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Wandering Wheels Newsletter, August 1990

Wandering Wheels

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WHEELS' NEWS

P.O. Box 207, Upland, IN 46989

AUGUST 1990

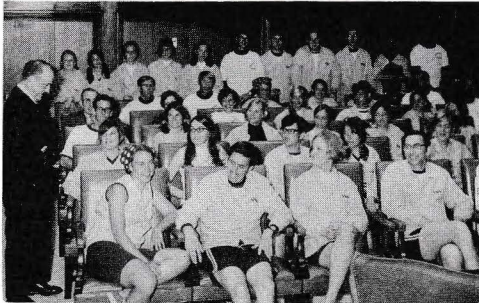
Area 317/ 998-7490

Greetings from Wheels!

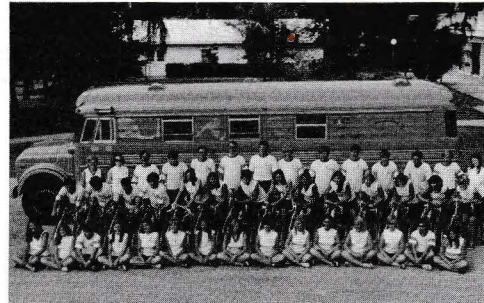
The following information is going to print a few days before our China departure and halfway through the '90 coast-to-coast tour. We're out there and out of here!

BIKE TRIPS

JANUARY The first January interterm bike trip took place in 1969. It covered 1,000 miles. The gang traveled from Savannah, Georgia, circled Florida and went up to the Florida capital of Tallahassee. Wheels has conducted January trips each year since 1969. Florida, California, Arizona, along with several Israel trips, have all been included in the routings. Nearly 1,000 young people have ridden with us on the January trips.



This is our very first interterm Team. You old old Wheels' vets look closely for a familiar face or two! (1969).



Our third January Interterm gang assembled in front of faithful Possum I, long since "dead". Looks like a military inspection!



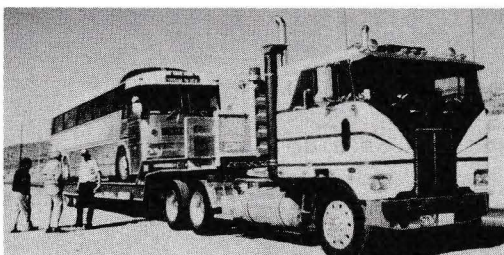
Our 1975 January Interterm Team singing in Bethlehem. Hopefully, we will be returning to Israel in years to come. Bruce Bendt is leading the choir.



Possum 3 is backdrop to yet another Interterm Team. This one was an early attempt to mix teaching with the biking. Dr. Tim Burkholder (far left back row) was the teacher.

January 1990 was a wonderful tour. The most popular January route is from Monterey, California, to San Diego and out to the desert, which was the route traveled by this year's team. The team had the safest ride in years. It is amazing the number of Wheels' vets we meet out on the road. The memories recalled from trips in years past are so rewarding. It makes me feel like one who has made a sound investment...good dividends coming back!

Our big Possum 7 broke down on us in Arizona. Circumstances were such that a one-of-a-kind wrecker was called into play to get it towed and eventually fixed. It is really hard to explain the special joys when circumstances speak of God's watchfulness!



Take a good look at this rig. It was designed to haul buses. Cost . . . \$95 an hour! When you break down in the middle of nowhere, half-way between Bullhead City, Nevada, and Kingman, Arizona, you pay the piper!

SPRING The guys stayed busy with four trips. All the tours took place up and down the east coast of Florida. Our homes continue to be church Sunday School rooms and small church sanctuaries. Like the January trips, we have been doing the spring break trips for twenty years. I'd be hard pressed to count the number of people involved—MANY 1,000'S!

The ocean is still one of God's most wonderful toys. It is perpetual motion! Man has tried to invent a wind-up toy, a gadget that is maintenance free and just goes and goes. The ocean is it! Man's best effort is Disney World and Wet and Wild. Well, we give 'em all three, along with the biking! Our days are still highlighted with devotional input and solid sharing.

