullian.

•**John Riley**  
 Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
 RCN Interbike Staff Photographer: John and I go back to pre-RCN days, though we never met face to face until this year. John has owned and designed many recumbents. His current bike is a folding Doppler Beamer "Flight" with a modified Vision seat (installed by Doppler),

a winter trike (two wheels in back) and a Vision.

•**Tony "Straight Up" Licuanan**  
 Seattle, Washington  
 RCN Interbike Correspondent: Tony does commuter testing for RCN, and does a hard commute on the war-torn torturous commuter tracks of rainy Seattle. Tony is a loyal Low Down and Laid Back NW rider who owns several recumbents, the newest being a 1998 Rans Tailwind that he tested for RCN.

•**Steve Nash**  
 Puyallup, Washington  
 RCN Interbike Correspondent: Steve is a loyal Low Down and Laid Back NW rider who owns a super low LWB with indirect fold forward ASS. Steve also has a 3x7 Counterpoint Presto with a

suspended fork and V-brakes. Steve came down just to kick my butt on the beach ride. He hung back until the beach was insight and dusted all of our high-SWB behinds. His super low LWB goes under the weather, which really worked with the ocean breezes of Huntington Beach. Steve regularly shows me how speed-superior his homebuilt low-racer is to expensive production bikes. Steve worked RCN transportation for the show delivering the Rans Vivo and Tailwind home from the show.

There are many others in our Interbike crew of super sleuth RCN reporter/spys that we would like to thank, though for security reasons, they wish to remain anonymous. □

## Homebuilders Corner

### New Bentech LWB Homebuilt Plans Announced



#### BENTECH INTRODUCES LONG EASY LWB PLANS

McKean, PA—Building on the success of their short wheelbase design, Bentech Recumbent Bike Plans announces a new model for 1998.

The *Long-Easy*, a radical departure from the original *DIY*, is a long wheelbase design featuring under-seat steering.

The *Long-Easy* is Bentech's response to consumer demand for a

design that embodies more traditional recumbent features. As the recumbent world seems evenly split between above-seat steering and under-seat steering, Bentech now offers easy to build plans in both formats.

Their newest design follows the original Bentech philosophy that designs be simple, functional and easy for anyone to build. In accomplishing this, Bentech once again provides plans for comprehensive welding jigs to construct both seat and frame. In fact, the new *Long-Easy* uses many of the same components and simple building methods that worked so well on the original *DIY* model.

The specifications for the *Long-Easy* are as follows: 63" wheelbase, 20" front wheel, 26" rear wheel, 18" seat height, and 18" bottom bracket height. Preliminary road tests show that the *Long-Easy's* handling characteristics are well mannered to allow beginners an easy transition from conventional bikes.

*Long-Easy* plans sets will be available September 1, 1997 at a price of \$30 + \$3 shipping and handling (N. America). Overseas shipping and handling is \$7.

For more information, send Email to [domerie@aol.com](mailto:domerie@aol.com) or snail mail to: Bentech, PO Box 198, McKean, PA 16426. Visit their website at: <http://members.aol.com/domerie/bentech.htm>. □

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The Rans V-Rex Zipper (Ryan type bubble) photo courtesy of Richard Drdul

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# RCNs Cool Bike of The Month

## The 1998 Rans Tailwind

by Tony Licuanan

**T**his bike is HOT!!! That's the first thing I said to myself when I laid eyes on the new 1998 Rans Tailwind at the People Mover's 'Bent Bash last month. The first thing I noticed is the newly added full triangulation of the frame. The rear stays now run out to the bottom bracket. The Tailwind comes in an exquisite Ferrari red powdercoat paint and has very fine craftsmanship and weld quality (very predictable of Rans). The MIG weld beads are better than some TIG welds I've seen.

"This bike looks AWE-SOME!!!" I added. It doesn't look like a Tailwind, but it is... Gone are those clumsy-looking (D) handlebars and in come the new sporty and sleek T-bars. This matched with the new frame really accents the bike and makes it beautiful. The Tailwind utilizes the new 20x1 3/8" Primo Comet high pressure tires, which offer excellent comfort as well as traction and performance. The GripShift ESP 5.0 derailleurs, cantilever brakes and the great Shimano components are all upgraded for 1998.

I did a quick road test on the Tailwind and the ride was so smooth, I almost forgot I was riding a CLWB recumbent. It sure didn't feel like a BikeE or an EZ-1. There's nothing twitchy about the handling of this bike. This is brought on mostly by the 20" front wheel and the longer 59.5" wheelbase (5-7" longer than other compacts), and still is every bit as user-friendly as a typical compact. Grab it, hop on and go! I had to take one home.

### A FEW WEEKS LATER...

I can't help thinking how this bike out performs so many other recumbents I've ridden. Keep in mind that this bike is just entry level from Rans' hanger bay. The Tailwind is a fast machine. In fact, it's faster than any other compact recumbent in its class. The frame is stiff and acceleration is quick. It sprints smooth and responsive without energy loss from the pedal to the wheel, due to it being a hard tail. Once up to speed (20+ mph), it feels as if you're



The 1998 Rans Tailwind—Rans.

gliding, spinning effortlessly. This is a trait that could be found mostly on LWB recumbents. Add a Zipper fairing and a body sock... you've got a speeding bullet.

### HERE COMES THE RAIN...

Our summer came to a quick end. The Seattle liquid sun is back. El Nino and the like, but life goes on... On wet slippery roads, the bike feels very stable. Maneuverability on the wet pavement is excellent. My center of gravity is not so far back to the rear (common to compacts) that control of the bike is enhanced. I don't worry much about slipping and sliding. Fenders are a MUST with the Rans seat! Or, you'll be sure to eat every grimy thing on the road and the wet spray will soak you, the seat back and sneak into the foam. The cantilever brakes are perfectly adequate for me, and much improved over previous Tailwinds. V-brakes or Maguras may be better for some, but add cost. One of the best points

of this bike is the price—\$950! In rainy and windy conditions I found the Tailwind to be very stable and secure—a safe commuter. Speed Comes... Rain Goes, no maybe that was Speed Comes, Pain Goes!

### SHIFTS SO GOOD...

The SRAM GripShift ESP 24-speed drivetrain really complements the new line of Rans' recumbents. Although I miss the Sachs 3x7 of the Metro and BikeE, I prefer the ESP. With its precise shifting (1:1 ratio), riding a bike couldn't get any easier. It shifts so good. One CLICK... you're in gear. There's definitely less noise and more importantly, less friction than a 3x7. Would combining a 3x7 make it better? I don't think so. It's a fairly light recumbent, (about 27 lbs.) and making it 63 speed would be a bit redundant. Besides, it's a good climber and the gears are more than adequate for my hilly downtown commute. If you feel the need for more gears, all Rans 20" drive-wheel models come from the

factory with 3x7 braze-ons in case you want to add one later.

### NICE SEAT...

When I was looking for a seat to use for my homebuilt SWB (Orange C.A.T., RCN #35 Homebuilders' Corner), I settled on what I thought is the best and most comfortable recumbent seat available. This seat was from the Rans company, and this was 2 years ago.

I was not surprised to get the best seat in the recumbent world on the \$950 Tailwind. The Rans seat is far superior to ANY other compact seats. For 1998, Rans has made it even more CUSH. They are now using a 2" denser and thicker foam that feels even more comfortable than my older one (downsized from 3" in 1997).

The back mesh has the safety reflective tapes all around and doesn't have the flex/springy feeling that I've encounter on other bikes—thus more power to the pedals, while retaining the breathability of the full

mesh back. There's also a place for a bottle cage or a pump on either side of the seat. Rans is definitely setting the standard here. It's truly a shame. It's been over two years since this particular style seat was introduced, and other recumbent manufacturers have yet to be inspired by the near perfection of the Rans seat design. Other compacts may be well and good, but the seat is the primary issue where 'bents are concerned. In the past, compact seats have suffered...until now.

#### WORTHINESS...

The Tailwind is the best commuter I have ridden and tested. It's a leader in its class and LWB customers should consider it too. The design is state of the art. It's very good for short commutes and even better for the longer 40+ mile rides. It's fast. It tracks very straight, more so than any compact with a 16" front wheel. It's a good hill climber and descends plush and stable like it should. It's well made. It has a great lifetime WARRANTY (frame)! All this for only \$995 MSRP.

I like this bike so much, I bought it and immediately sold my old commuter recumbent. This recumbent is a little hot rod and a definite sleeper. It has way too much

to offer for its entry level designation and price. Once again, the Rans Company is setting a new standard in the world of recumbents.

If you love LWB 'bents, but wish you could have it just a bit more compact or if you're fond of CLWB 'bents, but wish the steering and stability were not quite so twitchy—but every bit as smooth as a LWB, look no further. The Tailwind is your bike. □

.....

*Tony Licuanan is a Low Down and Laid Back Northwest recumbent rider and RCN Seattle commute-rain recumbent torture tester. Tony is also a homebuilder (CAT, RCN#35) and owns several recumbents. He has experimented with fairings including coroplast (from the video), fiberglass (with an airplane drop-tank as a mould and one of his most outrageous achievements is making a nose cone fairing out of a dog-house igloo, while driving the local Boeing engineers crazy. Tony lives in Seattle with his wife Cindy who also rides with the NW rider group. If you think your bike is tough enough, send it up for an RCN winter rain commuter test.*

## 1998 RANS TAILWIND

### SPEC'S AT A GLANCE

- PRICE: \$995
- TYPE: CLWB ASS T-Bar
- DIMENSIONS:
- WHEELBASE: 59.5"
- BB HEIGHT: 19"
- SEAT HEIGHT: 22"
- WEIGHT: 30 pounds
- FRAME: MIG welded CroMo
- Fork: TIG welded CroMo Unicrown.
- WHEELS: 406mm 20"
- TIRES: Primo Comet 20" x 1.375"
- CRANK: Suntour XC-LTD 36/46/58 175mm crank arms.
- DERAILLEURS: 24-speed, SRAM Grip Shift ESP 5.0 (rear); Suntour XC LTD (front)
- SHIFTERS: SRAM Grip Shift ESP 7.0
- GEARING: Hyperglide 11-28
- GEAR RANGE: 22-100\*
- CHAIN: Sachs Sedis
- HEADSET/BB: YST/Shimano
- SEAT: Rans low back (tall, opt.)
- BRAKES: Shimano Alivio Canti.
- PEDALS: Wellgo platform
- BARS/STEM: Rans T-Bar/riser
- PAINT: Hot Red Powdercoat
- SOLD BY: Rans Recumbents, 4600 Hwy 183 Alternate, Hays, KS 67601. Email: rans@media-net.net \*19" drivewheel diameter

## '98 Buyers' Guide

The 1998 Buyers' Guide is now the ongoing RCN SuperGuide—updated with every issue and spread throughout SIX LARGER RCN ISSUES for 1998. The only way to get it is to SUBSCRIBE.