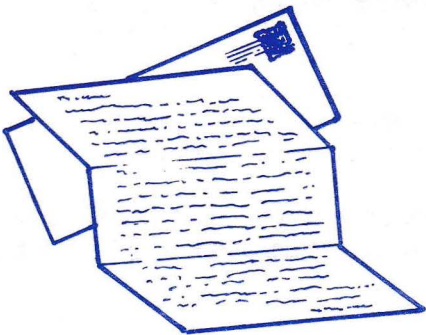
SPRING BREAK-AWAY COAST TO COAST

This was our third Breakaway. These trips are aimed at those who are wanting a little slower pace. The average age is about 55 with some as wonderfully along in years as their early 70's! We also sprinkle in a few young ones to spice things up! This year was no different. As the days on the road increase the riders become more intimate. The closeness that develops has a lot to do with the success of the tour. One of the gals in her 30's shared stories with us about her work as a prison guard. Many of the men were engineers (no problem when something broke!). Several of the gals were avid readers and were always shopping for books in used bookstores. It was great sport exchanging books and encouraging each other to read books the other had not read (Uncle Tom's Cabin, Les Misérables, Grapes of Wrath, and on and on). Keep in mind the majority of the Breakaway group is on the ride to basically ride and finish a coast to coast. The spiritual side of this run develops slowly. Early in the trip I appeared in my monk's robe, which also doubles as a one-man tent. One of the men saw me in the robe and thought for sure he had joined some kind of cult! It made for some laughs. Six weeks of solid "REAL" rubbing together allowed some honest stuff to surface. This was one of our best ever trips—right people, right weather, right distance, right serendipity! It all pointed to an A+ trip!



Breakaway '90 team members having a pow-wow. This was one "heck of a crew"!

Ann wrote and said, "Again—what can I say—the coast to coast was much more than I had ever hoped for. Before the trip I was mostly concerned about the physical challenges that would be facing me—and they were there—for sure, but I had no idea what a complete job of mind vacuuming would go on during those six weeks—I'll never be the same."



Linda's letter said, "It has been a real culture shock to leave the relative peace and simplicity of our coast to coast trip to come to the ostentatious and luxurious lazy life at a resort. I'm back to being the corporate wife and hoping the glow of my trip with Wheels doesn't fade too rapidly. I was impressed by your personal commitment to trying to make a difference in people's lives by showing them a different way of life. I liked the lack of waste—

the compactness of materials—the simple way of getting ready each morning. You gave us six weeks of really getting back to the essentials."



MERIDIAN STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

So much of our early work was servicing youth groups. Basically, a youth pastor would phone and ask if we would do something with his group. Usually we took the group on a bus trip or a week-long bike tour.

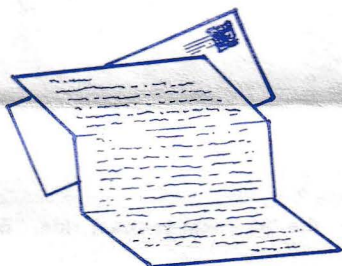
Well, we did an old-fashioned Wheels' thing late June. The Meridian Street United Methodist Church out of Indianapolis worked all year to raise money for a retreat under Wheels' leadership. A saucy group of kids joined us and we bused them Possum style to Pensacola Beach, Florida, broke out the bikes and rode every day eastward along the Gulf Coast. Our plans called for "biking and beaching"! We camped out each night in a nice private campground or a state park. The beach along this stretch of the Gulf is the prettiest you'll find in America. The water is a rich green and blue. Devotions were a snap held on the beach in the evening or at a lovely state park in the morning. The blend was so right. I shared with the group early on that Wandering Wheels was created to let young people know that they could unapologetically have a great time and, hand in hand with that, enjoy a gentle prodding from God—a prodding that would not strong arm them into spiritual growth, but rather cause the religious side of things to mesh with who they are at the moment. I shared out of the story of the demonic when Jesus confronted him in the graveyard. Jesus cast the demons out of the man. The story goes on to say that the local people watching all this were afraid...afraid of Jesus and the power He showed on that occasion. The thought I underscored was, don't be afraid of Jesus! Many young people aren't so much afraid as they simply feel getting serious with Jesus will mean giving up certain personal joys. During the week the devotionals encouraged them that, at the right time, a kind of spiritual focusing takes place and they will respond very much like the demonic who, that day, went and put on clean clothes and desired to leave the cemetery and travel with Jesus.

I picked up the Meridian Street Methodist's senior pastor's sermon from some weeks back and, interestingly enough, found similar thoughts in his March 11th message:

"I suspect it's much harder, and it takes longer, for us to experience this new life than we have assumed. It may not be so much one identifiable experience as a process. It is a development arising out of a new relationship. It may not be an accomplished fact at all. We may not be totally changed, only aware that we are changing. It may not be a sudden 'turning around', but for some just a confirmation that we are headed in the right direction. The critical point is that it can happen."

Nudging the kids by praying with them, telling stories that will be remembered, sharing Bible stories and mixing it all with a full day's LIVING helps the young ones to not worry about Jesus slowing things down for them.

Some comments from Linda, the Director of Youth and Family Ministries, are as follow: (She also complained about her bottom hurting from the cycling!)