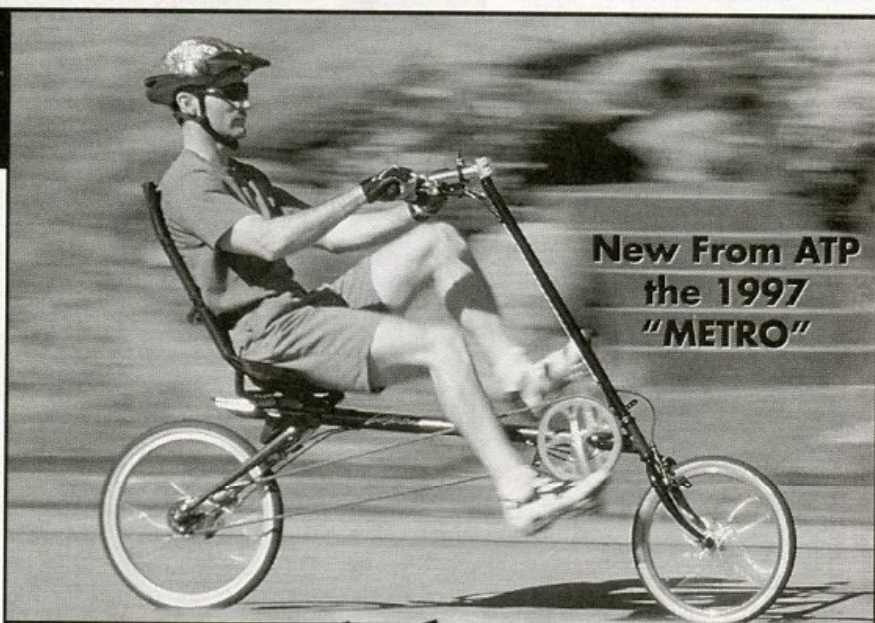
To order see our order form on page 47/48 of this issue 1998 is shaping up to be the BEST YEAR EVER for RCN.



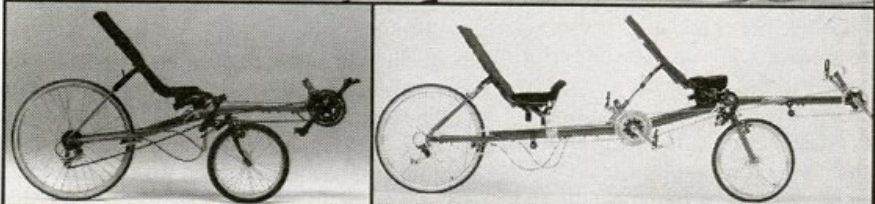
Featuring a suspension frame, this nimble about town machine is an ideal spur-of-the-moment bike. It's easy to ride, easy to maintain, and fits on most standard car racks.

#### VR-30 Metro Specifications:

- 1.75" TIG welded CroMo mainframe
- "MMC" Suspension System
- Collapsible for transport or storage
- Alloy 170mm crank
- Shimano Cartridge Bottom Bracket
- KMC UG 50 Chain
- 1-1/8" threadless headset
- Alloy front quick release front hub
- Alloy rear rim, 20" (406)
- Alloy front rim, 16" (349)
- 29.5 pounds
- 7 Speed: Nexus 7 speed Internal hub
- 21 Speed: Sachs 3x7 Internal hub
- Starting at \$925 MSRP



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## The Doppler Beamer "Flight" a folding, travel recumbent

Story and photos by Shari Bernhard, [shari@norman.mkt.hcsc.com](mailto:shari@norman.mkt.hcsc.com)

**D**oppler Cycles, a very small manufacturer out of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, has designed the Beamer, a sturdy, no-nonsense recumbent. The Beamer "Flight" model has an unusual and welcome feature: it folds - compact enough to fit into a large standard suitcase, somewhat like a Bike Friday and a rare feature for a recumbent.

I discovered this bike when I posted a note to the HPV mailing list on the Internet asking if anyone knew of a folding recumbent. I received a response from John Riley who had just ordered a Flight for himself. Living in Toronto, John had the benefit of trying it out first and extolled the virtues of the design and engineering of the Beamer.

I didn't have the luxury of test riding the Beamer, but after several weeks of contact with Mark Swartz, one of the Doppler Cycles principles, and email exchanges with a couple of other cyclists who had ridden the Beamer, I felt that it would satisfy my particular need of having a recumbent that I could easily take on a plane for out of state tours. I ordered a Beamer Flight in May so that I would have it in time to get accustomed to it and work out any minor bugs before my tour in August.

The Flight was due to ship the day after the UPS strike started, so it was shipped air cargo. After it cleared customs, I picked the Beamer up at Air Canada's cargo depot. It took me an hour to get it out of the box and assembled, but I could tell that with practice, assembly would be much quicker.

### THE BULLET

The Beamer Flight is a folding CLWB with a 53.5" (136 cm) to 55.5" (141 cm) range wheelbase. My frame was custom made to 52" (132 cm) for my short legs and it was still just about an inch too long. The frame is a 2" square monotube made from 4130 aircraft grade CroMo steel with above-seat steering.

The components are mostly Sachs, including: 3x7 speed internal hub, twist shift, 50-tooth chainring, and chain. It's equipped with a 20" rear wheel with a 115 psi



Schwalbe city tire and 16" radially-spoked front wheel with a Primo 85 psi tire, both on Sun 36-spoke rims. The brakes are Dia Compe Big Dog sidepulls front and rear.

The sliding seat is 23.5" (60 cm) high and utilizes a specially designed seat tensioner. A small elastomer attaches between the rear swingarm and the boom for a bit of suspension. The bottom bracket, at 22.75" (58 cm), is higher than other "compacts" (CLWB) recumbent. I have estimated the weight distribution to be about 70% on the rear and 30% on the front of the bike.

The frame is powdercoat painted. The bike weight as shipped is 35 lbs, 5 lbs of which is the rear wheel alone. Price is \$1095 US for the basic Beamer, and an additional \$250 for the Flight folding option.

### THE DETAILS

The frame itself is good quality with what I consider nice welds and extremely sturdy machining. I felt like I could throw this puppy off the roof and it would survive without a scratch. Paint was excellently

applied, even and shiny. The fork is good quality, and the handlebars are fairly wide and comfortable. The design is simple with top notch engineering, but for me, the best feature about the Flight is its foldability.

There are two main folding joints: the main tube folds across the center with a quick release to hold it in place when assembled and the rear swingarm folds under to the bottom of the frame.

All that's needed to put it in a suitcase it to remove the ASS bars and both wheels, take off the pedals (or thread them onto the opposite sides of the cranks), fold the rear swing arm under, loosen the center quick release, and fold the main tube and that's it! I found that removing the chain made it simpler to fold and pack, so I installed a removable chain link. I had added a kickstand and a water bottle holder on top of the handlebar, both of which had to be removed for packing.

After 3-4 practice folds, I'm now down to 20 minutes each way take down and set up. The wheels are carried in a separate carry-on bag.

### SEAT QUALITY, DESIGN

The seat is very unique, designed to be packed easily with the bike. The seat back frame is made of seamless, TIG-welded 6061 aluminum with a bracket that bolts to the main tube. The seat fabric is nylon mesh. The seat bottom is a triangle with a 2" wide loop sewn into the front point. The seat surface is formed by the seat bottom suspended hammock-style between the bottom of the seat frame, using three adjustable nylon straps, and attached by the front loop to a special tensioner.

The innovative turnbuckle tensioner is a custom machined bracket that bolts to the main boom separately from the seat frame. A 1/2" diameter cylinder slips into the loop and bolts to the top of the turnbuckle bracket. The turnbuckle adjusts to the desired tightness of the seat bottom.

When the seat is removed from the bike frame, the seat bottom folds flat against the seat back, making packing a breeze.

The seat back angle adjusts

from bolt-upright to about 110-115 degrees (estimate) by sliding two 1/2" stainless steel rods attached to the upper part of the seat back frame through quick release brackets on the swingarm. The mesh seat back attaches quickly and easily to the seat frame with adjustable straps.

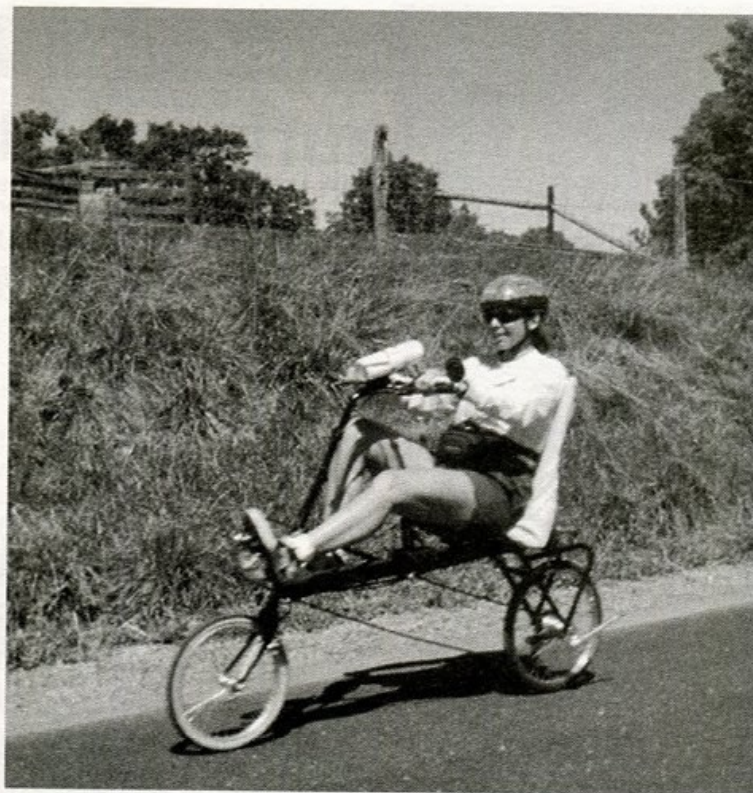
The seat bottom is a nice idea, but it didn't work for me. After its maiden voyage, I developed a severe case of "bleacher butt." The design of the seat bottom has 3 straps in the back, one on each corner and one in the center, and the tensioner in the front at the point. There is a pocket with a thick foam pad in it, but the pocket is sewn *underneath* the part you sit on. When the turnbuckle is tensioned enough to keep the seat bottom suspended off the boom, the sitting surface is hard as a rock, rendering the foam pad useless, and making me feel like I was sitting on the edge of a 2x4 after a few miles.

Because time was short before I took it on a long tour, I devised a pad made with a triangle of masonite stuffed into a camping pillow.

#### HANDLING & PERFORMANCE

The stock Beamer and Flight both come with above-seat steering. The head tube bracket loosens for quick removal of the bars for packing. The T-shaped ASS bars are wide and quite comfortable. I had a little trouble with hitting my knees on the bar at first, but I just pulled it an inch up out of the head tube and no longer had that problem. Having an inch less inside the head tube didn't affect the handling at all.