Dear Wheels Friends,

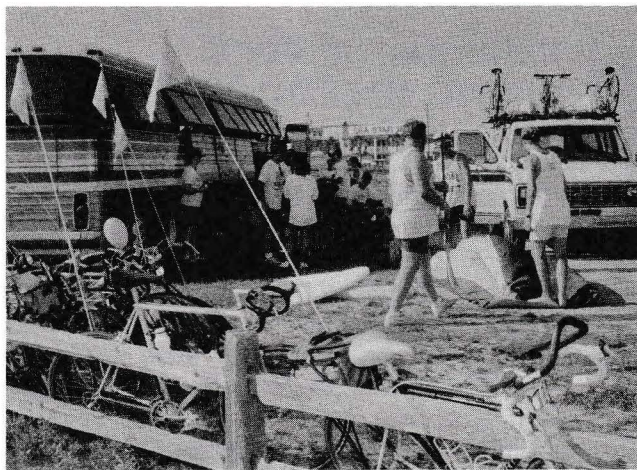
Thanks for our first Wheels' experience! The food and accommodations were superb! Your loving leadership was a true gift! It was pure joy for me to "be with" the kids without worrying about all the details of a successful retreat. We had so much fun, and were touched by your devotional leadership. I think the kids really got a new look at Jesus and the kind of person he calls each of us to be.

As I finished the "Coast to Coast" book last night, I was rejoicing, knowing that so many of the great life lessons of that long trip were experienced in little ways during the week. The miracle of their strong bodies being pushed and coming back for more, the community lessons of kindness, patience and encouragement we watched emerge were all so good! But most of all I'm thankful for the gift of "holy indifference" we witnessed begin to manifest itself. Our kids have all lived pretty "cushy" lives, and we deal a lot with their value system. It reminds me of Judy Collins singing, "It's life's illusions I recall, I really don't know life at all." It was great to watch them realize that not much is really needed for physical well-being. I think they do have a glimmer of what is truly important.

Much thanks for your hard work, your leadership and your friendship. We look forward to being with you again. We love you!



John Bonham helped lead the Meridian Street United Methodist Church gang. The kids nicknamed John "the Bear"! A lot happens in special little encounters like this one.



The youth group from Indy was real helpful when it came to breaking camp each day.

Coast to Coast '90

As I write this newsletter and by the time you receive it the 1990 tour will be closing out. There are 60 people on the tour riding the northern route from Portland area to Rehoboth Beach. So far so good. They are having warm weather and some long days. About 2,500 have done the tour to date. I just finished my 26th and can vicariously identify with every inch of this crossing. Ted Bowers is leading the group with Mel and Cindy Callison assisting, along with Tim Mahaffey, who is working on his 12th, and Phil Hand, who is working on his 9th! Russ Munn is playing mechanic and several old-timers are renewing themselves. Val Stevens, who rode with me way back in the late '60's, is along as a chubby 40-year-old and, I think, a grandfather! It is quite a privilege to have men like Val come back and ride with us. This is one of God's real blessings!



I asked Mel Callison to shoot some pictures of the '90 coast-to-coast team. Above you catch Ted Bowers, tour leader and Russ Munn, team mechanic, riding with the tailend. This is "OUT IN OREGON" somewhere!



Four team members from the '90 coast-to-coast ride. "Body language" says it all!

Thanks for praying for the ongoing success of our major tours.

SPEAKING OF PRAYER

There is a gal, Joan Borysenko, who has written many articles and books on mind and body wholeness. She says there is a growing groundswell of support for spiritual optimism, even in the Judeo-Christian tradition. She quotes from a book by Larry Dorsey, Recovering the Soul, that makes the case that consciousness is nonlocal and can affect our health in a nonlocal way, that is, my thoughts can affect you at a distance in a way that is good for your health. She goes on to say that if one talks to enough physicians you hear a lot of very interesting stories about cures that couldn't possibly have happened. The following is from her book, Guilt is the Teacher. Love is the Lesson:

"In my book I cite a well-known study by Randolph Byrd that made quite a splash a couple of years ago. Byrd was a cardiologist at San Francisco General Hospital who decided to do a study on the efficacy of prayer. He took 500 patients who had been admitted to the coronary intensive care unit, either for heart attack or to rule out heart attack, and he had them randomly assigned to a prayed-for and a not-prayed-for group. It was the pinnacle of controlled scientific research: a randomized double-blind study. None of the staff knew who was in which group so they couldn't preferentially give care to one group and not the other, and the subjects were chosen at random, so factors like sex, age, health, and demographics would balance out. Then he farmed out their names to prayer groups of various denominations around the country.