The steering is direct to the front wheel with a positive feel that makes the bike quite maneuverable. I was able to do a U-turn within a very narrow road. Being a USS aficionado,



Shari on tour with the Beamer.

I had some concerns about getting used to ASS, but this bike felt stable and responsive without a hint of twitchiness. The bottom bracket position is higher than normal for a CLWB though it did not adversely affect handling.

Downhill stability of the Flight is tops. I'm not a fan of fast descents; I approached the downhills with more trepidation than the climbs. However, on twisty, steep descents at speeds of 35-40 mph, the Beamer handles more like a go-cart than a bike. It holds the turns beautifully, and feels as stable and surefooted as a cat. It is one of my favorite features of this bike and made my tour in the mountains that much more fun.

I don't know if performance could be considered the Beamer's claim to fame, but it's no slouch either. I didn't install a computer because I didn't want to worry about wires during folding, and I don't completely trust wireless computers, but keeping up with my computer-fied riding partners put my speed at 15-16 mph on flat ground with no real strain. I got it going to 20 mph for about a half mile before I felt my heart and breathing rate rise a bit higher than I like. On my SWB bike I can ride at 20-22 mph for 40 miles.

The weight of the bike made it quite a bit tougher for hill climbing. I believe that with some speed training the Beamer could hold its own

at 17-18 mph with a rider accustomed to those speeds.

#### COMPONENTS

The cable runs are long and a little worrisome when removing the handlebars for packing, but once I was confident that the cables wouldn't kink or tangle—they are completely enclosed in cable housing—I stopped being concerned about that. I packed the bike for travel five times with no cable problems.

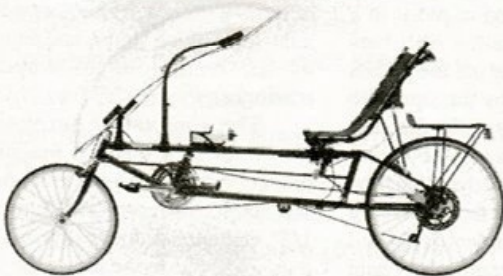
The brakes are acceptable, but not great. The front brake is positioned behind the fork instead of in front which is disconcerting, but didn't seem to be a factor in braking performance. I was able to stop adequately on a downhill, and on a panic stop, they are responsive, but not excessively so. An upgrade to Aztec/Koolstop brake pads, as Bob Bryant wrote about in his RCN#37 Rans Rocket review upgrade may solve the problem. If it doesn't, I will look at the cables and brake handles.

I did find that due to the length of the cables, shifting isn't as crisp as I like. I missed shifts on numerous occasions and had trouble getting into my lowest gear at times. The gearing (28-105) is not adequate for more challenging terrain. The 3x7 hub is still the best choice for this type of bike. Not having to deal with a front derailleur makes packing easier. The Sachs chain was, of course, an excellent choice. It was quiet and smooth.

#### CLEVER DETAILS

There was no chain tensioner on the Beamer. Instead, a length of black PVC pipe was utilized as a chain tube attached to a bracket on the main boom. The chain tube was surprisingly quiet and did not seem

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to create any unwanted drag. The waterbottle braze-ons are cleverly machined into the chain tube bracket. Unfortunately, I found that my knee kept hitting the water bottle unless I concentrated on pedaling with my leg bent slightly outward. I found this annoying after a while, so I moved my water bottle holder to a bracket I installed to the top of the handlebar. This worked out just fine.

Another simple yet clever idea is the integrated swingarm/suspension/rear pannier rack. The swing arm has two rails on each side to accommodate pannier hooks and the square boom between the swing arm acts as a rack which can hold a rear trunk. The small elastomer connects the swingarm to the boom and gives a little suspension at the same time.

I had one problem with the elastomer. I tightened the bolt as much as I could before starting my ride. After riding a while, I kept hearing "tick-tick-tick" that seemed synchronized to my leg movement. It turned out that the bolt was very loose and the ticking noise was the sound of the washer between the boom and the wingnut. Sitting on the bike compressed the elastomer enough to allow play on the bolt. I had my riding partner, who had figured this out, tighten the wingnut as I sat, and I no

longer had problems with that noise.

#### ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

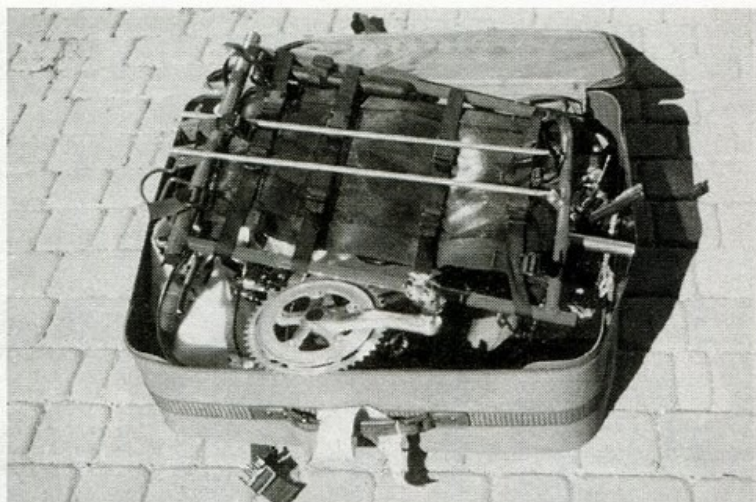
There are a couple of places where little things would make this bike even better. After several days' riding, the seat developed a horrible squeaking noise. I traced it down to the plastic guides on the seat bottom. Loosening the bolt lessened the noise a great deal. Rubber washers might eliminate it completely. The same is true for the suspension bolt.

Another minor issue is the type of bolt used on the seat and elastomer. They have plastic wingnut heads integrated onto steel bolts. I'd prefer the use of all metal wing-bolts, and will probably replace the plastic headed ones eventually.

The water bottle bracket location, while an interesting and inventive idea, didn't work well in reality for me. It might be a good location for a mini-pump, though, with no leg interference.

#### SUMMARY

I'm quite pleased with this recumbent. The seat bottom is the only real down-side to the bike. It makes an excellent commuter as well as touring bike. The frame is heavy, but it is so well built it's practically bullet-proof. The components might



Shari's Beamer in a suitcase.

not have been my first choice but they are certainly adequate and can handle most situations and riding styles. If the few items mentioned above ever get taken care of, the Beamer Flight would have few peers.

Assembly and disassembly are quick and simple, exactly what I was looking for in a travel bike, and while my husband had to haul around his huge Trico bike box, my regular suitcase fit right into the car and right on the plane with no excess baggage surcharge. I can definitely give Doppler Cycles Beamer Flight a big thumbs up.

**LATE NOTE:** Just before press time, Mark Swartz of Doppler Cycle Technologies wrote to say that the Beamer is no longer in production and the future of Doppler Cycle Technologies is uncertain. Doppler would like to find somebody to manufacture the Beamer model or to build it under license. The Beamer is an excellent concept that deserves some backing. Almost every serious 'bentour would like to own a travel bike.

You can contact the former manufacturer at: Doppler Cycle Tech., 52 Walnut St., Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 1PG, Canada. ☐

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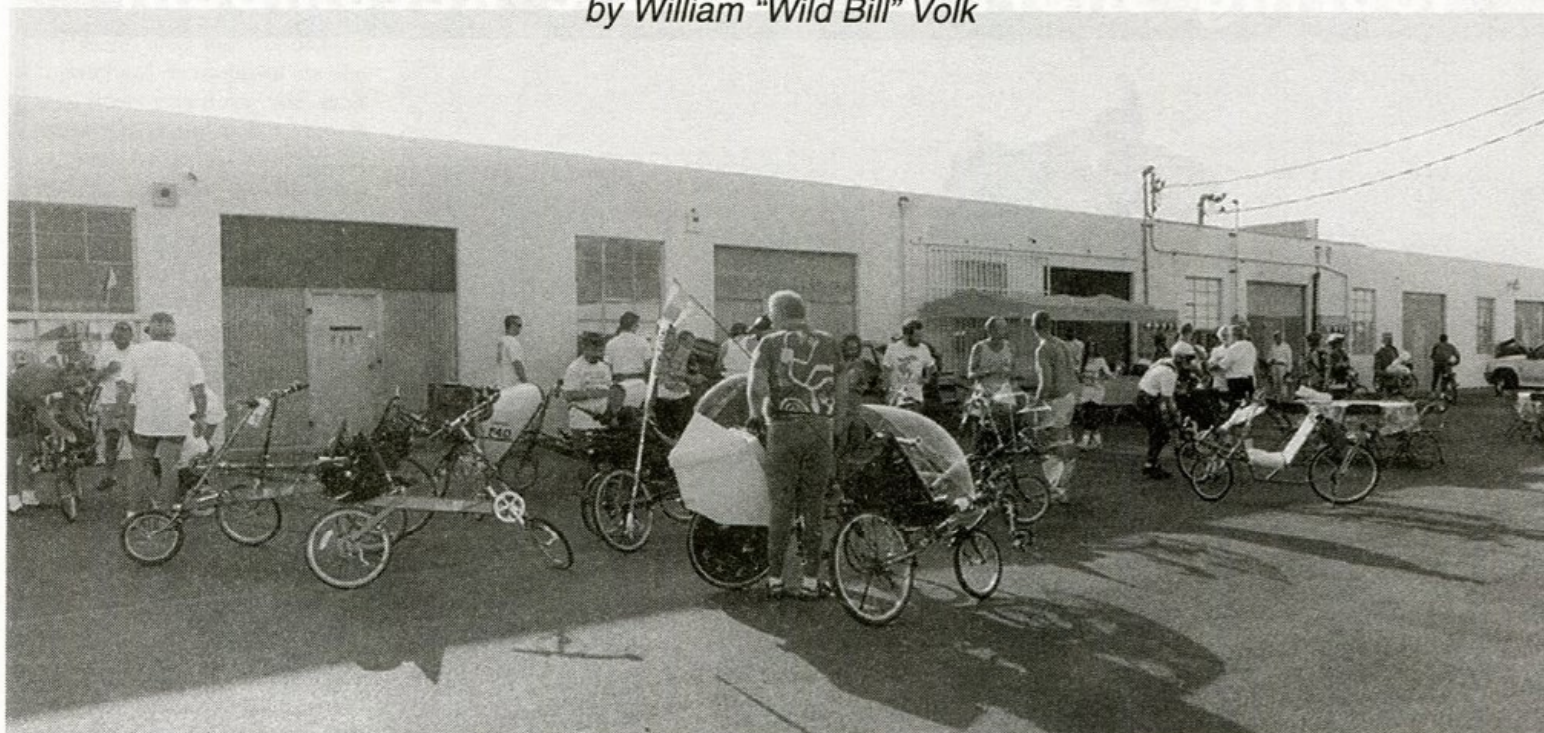
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## The People Movers Bent Bash

by William "Wild Bill" Volk



**P**eople Movers, if you didn't know by now, is the largest retailer of recumbents in America... perhaps the world. While your typical bike shop struggles to stay in business and avoids 'bents as being too "weird and different," People Movers has been building an ever larger more successful business. Located in the best regional bicycle market, the Los Angeles/Orange County/San Diego area, they are responsible for many of us going 'bent in the first place.