"When they broke the code at the end of the study, they found that indeed the prayed-for patients did significantly better on a number of measures. They got fewer infections, needed fewer antibiotics, got out of the hospital sooner. No one in the prayed-for group needed a respirator, whereas 16 or 17 of the others did. The differences were so significant that if prayer had been a drug, there would have been a run on the market for it. One well-known debunker of similar studies could find absolutely nothing wrong with this one. 'Now I can truly say,' he wrote, 'that physicians should take out their pads and write prescriptions for prayer.' There is no way to explain these results in terms of a brain generating consciousness in the body. The only way to explain it is that somehow the thoughts of one person can affect another person at a distance. Of course, for most of us this is just common sense."

BACK TO CHINA

We're out of here July 21. A 27-person team will fly to Hong Kong and visit Guangdong Province for a two-week ride similar to our last two outings. We hope to visit with several of our Chinese coast-to-coast riders. In fact, I have plans for paying for some of them to tour with us. William and Helena, two of our favorites, will serve as guides. An update on our China Run will come in the fall.

Quotations

"The sun, with all the planets revolving around it and depending on it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as though it had nothing else in the universe to do."

— Galileo Galilei

"Belong to people.

Accept pain as part of your life.

Know that you have made a difference."

— Author Unknown

"Good deeds are never wasted and not forgotten. Our human nature is such that we need to be helpful, thoughtful and generous as much as we need to eat, sleep and exercise."

— Harold Kushner

About 42% (more than 10,000) of the runners who finished the 1989 New York Marathon were over the age of 40. Of these, 56 runners were over 70. The oldest finisher of the 26-mile race finished in 6 hours and 43 minutes. He was 91 years old.

Aerobic exercise and other forms of "toughening" can have long term mental as well as physical benefits according to recent studies summarized in June 1989 Brain/Mind Bulletin.

"Research supports aerobic exercise as a factor in preventing disease. A study of athletes immune systems by Laurel Troger Mackinnon of University of New Mexico found that after a vigorous workout, the ability of white blood cells to wipe out viruses and tumor cells rose about 40%."

— Women's Magazine



The Possum trips are as effective as ever. Ted took a group to New York City and used the scooters in Central Park. Already this summer the Possums have gone to California and up north to Nova Scotia – mile after mile of endless travel. I'm sure not many people travel with us without knowing these faithful rigs are gifts to Wheels to encourage people in their own walk with God.

The maintenance of the buses is like the foundation of a house. No one ever really gets turned on by the underpinning of a house. The rugs, furniture, fixtures, etcetera, receive the praise. The same is true of the constant nursing that takes place maintenance-wise with the buses. Changing 200-pound tires, lubing all the hidden joints, the fine tuning of the air conditioning system are all so foundational to the trips' successes. Jim Gore heads this up and the driving staff serve as helpers. It's just plain old dirty, grimy, thankless work that has to be done.

The real pretty stuff is reflected in the letters we receive, such as the one below:

Dear Wandering Wheels,

I am writing this letter to both commend and thank you for a wonderful Possum trip that has greatly impacted my life.

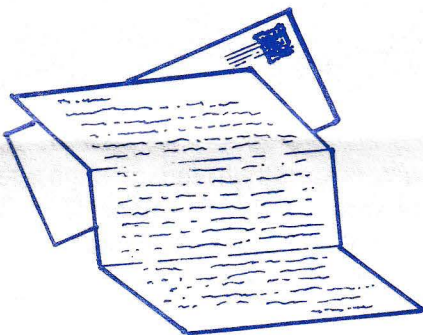
The staff that accompanied us (Cathy, Zane, Fred and Matt) was super. They really knew how to help us have a good time and set positive examples. Also, the crew is also to be commended on the outstanding display of patience. While climbing the mountain, no matter how long it took or how bad we whined, they never lost their cool.

I would also like to say thank-you for helping me to get my spiritual life back on track. The trip gave me chances to think about and many opportunities to grow in my

faith in Jesus Christ.

Once again, an outstanding crew and an outstanding trip. I will never forget it and feel that no Christian's life could be complete without experiencing this.

Sincerely,
Mary Huff



Our best intentions of getting this letter out in July have been thwarted in many ways. As this goes to print, Coast to Coast '90 has been successfully completed. We'll have an update in the fall on this.

While it is still fresh, I'm closing out with a couple of China thoughts and some amplification on our WINTER and SPRING Coast-to-Coast trips.