People Movers is located in Orange County, only a short pedal from Disneyland. Every year (at least the last 3 or more) People Movers throws a little party for us recumbenteers. This consists of a ride to the beach and some fun and games back at the store. I looked forward to having a fast flat ride to the beach, coming from coastal San Diego where my 24-tooth small chainring sees daily use. In addition I knew there would be cool new bikes to see and ride, and I wasn't disappointed. Finally I wanted to drum up support for the San Diego Streamliner Series, an HPV racing event I run out of the San Diego Velodrome.

So I loaded up my "HPV Transport," a rather large truck that sees less use than my bike, with my commuting S&B and my loaned Festina

Low Racer. Saw other local 'bent folks on their way to the event during the drive and arrived a bit before 8:00 am. Already there was a large crowd, the largest I've seen at any recumbent event.

*...we had a nice  
"hammer time"  
to the beach...*

Starting at about 9:00 we had a nice "hammer time" to the beach (and back) with Bob Bryant (of RCN fame) and a few others (about 5 in our little group). Those hills back home are good for something as we were the "lead dogs." Bob Bryant doesn't just write about 'bents, Bob can ride. The guy (Jim from Las Vegas) on the P-38 can really ride. He is rumored to be a masters category roadie. I figured on riding the well equipped commuting bike first, and then doing part of the route over on the rather extreme Festina.

I'm glad I had the Zipper fairing, the new Conti supersport on the rear, and the new tailbox. We averaged over 21 mph in both directions... which (given the bridges et. al.) means that we were in the 23 to 24 mph range most of the time... unless we were passing some roadies... then we really picked up the speed. After

this ride, I switched to the Festina and did a ride "to the first bridge" and back at even more fun speeds... that really really pissed off some local roadies.

About the bike Bob rode. In software we always look for the "Killer Application." The one program or game that makes a new computer or device a market success. In recumbents we've had some really nice bikes over the years. This year I think Rans has the "Killer App" of recumbents, a bike that's so damn great and such a good value that it's going to attract much of the high end bike business. This is the Vivo... which is sort of like a dual suspension Rocket with hydraulic brakes for \$2050. That's like saying a Porsche Boxster is kinda like a Miata with a mid engine and Porsche engineering.

The Vivo handles great, it rides great, looks very well finished, and it's no slouch. I'd love to try this on my commute .... the dual suspension would be just the thing for the high speed descents. Bob was able to power thru the bumpy underpasses where others (including myself) had to deal with bouncing down the road. I'm not a betting man, but I'd lay even odds that the Vivo winds up being the RCN 'Bent Of The Year.

Besides the Vivo, I managed to ride a whole bunch of cool bikes.

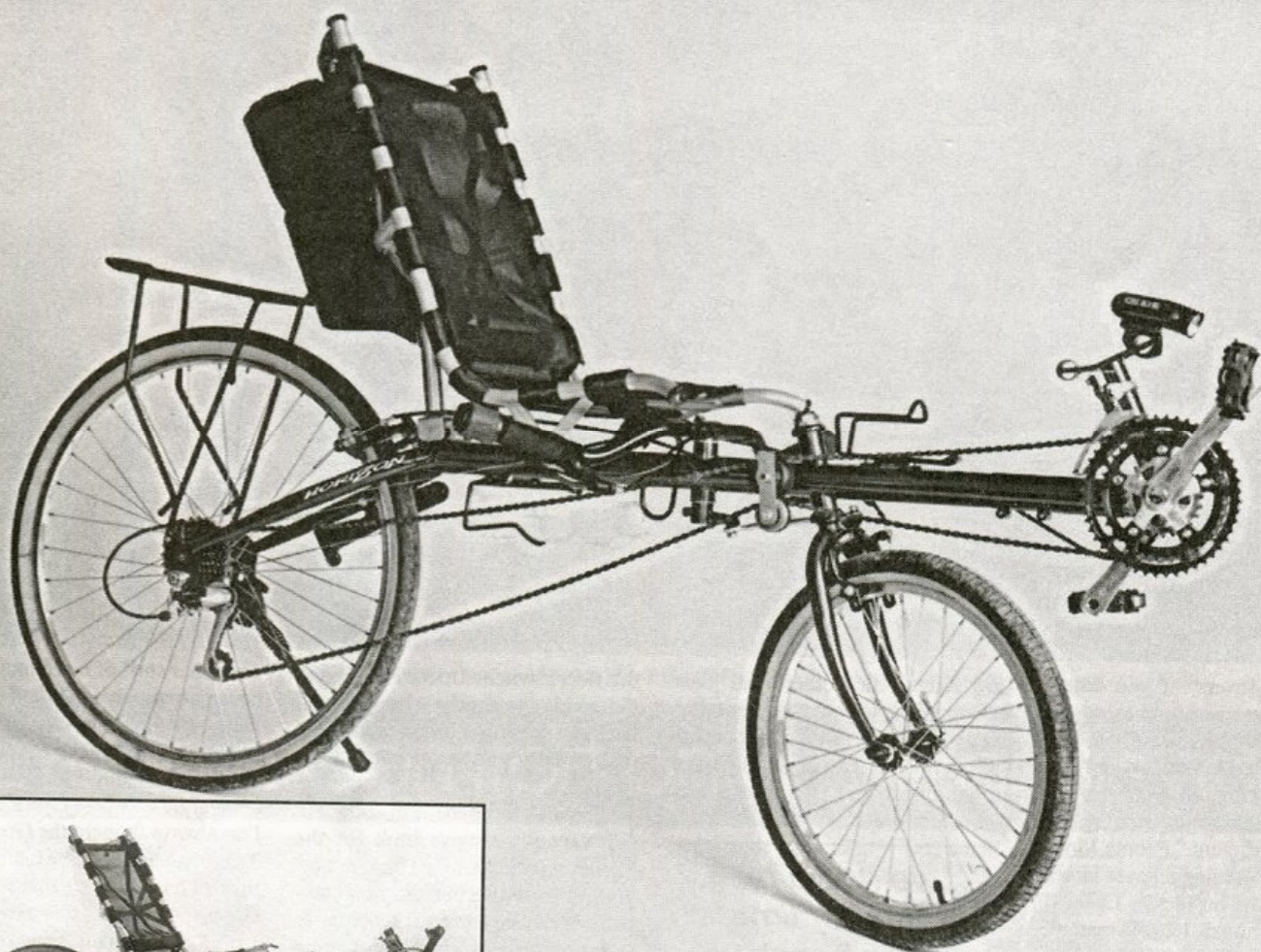
The other stuff of merit includes the new rear-suspension BikeE. With its massive amount of rear suspension travel, this will make a great urban warrior machine! I also liked the delta style Comfort Cycle trike and I've always thought the Greenspeed Trike was in a class by itself. I wish there had been a suspended Greenspeed at that ride to check out.

I finally managed to ride a pivoting bottom bracket FWD bike. I had previously failed in my attempts to achieve true harmony and balance with these elegant cycling creations. In other words, I fell flat on my \*ss. Bill Patterson was kind enough to lend me "Henry" a single ASS FWD bike. I wasn't all that graceful, but I managed to propel the machine in a semi-controlled fashion. Nice workmanship. The temperature was kind of warm for some of the folks, but I had just done some summer desert riding the week before and found it quite pleasant. The usual contests, an upright bike toss and a slow riding competition were great fun. The auction was the place to buy a great bike at a discount.

Unfortunately I had to return to San Diego and missed out on Bob Bryant's birthday celebration. All in all, this was a great time for everyone. You can bet I'll be at the next one... ☐

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## The History of my Recumbent and You're Welcome to it

Story and Photo by Scott D. Groff

It seems that many of us who purchase recumbents are the type of riders who tinker with their bicycles. Good is okay but better is even, well, better. The local bike shops and the bike catalog sales people love us.

When I purchased my recumbent, I went to a local bike shop which was having an open house sponsored by Advanced Transportation Products, the Seattle area manufacturer of the Vision recumbent. I rode a long wheelbase R-40 and a short wheelbase R-45 and found both of them scary to ride. Keep in mind I had never been on a recumbent before. Thank goodness the open house had a really large parking lot attached to it.

What attracted me to the Vision? Two things: price—I did not know if I would get the hang of riding a recumbent and not spending much over \$1,000 was a requirement. Second was the modularity of the bike. At least the R40 and R42 can be purchased as long- or short-wheelbase and in above-or below-seat steering configurations. I figured if I didn't like what I bought, I could always change it. So I made the jump and purchased an R-40 under-seat steering model.

I followed Vision owner's manual suggestion to make the first several rides on an off-street parking lot to get used to shifting and steering. I don't know how many tight right and left turns I made before I ventured out onto the city streets, but there were a bunch. I remember my first "fast" downhill - it was really weird having my feet way out in front of me.

I experimented with the seat in many positions. For me, the most upright position felt cramped and the completely laid-back position caused me to get a crick in my neck, so I settled on the middle position. With my leg length, that puts the boom at its furthest extension.

In all this moving the boom and the seat back and forth, I learned an elemental law of Vision-LWB physics: the longer you stretch the distance between the front of the bike and the rear, the longer you need to make the chain and the front brake cable.



I discovered all this quite by accident on my local bike trail. The bike trail is straight for miles and only has turns towards the northern end. I was doing really well until that first corner. The bike came to a quick stop. I got off and looked everything over pretty carefully. My pushing of the extendible boom to its maximum had shortened the front brake cable, which manifested itself on the first right turn. I also found out that I could not shift the chain to either the big front chain ring or any of the three large rear cogs.

Well, I stood up, picked up the bike, pivoted 180 degrees. I set the bike down and pedaled home on the blessedly straight trail. Oh yeah, using only the middle chain ring and the four outer rear cogs—funny thing about physics!

My purpose in writing this article is to let you know what I have done to "tinker" with my bicycle. My wife calls it not leaving well enough alone. During the parking lot practice riding, I discovered I really did not like the twist grip shifters that come standard with the bike. I detested making so much

noise that the whole world knew I had changed gears (grinding plastic). In addition to that, the darn things would shift one way just fine, but I had to shift one or two cogs past where I wanted to be and then to shift back—real annoying.

With my then-bike shop's advice, I installed a Bass Worm to compensate for not having a return spring in the twist shifters. It helped some, but in a fit of frustration one Saturday, I bought some used Suntour bar-end shifters, non-indexing, and installed them—big improvement from my vantage point! Since the Bass Worm was no longer useful, I removed it.

By this time, I had found out about *Recumbent Cyclist News*. I bought the '96 Buyers' Guide and damn near memorized it. Taking the advice contained in it, the first thing I changed was the chain from the KMC stock chain to a Sedisport. Not knowing how much chain a recumbent really consumes, I felt pretty good about buying a box from my local REI. When I got it home and compared it to the old KMC, I discovered I had the opportunity to go

back to REI and buy another boxed chain. Took it home only to discover I should have bought the third boxed chain because I needed part of it, too. The clerk at REI gave me a really funny look at the third visit.

Another really neat tip I picked up was how to make a nifty chain protector. I have rather large legs. I found that the chain was doing a really good job of removing all the hair on the inner part of my right leg. The first five miles of any given ride were really unpleasant. After that, there was no hair left on that part of my leg and the rest of the rides went pretty uneventfully.

However, I determined that I didn't want to go through that pain each ride, so I made a chain protector, following the directions in the Buyers' Guide. I went to my local mega-hardware store and purchased a 24" length of plastic irrigation pipe riser. Perfect length! Took it home, heated a pot of water, stuck each end of the plastic pipe in the hot water long enough to soften it and belled-out the end by spinning an open-end wrench around in it. All that was left was to split the chain and slide the

now-chain protector over the chain and reassemble it. I made the plastic tube stay in place by taping a tie wrap in place around the tube, running another tie-wrap through the gadget that supports the chain that has "ATP" cut out of it, and through the taped-on tie-wrap. Takes longer to type it than to do it.

Now that I had gotten accustomed to riding the bike long-wheelbase with under-seat steering, I succumbed to the temptation to convert it to short-wheelbase. They are supposed to be quicker handling, easier to climb hills and easier to mount on a roof rack.

From my experience, only the last of these three is valid. I found no difference in handling or climbing. I DID find that the short-wheelbase bike is much harsher riding when hitting any sharp bumps. But in any event, I purchased a Vision short-wheelbase boom extension. I objected to the looks of the long-wheelbase boom hanging out there in the breeze.

Remember the bike trail? One of the difficulties in riding it is caused by the wooden bollards the County installed to keep cars, buses and tractor-trailers from mistaking the trail as a really narrow one way fast-route to wherever.

In a below-seat steering recumbent, riding through these pesky things is an exercise in patience and aim, and is best done at a lower speed. I've nicked them several times - leads to some exciting practice in bicycle control!

So, a conversion to above-seat steering was the next modification. I looked at the assembly Vision offers—nicely done, but I did not like that rather TALL stem extension. I feared a quick, unintended stop would lead to my being able to sing soprano. So I ordered a Haluzak steering assembly. When it came, I discovered it was too large to fit into the Vision steering tube. An hour's worth of work with my handy-dandy Dremel tool, grinding the extra aluminum down, and it fit nicely.

I picked a weekend to make this change. But before I did anything, I started to thinking: I really didn't like the short-wheelbase ride quality. I didn't like having to lift my heel whenever making left turns to avoid hitting my heel with the front wheel.

I decided I could handle the trade-offs, so I converted the bike BACK to long-wheelbase at the same time I removed the below-seat steering and installed the Haluzak assembly. In my opinion, the bike looks less cluttered with the above-seat

steering. What else have I done:

I installed the **rear fender** off my mountain bike, which has since gone to the great used bike shop in the sky. I modified the front fender to fit the smaller front wheel - this did not take much, just shortening the horizontal stays.

I added **Mr. Tuffy Strips** to the inside of my tires to reduce flats. Actually, I've used these things for many years and the only flat I have ever had is when a four-inch screw went through the tire, the tube and bent up double inside of the rim.

I replaced the two larger **front chain rings with 40- and 50-tooth** chain rings. I also put a new bottom bracket in it. With the stock rear cluster and front granny chain ring, I now have a 24 gear-inch low and a 104 gear-inch high with nearly perfect half-step gearing. The 50-tooth large ring is just about all the Suntour front derailleur will handle. I measured the actual wheel diameter with me sitting in the seat and got a 25" wheel diameter, so I used that rather than the nominal 26" wheel size in making the gear-inch calculations. Actually, I wrote an Excel spreadsheet to calculate the gear-inch combinations available with any front vs. rear combination.

I installed **Speedplay clipless pedals**. I had a terrible time getting the shoe cleat to clip-in securely, and they would release sporadically. My dealer discovered there was a problem with the cleat and they happily exchanged them.

I then tried a set of **Time pedals**, with lots of float. They had so much float that the only way I could uncleat was by rotating my heel inward. Unfortunately that doesn't work very well if the pedal crank arm happens to be in the way. Twice I couldn't uncleat and the bike and I toppled over—very embarrassing, and I injured my shoulder. So now I ride with a pair of retro **Shimano Deore XT mountain bike pedals** and a pair of deep-tread mountain bike shoes. I haven't found any drawback for not being cleated to the bike, but what I have found is a greater sense of security in being able to get my feet to the ground very quickly. I find this is really helpful since I ride in a more reclined position than some riders. It's a minor thing, but I removed the side-entry front brake hanger and guide and replaced it with a conventional mountain bike hanger that attaches to the head tube. This allows the brake cable to enter the cantilever yoke straight-on.

I added a **Rollamajig** at the rear

derailleur to remove some of the extra cable; replaced the non-indexing Suntour bar-end shifters with **Shimano Ultegra bar-con bar end** indexing units. Yes, they ARE better; replaced the rear derailleur with a Shimano Deore XT because the stock derailleur did not shift well with the new Shimano bar-ends; replaced the stock rear cluster with a properly spaced Shimano cluster to continue solving the difficult shifting problems. It seems that Shimano has really gotten a handle on American-style marketing! I guess I don't object-when you finally have all the right Shimano components working together, everything works well. I replaced my many-times disassembled Sedisport chain with a **new Sedisport chain**. It seems I wasn't as careful aligning those little pins as I thought. They were hanging up on the rear cluster teeth, causing chain skip, noise and inadvertent gear changes—very disconcerting.

I added a blinking tail light (what railroaders call a FRED - Flashing Rear End Device) to my rear carrying rack and a Whale-Tail to the back of my helmet. My wife wanted me to mount a flag-she's worried about my not being seen. We compromised on the two flashers.

I bought **two of the 32 oz. Camelback systems** and stuck them just inside the strap of the Vision seat back pack. I glued some hook Velcro material to the metal of the seat left side frame and I sewed a strip of loop Velcro around the tube of each Camelback. That way, it's easy to reach the drinking tube at any time. Just reach to my left and pull the drinking tube away from the seat frame. I drink a lot of water when I ride so this works better for me than carrying multiple water bottles that are generally not easily accessible.

I replaced the original brake shoes with **Kool-Stop pads** - much better overall, but you still want to leave a bunch of extra room for stopping in the rain.

I installed a **Cat Eye computer**, using a cable meant for a tandem so I can have the pickup sensor at the rear wheel.

I tried all manner of mirror combinations. Any mirror installed on the handlebars vibrates too much to be of much use, so I found a **long-stemmed mirror that mounts on my glasses** that works really well. For those of you in the Seattle area, Gregg's Green Lake is the ONLY place I was able to find them. Trust me-I hit seven bike shops to find it.

I purchased the **Vision seat back bag** and I like it. It is really

convenient for carrying the two Camelback packs as well as lunch, maps, and rain gear. I also carry a fair number of tools and a full first aid kit. These are too bulky to fit in the Vision pack, so I strap a waist pack with tools and first aid kit stuffed into it just below the bend in the seat frame. The pack is out of the way but accessible when needed.

I strap a full-size frame **tire pump** behind the seat. Rhode Gear sells a kit that includes two rubber bushings with cut-outs for the pump and a frame, along with two straps to secure the pump to the bushings and the seat frame.

The final touch, at least for the time being, was to wrap the bars and stem with real roadie-type **cork handlebar tape**. The end result is one very dialed Vision, and a rare one at that—a "BT" (LWB with ASS).

By the way, speaking of bike shops, I bought my bike from the shop doing the demo. They were new to recumbents. I spent too many trips driving back and forth trying to resolve fit and adjustment problems. I highly recommend you find a bike shop that knows recumbents. Have them do any bike mechanic work you're not comfortable with—buy your accessories from them—and help keep them in business!

In the Seattle area, I find Angle Lake Cyclery to be the best. Dale Clark is the co-owner along with his brother, Kelvin Clark of Angletech in Colorado. Bike shops near my home either gave me a funny look when I brought my 6 foot+ long monster into their shops, or they recommended I take my bike to Angle Lake Cyclery. The best decision I made was to take their advice.

I am a member of the **NW Low Down and Laid Back Recumbent Riders** and hang out with Bob Bryant and the gang. We have weekly rides from Bicentennial Park in Tukwila (Southcenter area/near SeatTac airport) out the Green River valley or to Alki beach. One of the things I enjoy most about the recumbent group I ride with is being able to talk about bikes, especially recumbents, and to look at what others have done to customize theirs.

So the real reason I wrote this article is to start the ball rolling. I would really enjoy reading about what others have done to their bikes.

Until then, happy trails tooo yooouuu until we meet again.

---

*Scott Groff rides with the NW rider group. He has recently traded in his Vision LWB for a 1998 Rans Stratus. □*

## The Ross Festina Low Racer

A No-Compromise Racing Recumbent

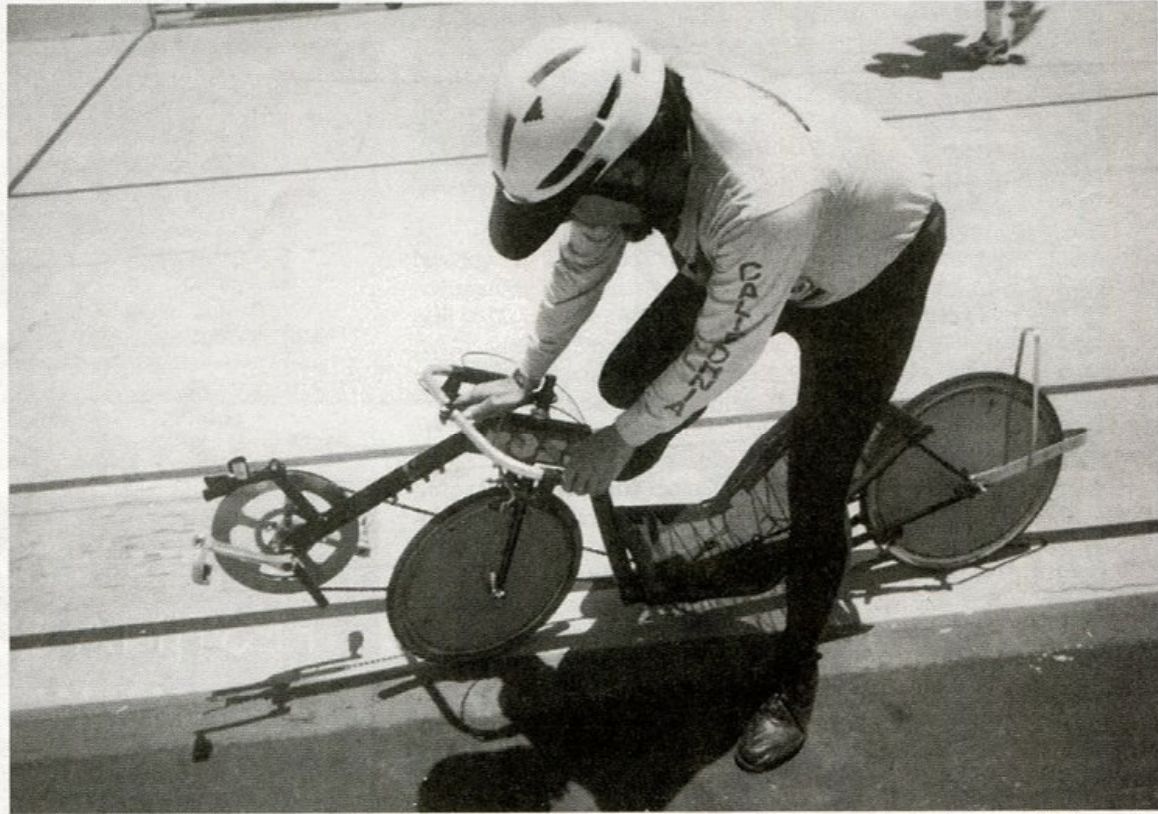
by William "Wild Bill" Volk, [bvolk@inetworld.net](mailto:bvolk@inetworld.net)