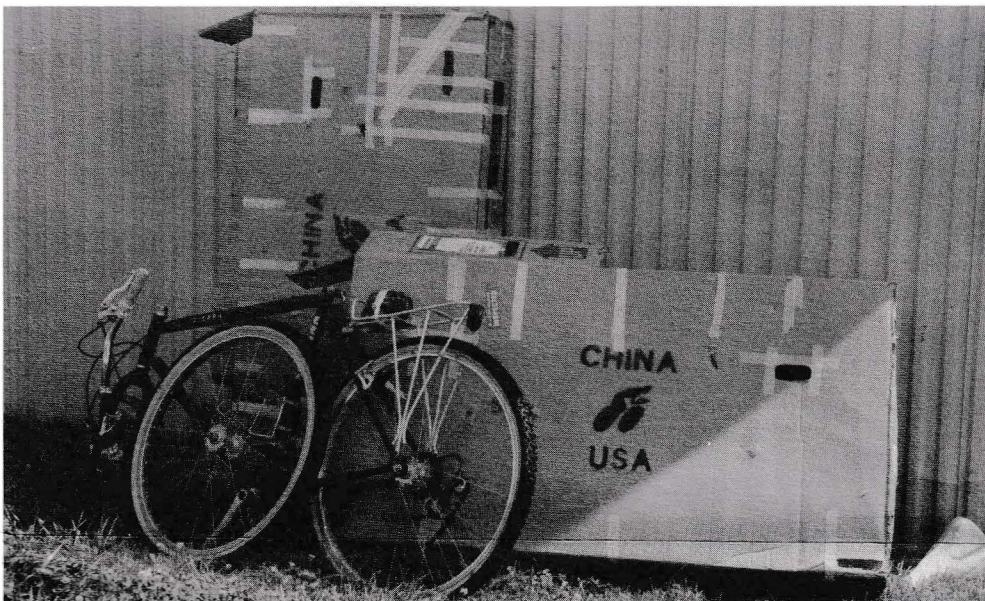
If you know of people who would be interested in the Wheels' schedule, drop their names and addresses in the enclosed envelope to us. Your financial help continues to be a source of encouragement, as well!

STORY OF A CARDBOARD BOX The boxes that carried the bikes to China and back were loaded and re-loaded on buses, trucks, planes and boats 26 different times. They were stacked, shoved, squished, pulled, pounded, hauled, and bounced over 30,000 miles!

They started their journey in China carrying new bikes to America. Wheels rescued them from local dealers and packed them with our bikes and sent them back to China. After our run in China, the whole procedure was reversed and the bikes and boxes were sent back to the U.S.

They were rained on and shown little care. The porters and dock workers treated them as obstacles to be gotten rid of. Often the porter would slide the boxes over rough concrete until the bottoms were threadbare. The tape was the only thing keeping the contents from spilling.

I have enclosed a portion of one of the boxes in this letter. No big deal, but it is an authentic piece of a wonderfully simple piece of paper that helped make our tour a success. No one ever brags about cardboard and I'm here to tell you that the boxes pictured here are herculean containers! It's a reminder of how wonderfully we're made with our paper thin layer of skin holding the contents in. Oh, the abuse our cartons receive! God has certainly provided us with a reminder of His craftsmanship when we look at the strength of cardboard and compare it to the resiliency and toughness of our containers!



China bike boxes.



The China Team was invited to a "feed" sponsored by a major glass manufacturing company in one of the cities along the way. Banners were out to welcome us. We asked if the company made bicycles since the banner seemed to indicate that the ROAM CO. was welcoming us. Come to find out the English words below the Chinese writing were their interpretation of "Upland Bicycle Wandering Wheels Co.!" It's interesting what can get lost in the translation of a word or two.

THE WINTER crossing dates are December 29 through January 28. The ride will cover the most southerly route possible. The starting point is San Diego with the ending point New Smyrna Beach, Florida. The daily miles will be 100 to 110. This is expected to be a high adventure tour.

THE SPRING crossing is a softer tour. The daily miles are 75 to 80. This is our 4th spring crossing. A total of 2,600 miles will be covered. The route will go through the Grand Canyon and wonderful Indian territory after leaving Southern California with St. Simons Island, Georgia, our goal.

In the spirit of the prayer thought in this letter, continue to keep our activities in your prayers.

Thanks!

Bob and Staff

BIG **COMING** **UP** **STUFF**

Fall Breakaway

September 14-23

FIRST WINTER Coast-to-Coast

December 29 - January 28

January California Trip

January 4-28

SPRING BREAKAWAY Coast-to-Coast

March 30 - May 11

40th (1991) Coast-to-Coast

June 22 - August 3

Russia (tentative dates)

July 20 - August 10

China

(hinging on interest)

For application information, contact

Wandering Wheels

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