When I was growing up, like most kids, I was fascinated by auto racing. I remember when the film "Le Mans" came out, and still can recall the theme to "Grand Prix." The idea of racing along in a Porsche 917 was a fixation for quite some time. Luckily I fell in love with cycling in my teens, and other than a brief acquaintance with the New Jersey Highway Patrol during 1978 in a restored Mercedes 200... I never pursued auto racing.

Bike Racing, at least the UCI/USCF variant, is akin to classic 12 meter yacht racing. The rules on equipment are fairly restricted. Don't get me wrong, a top notch racing bike is a thing of beauty. I raced USCF and college events in the late '70's and the feel of a well constructed 'full-campy' silk sewup equipped bike, in a sprint, is amazing. Still, the demands of graduate school and an ever expanding waist line took me out of competitive cycling in the early 1980's.

Flash to the late '90's... and not only am I riding and racing recumbents... but I'm even running a racing series in San Diego (at the local velodrome). Part of the fun of running an event is the chance to try out a number of bikes. In December Tim Brummer, he of Lightning Cycle Dynamics fame, showed up with a Lightning M5 Lowracer (see picture). Lowracers are a style of recumbent that can be characterized by a very low seat height (typically less than ten inches from the ground) and a very laid-back seat angle (typically beyond 45 degrees). This was the first time I'd ever seen a low racer and I just had to try one out.

To be fair I have the coordination of a 12 month old toddler. It's a miracle I can even walk without falling. I can't skate, snow ski, water ski, or surf (bummer), and I've tried. Before cycling, the sports I participated in only required the ability to suffer and/or inflict pain (American football, lacrosse, and wrestling). So I often have problems riding 'bents. In fact I couldn't ride any 'bent until I managed to snag a ride on a Linear in '93 (Out of kindness, I'll not mention the other 'bents I attempted to



ride on). My first 'bent, a custom S&B built in '94 for my then considerable bulk, took me a week before I could ride it with any sort of control. I still find it hard to ride many of the bikes out there... but I have gotten better at it... and considerably less bulky to boot.

The M5 is a beautiful bike, and it was fast. However I was lucky to do one slow wobbly lap of the track infield without crashing. So I didn't have all that high of an opinion of low racers in general. Still, on the Internet, one Mr. Peter Ross insisted that his Festina was different. During a visit to the San Francisco Bay area in April of 1997 I managed to snag a ride on another low racer, the Challenge Hurricane. This was a bike I could deal with. It wasn't as low as the M5, and it wasn't all that light, but it handled rather easily.

Mr. Ross is nothing if not persistent, and in time for our June racing event he mailed me the subject of this article, a 1995 Ross Festina Low Racer that had been raced in Europe during the last few years. I managed to assemble the bike with-

out incident, partially due to his well written instructions.

The Festina is an impressive machine. Yes, it's low. The seat's a mere 7.5" above the ground. Yes, it's laid-back. The loaner bike has it's seat angle at 40 degrees above the horizontal. And yes, it's fast... really fast in a way that brings back the childhood memories of all those racing films. More importantly it's one of the most stable handling bikes I have ever ridden. It's eerie how easily you find yourself rolling along with what appears to be a hand holding you up, with the minimal sort of "kick off." This test pilot managed to pedal the 8 speed, 67 tooth chain ring bike up the Torrey Pines Grade ... and on the way back down, got to feel what 47 mph was like on what basically looks like a pedal powered street luge.

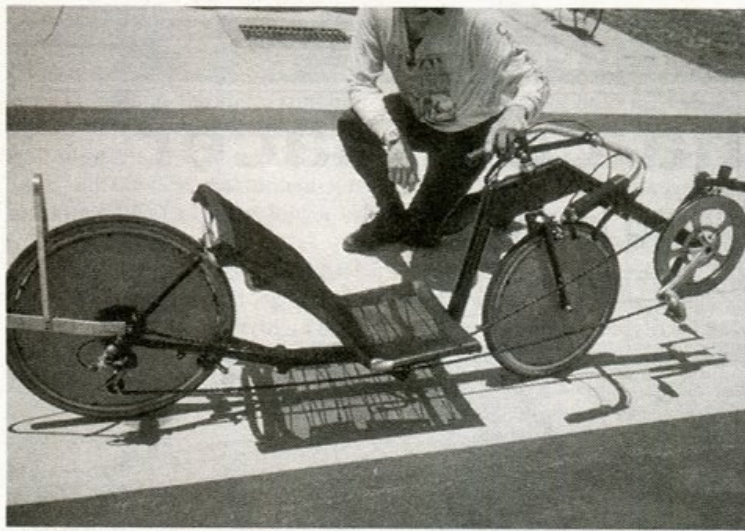
### Stable handling at any speed

The low height of the Festina also puts it under most of the headwind you might encounter. Winds decrease the closer you get to the ground and not much of anything

is as low as the Festina. Great fun when you have been riding with some folks and the wind shifts direction into your face. Makes them work even harder to keep up.

Now to racing. The object in racing is speed. It also pays not to crash because as Mario Andretti says "you can't win if you don't finish." In my opinion, the longer hpv events (the hour et. al.) require comfort. The Festina is also quite comfortable. Not only the mesh seat, but the ride of the bike is quite forgiving. The longish wheelbase and the compliant chain stays help.

So what about speed? HPV speed is a function of many factors. The rolling resistance of the wheels, the weight of the bike, and the power of the rider all matter. However one of the most important factors is the aerodynamic resistance. This is commonly referred as the effective area. The Festina's low profile provides a good starting point, fairings can reduce this area even more. On my commuting 'bent (with front and rear fairing) my best 200 meter sprint speed (in April '97 at the track) was



27.339 mph, using the Festina (in July '97) with a fiberglass/fabric partial fairing (my head sticks out, see picture) I was able to obtain a speed of 33.683 mph. What's more important is that I was able to ride 25.833 miles in one hour on the Festina as opposed to 17.917 miles on the bike I raced in April. I was probably tired from the sprint.

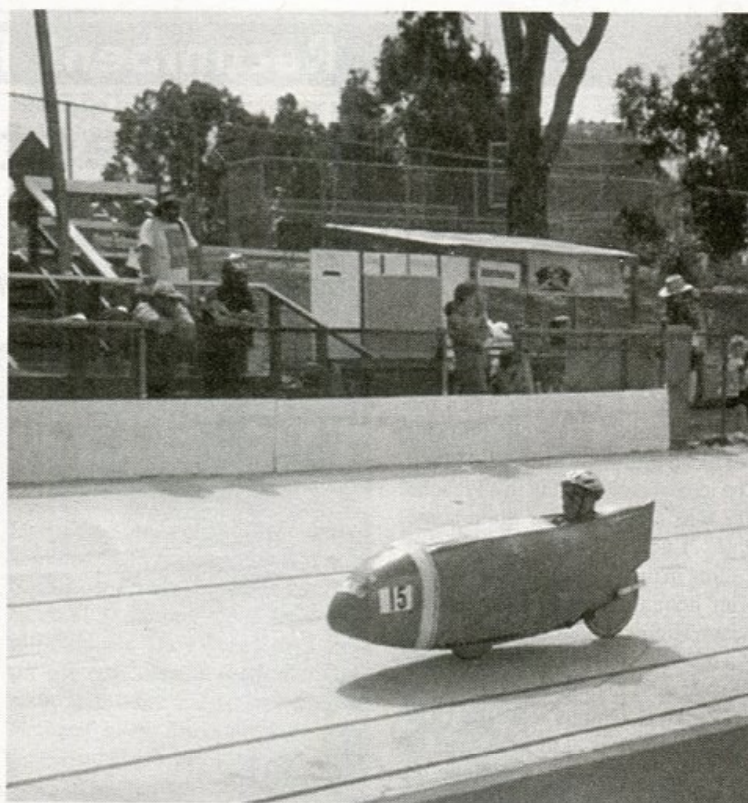
Can you ride to work with it? Sure, but it's designed for racing without compromise. The chain line does make sharp turns a bit of a problem, but it's not something you would encounter in a typical event. It's not an "ideal commuter" or touring bike. I wouldn't want to pick up the groceries with a F1 car either. But for racing and "event rides" it's a great choice. Now to the specifications. My loaner had an adjustable boom to allow for a very tall rider.

In addition Peter Ross has updated the Festina to use a smaller (more obtainable) front wheel. This has improved the already fine handling. I've made notes on where the specifications have changed.

#### Conclusion

Successful HPV Racing requires time for training and equipment preparation. You could build your own bike, but it would be difficult to match the low frontal area of the Festina Extra Low Racer. If you want to compete the Festina provides a great machine to campaign with. You can devote more time to training and/or fairing construction. The Festina allowed me to go from 6th to 2nd in overall racing results by providing measurable speed improvements—which speaks for itself. □

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** I got a brief chance to ride the Festina at the People Movers Bent Bash. It is a very fast and stable machine. I found the ergonomics to be more user-friendly compared to the M5 Low Racer that I had a chance to ride this past summer. The M5 lacked neck support and a natural head rest was the back wheel. Low Racers are for primarily for race tracks, however bike trails and country roads are within the realm of possibility. This would not be my first choice for street riding. Low Racers are fast, fun and the wildest ride you could hope for. Bill Volk's test bike is currently for sale through Peter Ross of Crystal Eng. UK and is currently in San Diego.



## Specs at A Glance: FESTINA LOW RACER

- PRICE: \$1200 frameset + shipping, customs and duty.
- TYPE: Low Racer ASS
- DIMENSIONS:
  - Wheelbase: 44"
  - BB height: 15.5"
  - Seat height: 7.5"
- Weight: 28 pounds
- Weight Dist.: 55% front, 45%
- FRAME: TIG welded CroMo.
- WHEELS: 451 x 28 rear, 390 x 28 front
- CRANK: 67-T. Egg ring 170mm
- DERAILLEURS: Customer spec.
- GEARING: 8-Spd 12-20
- GEAR RANGE: 45-124
- CHAIN: Customer spec.
- HEADSET/BB: Customer spec.
- SEAT: Crystal sling/mesh
- BRAKES: Customer spec.
- PEDALS: Customer spec.
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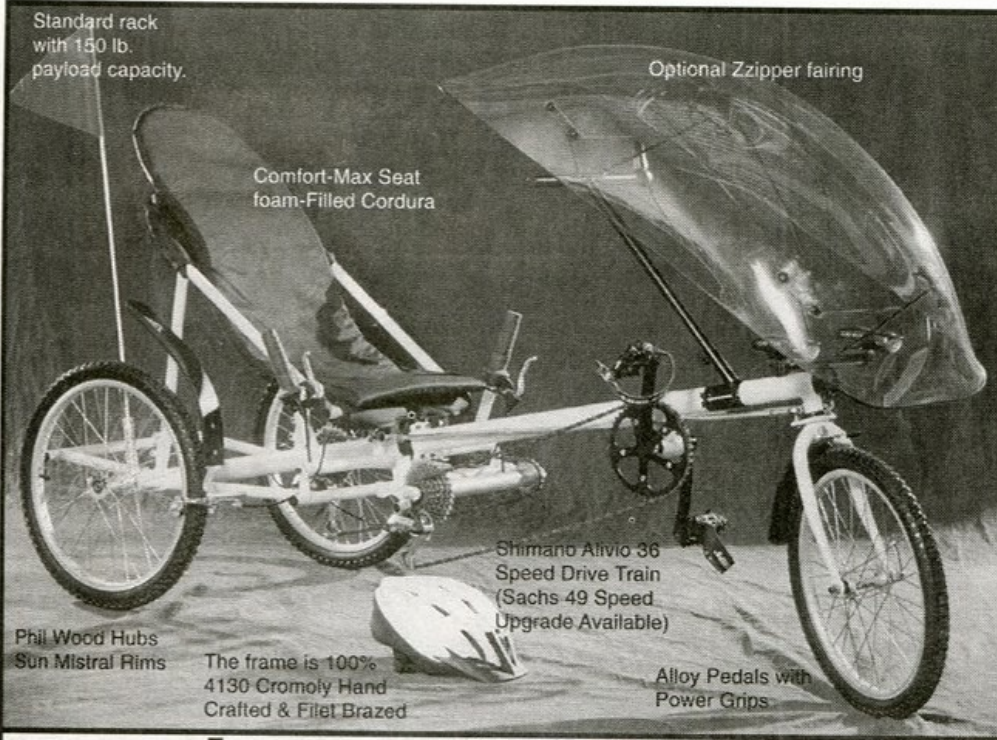
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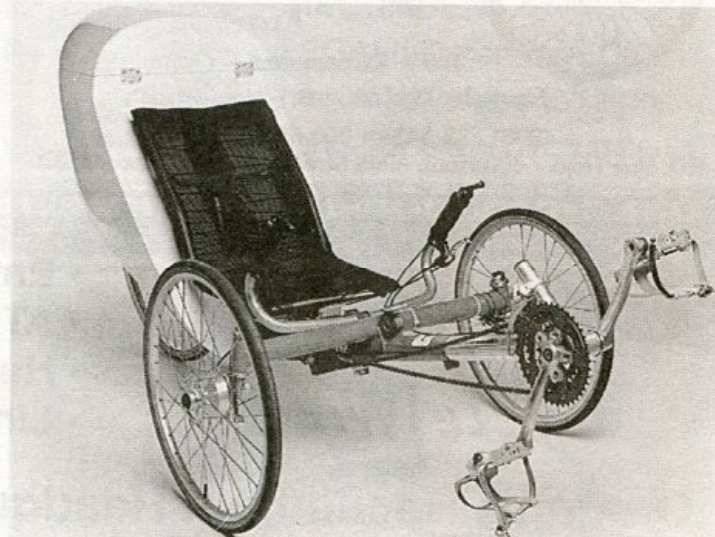


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# Recumbent Riders

## A Tribute to Herman Hoffer

by Michael Eliasohn

**H**erman Hoffer's goal was to pedal 100,000 miles by his 100th birthday.

It was not to be, but had he not switched to a recumbent bicycle, he probably wouldn't have even come close.

Hoffer, age 92, was killed June 7, 1997, in a collision with a car while riding his Tour Easy near his Ashley, Michigan home. According to an article in the League of Michigan Bicyclists Magazine, Hoffer apparently made a U-turn for unknown reasons in front of a passing motorist.

His grand daughter, Jodi Czuchna, said his final mileage mark was somewhere over 94,000 miles.

The retired farmer and factory worker didn't start bicycle riding until 1969, when he was 64. He rode across the USA in 1974 and 1975 and was a frequent participant in



organized bicycle rides and tours around Michigan.

large for Hoffer to try, so he ordered one without having ridden one first. (Kral, by the way, is 82 years old and still riding his Tour Easy.)

Hoffer quickly became an advocate of recumbents. In a letter he wrote in February 1997, he described himself as "a man who has put 79,245 *uncomfortable* miles on one mountain and three road bikes and 14,688 *comfortable* miles on a recumbent." In that same letter, he said, "I think I average about 2 miles an hour faster on my recumbent than on my other bicycles, but I quit riding them after getting my recumbent."

Had he not switched to a recumbent, he told me in June 1995, "I believe I'd have quite riding. I don't think I'd keep riding those uncomfortable bicycles."

Herman Hoffer certainly was an inspiration to bicycle riders and, I'm sure, to non-bicycle riders as well. A widower, he is survived by three children, eight grandchildren and two sisters. □

Hoffer rode upright bicycles until getting his Tour Easy in September 1993. He did so after Frank Kral of nearby Owosso got one and "bragged it up," as Hoffer told me in June 1995. Kral's Tour Easy was too

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# Calendar/Rider Group Listings

## 1997 EVENTS

### LOW DOWN & LAID BACK RIDE TO THE BLACK DIAMOND BAKERY

Saturday November 1, 9:30 am  
Kent, WA Lake Meridian Park parking lot.  
Regular lunch ride  
Contact: Bob Bryant 206/631-5728

### CALIFORNIA STREAMLINER SERIES,

Sunday November 2, 1998  
Hellyer's Velodrome  
San Jose, CA  
Registration at 10:00AM  
Contact: Bill Volk at bvolk@I  
NETWORKD.NET or Steve Delaire at  
tel.707/539-4203.

### DOO DAH PARADE

Sunday, November 23, 1998.  
Pasadena, CA Parade starts at 11am.  
Contact: Gregory DuVall 310/829-5662.

### LASERR RECUMBENT RALLY

December 1997  
Contact Fools Crow Cycle/Ed Deaton  
ph#904/224-4767 or email: edde@  
freenet.tlh.fl.us

### LOW DOWN & LAID BACK RIDE TO THE BLACK DIAMOND BAKERY

Saturday December 6, 9:30 am  
Kent, WA Lake Meridian Park parking lot.  
Regular lunch ride.

Contact: Bob Bryant 253/631-5728

### LOW DOWN & LAID BACK RIDE TO THE BLACK DIAMOND BAKERY

Saturday January 3, 1998, 9:30 am  
Kent, WA Lake Meridian Park parking lot.  
Regular lunch ride  
Contact: Bob Bryant 253/631-5728



Contact your local rider group to find out about off-season activities. Most rider groups are have little or no budget. Get involved! Start your own rider group!

## USA RIDER GROUPS

•**ALABAMA/GEORGIA** (North state): First Sat. of every month, 9 a.m. from Hokes Bluff, AL City Hall-Call Dave@205/492-3454 or Email: bur-gess@cybrtyme.com

•**CALIFORNIA, EASY RACERS** (Watsonville): 3rd Saturday of each month, 9:30am, ph#408-722-9797.

•**CALIFORNIA, (LA area):** Third Sun. of every month, 10 a.m. at Burton W. Chace Park, Mindanao Way, Marina Del Rey, CA. Chris Broom Email: cbroome@arco.com

•**CALIFORNIA, PEOPLE MOVERS,** (Orange County): Monthly rides to the beach in Orange County, Ph#714/633-3663.

•**CALIFORNIA, (Palo Alto):** Call Alvin Chin ph#415/571-5147.

•**CALIFORNIA, (San Diego):** Last Sat. of every month from the Mission Bay Visitors Center. Bill Volk, 2348 Lagoon View Drive, Cardiff CA 92007. Ph#619/824-8323, Email: bill\_volk@lightspan.com

•**CALIFORNIA, (Sacramento):** Recumbent Riders of Sacramento weekend and moonlight rides along the American River Pkwy. Call Gary @ (916) 947-1498, Dave @ (916) 483-4435 or Email: Recumers@aol.com

•**CALIFORNIA, EASY RIDERS EZ** Riders of San Dimas (~30 mi. E of LA) Most Sat. are workout type rides of 20-50 mi. Sun. are causal breakfast rides of 10 - 20 mi. Contact: odonnell@xis.xerox.com (for a ride schedule) & lscheetz@cyberg8t.com & leok@usa.net

•**CONNECTICUT** Recumbent Yankee Pedalers meet the second Sunday at 9am. Contact for starting point. Prospective riders can contact me: Dave Tipping 203/484-2937 or email: nz1j@juno.com

•**FLORIDA, FOOLS CROW CYCLES, LASERR,** (Tallahassee): Call for schedule. Ed Deaton ph#904/224-4767 or email: edde@freenet.tlh.fl.us

•**ILLINOIS WISIL HP** Vers., (Chicago area): Contact: Len Brunkala, 260 S. Channing, Apt.#1, Elgin, IL, 60120-6619.

•**ILLINOIS Riders,** (Chicago area): Contact: Fast Eddie Gin ph#773/237-6624

•**ILLINOIS,** (Champaign/Bloomington area): Tom Smith at ph#217/351-7305, Email tsmith@s.psych.uiuc.edu for info.

•**MASSACHUSETTS** (North Shore) Bent riders wanted! Zip areas 018 and 019, who might want to meet others of the same persuasion to ride on our nice backroads. Bob Hicks, 29 Burley St., Wenham, MA 01984, (508) 774-0906.

•**MICHIGAN:** Michael Eliasohn, 2708 Lake Shore Dr., #307, St. Joseph, MI 49085. Ph#616/982-4058.

•**MINNESOTA, MnHPVA** (Mnpls.): Meets 2nd Wed. 7:00 PM Lake Nokomis Community Ctr. Pre-Meeting Ride 6:00 PM - Mar-Oct. Contact: Mark Stonich @ 612/824-2372

•**NEBRASKA, County Cruisers** (Omaha): Ride on the 2nd Sat., 6-30 mi. Contact: Armand Gibbons, No fees, no dues, just lots of fun! Ph#402/553-4472. http://www.nfinity.com/~armandg.html

•**NEW MEXICO** (Albuquerque) Ride one Sunday morning per month. Contact Hester at Absolutely Recumbent Ph#505/345-7736

•**OREGON HPV ASSOC.** (greater Portland): Meetings rides and a bimonthly newsletter. Ride contact: Jeff Wills @ 360/254-3736 Email: jwills@pacifier.com OHPV, PO Box 614, Beaverton, OR 97075

•**TEXAS: R-BENT** (Recumbent Bicycle Enthusiasts of North Texas): 4th Saturday of the month. Call for time and location, Ph#972/329-1225, Web: http://web2.airmail.net/imbent2/bentride.htm

•**TEXAS:** (Houston, Texas): Ride on the 2nd Saturday, 8am start. Meet at Katy HS year round. Come join us Contact: Pat @ 281/347-3627

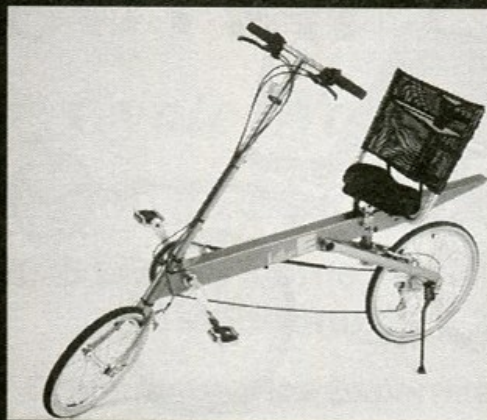
•**WASHINGTON, LOW-DOWN & LAID BACK Recumbent Riders** (Seattle, So. King Co.): Meet the 1st Saturday at 9:30 am at the Lake Meridian parking lot in Kent. The group also meets for impromptu weekly rides. Please email or call for schedule. Bob, Tel. 253/631-5728, DrRecumbnt@aol.com

•**WASHINGTON (SW)** Vancouver Bicycle Club recumbent rides meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month from the Old Holland Bakery. Ride starts at 9am. Gale Simpson @ 360/891-1947

•**WASHINGTON (SE) WRTW2\*** (Two Wheeled, Recumbent Riding Trombone Teachers of Walla Walla., Bill email: VonBruno@bmi.net

•**WASHINGTON DC AREA: W.H.I.R.L.** Meets Saturdays weekly 8 a.m. (9 a.m. winter) at the Viers Mill Rec Center, MD, north end of Beach Drive, weather permitting. Contact: Vic Sussman @ 301/565-3050 or whirl.cycling.org

•**WISCONSIN:** Greater Madison Recumbent Brigade. Last Saturday of the month 9am at State St. corner of the Capitol. May to September. Loose format. Bring suggestions for route. Contact: mfox@lss.wisc.edu



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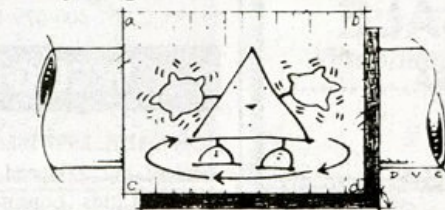
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## Classified Info

See page 48 for classified ad order form

RCN#43 ad deadline is: December 10, 1997.

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RCN ANY 12 \$40 POSTPAID USA.....  
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Issues available: #2-#41. Issues that are sold out at this time: 6, 7, 14, 23, 36, 37. RCN 26/27, 32/33 and 38 count as two (buyers guides). Please select alternates in case your selection is sold out. **Payment:** must be cash or personal check (USA), or bank draft in USA funds/cash outside the USA.

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**FOR SALE: BikeE 21-Speed.** Has 2" wider handlebars, accessory mounting bracket, custom pannier rack, fenders. Violet in color. Like new, < 20 miles. \$900. Thomas, tel. 802/655-5852 (43)

**FOR SALE: CUSTOM BUILT SWB** underseat-steering, 700c rear, 20" front wheel with hub brake. Triple crank with Sachs 2x7 rear hub. Fits riders 43-46" X-seam. Good experimenter, commuter for flat land riding \$400. 916/273-8818. (42)

## RCN CLASSIFIED ADS WORK!

And some are free. See page 48 for more info.

**FOR SALE/TRADE: 1998 Comfort Cycle Chaise 3 Trike,** black, upgraded 49-speed, fenders, Primo Comets. <200 mi. New in Oct.'97. Bob 253/631-5728.

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**FOR SALE: GOLD RUSH REPLICA,** medium size, Phil Wood hubs, Shimano drivetrain, \$1800. Call Erwin evenings 704/289-1243 (NC/42).

**FOR SALE: LIGHTNING STEALTH,** bright red, 20" front wheel, V-brakes, Shimano drivetrain \$1800. Call Erwin, evenings 704/289-1243 (NC/42).

**FOR SALE: LINEAR SONIC SWB.** Great shape, New lumbar seat. \$850 OBO. **FOR SALE: Linear LWB 42"** silver. New, not ridden. \$999. Both include shipping in USA. Omar Khieil. 5815 W. Hearn Rd., Glendale, AZ. 85306. Ph#602/978-3787 (AZ/42)

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See page 48 for classified order form  
Next ad deadline is:  
December 10, 1997.

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**1996 WHPVSC VIDEOTAPES** Las Vegas HPV racing-190 min. 2-VHS tapes \$30 postpaid. Gregory Du Vall, 2930 Colorado Ave. #D-12, Santa Monica, CA 90404-3647 or ph#310/829-5662.

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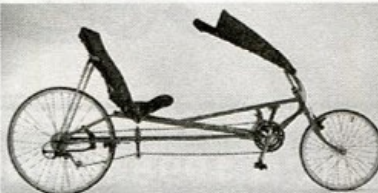
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**Buyers' Guide/Accessory Guide**  
•RCN#47 Sept/Oct '98 SuperGuide Update  
•RCN#48 Nov/Dec '98 1999 Season Preview

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- RCN#43 Jan/Feb '98 CLWB Buyers' Guide/ '98 Editors Choice Awards and How To Buy A Recumbent Bicycle
- RCN#44 March/Apr '98 SWB Buyers' Guide
- RCN#45 May June '98 LWB Buyers' Guide/ Recumbent Seat Shootout
- RCN#46 July/Aug '98 Tandem/Trike

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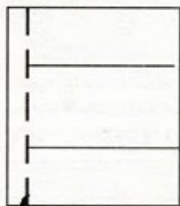
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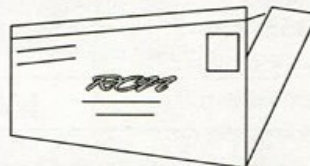


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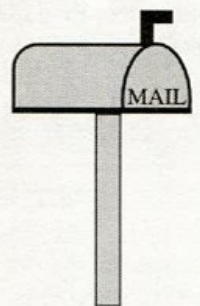


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### MULTIPLE COPY DEALS

- ANY-6 Back issues.....\$33/\$35.71/\$40
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### BUYERS GUIDE

- RCN#38 1997 Buyers' Guide (our LARGEST  
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### PLEASE MAIL ORDERS TO:

RCN, PO Box 58755, Renton, WA 98058  
RCN INFO-LINE: 253/630-7200  
RCN FAX: 253/631-5728  
EMAIL: DrRecumbnt@aol.com

### CIRCULATION/ORDER PROBLEM!?

Call 253/631-5728

**CREDIT CARD ORDERS:** People Movers is an independent agent for RCN and offers select options via phone/credit card. Call 714/633-3663. RCN advertised sales/specials *may not* be valid.

## Classified Ad Order Form

**Subscriber/Non-Commercial Rate:** \$15 for two insertions to 35 words. Non-Subscribers: \$30

**Commercial Rate:** \$35 or \$1 per word 35 word minimum, prepay only: Classified ad orders must be paid in advance and are taken by mail/Email/ fax only. Email: DrRecumbnt@aol.com. Call Ph#253/631-5728 for a commercial/display ad rate sheet.

**Subscriber Free Classified ads:** Parts Wanted. Parts For Sale, Bikes for sale-under \$599, Personal ads and Tour Partner Wanted/ ride announcements. Ads taken by mail/email.

Ad Deadline for RCN#43 is December 10, 1997

Check box if ad has been sent via email already.

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(END 35 WORDS)



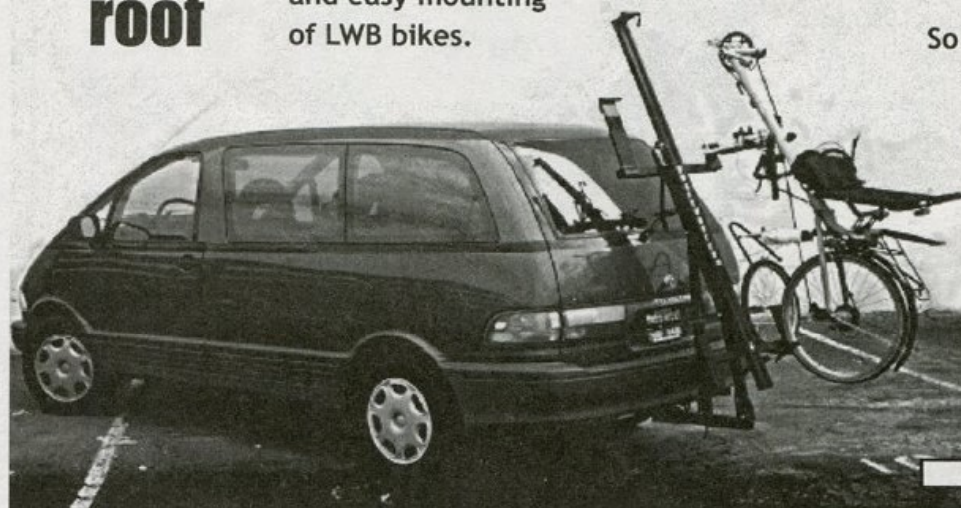
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PepleMovrs@aol.com http://www.recumbent.com

## Last months puzzle winner....

The first and third are diamond frame riders. The second rider is a recumbent rider. Remember the first riders answer couldn't be heard. The only answer he could give to the question was "I am a recumbent rider." Based on this, everything falls into place. The winning entry was chosen from a month a number of correct entries. It was submitted by Bill Volk—Congrats Bill.

## This months puzzle is a real easy one.....

Say you have two poles, each 30 feet high. There is a 40 foot long cable which is attached to the top of each pole and stretched between them. What is the distance between the poles? One entry per person.

In the case of more than one correct entry, the winner will be drawn from a random drawing. The winner will receive a one year RCN subscription and \$25 People Movers Gift Certificate.

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A blue Lightning P-38 #733, a blue BikeE #196272, a red BikeE (#19680), a purple BikeE (19646), a Black BikeE (19601) and a red EZ-1 (#189) were in the six bikes stolen from People Movers in May 1996

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