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Wandering Wheels Newsletter

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### Wandering Wheels Newsletter, October 1982

Wandering Wheels

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# WHEELS

## NEWSLETTER

October 1982



Barbi and Bob receiving special award from Dr. Bob Jackson at large gathering in Milo A. Rediger Auditorium.

Single riders now married brought mates and you can't believe the number of babies they've produced!! Listen, single riders, don't ever worry about too much cycling affecting your ability to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it!" (Gen. 1:28) They came from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and points in between. Many who couldn't make it wrote gracious notes and letters. "Thank you, God, for these friends who have helped make Wheels what it is today and who continue to push it along!"

It was such a blessing to see the "gang" (which included many of you who receive this letter) that I am sure we'll want to have another big reunion soon--at least before another 25 years go by!

Get a load of the pictures! Wheels was honored by Taylor University during Parents' Weekend September 17-19. Believe it or not, Barbi and I have begun our 25th year at Taylor! What a privilege to have the weekend festivities highlight this 25-year history. It does not feel like we've been here nearly a quarter of a century. Whew! (That's a good, not a tiresome, "whew"!)

"Why it only seemed like yesterday..." was the feeling as each new arrival came into the Wheels' Kitchen for the Saturday morning reunion brunch.



People of "Wheels' past" passing through the Wheels' Kitchen. Such "war" stories you've never heard...many of them were true.

Just a little over two months ago we finished our 18th summer of biking. The summer of '82 went as smoothly as any I can remember. At one point we had 125 riders on the road at a time, participating in the Mexico-to-Canada trip, plus the Portland-to-Rehoboth Beach (via D.C.) trip. During that time the team members were riding, collectively, over 10,000 miles per day. Think of the exposure--compute it: 10,000 miles X the number of speeding cars approach-

ing from front and rear, the high speed coasts, holes in the road, fog, dangerously hot weather, et cetera! The safety record was over the top! In addition, all the equipment was "well used". Our follow-up rig, Grey Lady, was running with 150,000 miles, the van with 130,000, our "new used" sag wagon with 75,000, and the bus that took us to the West Coast and brought us back from the East Coast with nearly 1/2 million miles, and these figures related only to the cross-country trip! It was unbelievable the maintenance-free summer we had! My prayer at the start of each trip is that we'll just get to our departing point; then I breathe a sigh of relief and just pray a day at a time as we cross the U.S. on bikes. I'm not quite as concerned about getting the gang home after completing the tour--I don't feel quite the same pressure. If we have a breakdown coming home it's not as crucial because we normally have time to kill.

After two major U.S. tours and a month of touring in Vermont and then getting back to Upland with not so much as a major repair, I am filled with awe!! Can you comprehend the amount of metal rubbing against metal all this represents, not to speak of the 125 bikes and their 1,500 parts per bike X 225 bikes (total for the whole summer) which represent the total number of individual parts that could malfunction? Wow! One can look to the heavens and marvel at the stars, to the cells of the body and how they function, but I feel overwhelmed when I see a summer fit together the way this one did! Don't get me wrong, just because we have had a high



Part of the '82 coast-to-coast gang obviously in the later stages of riding...they are going bananas!



Heading north, the border-to-border riders moving past the Teton Mountains.



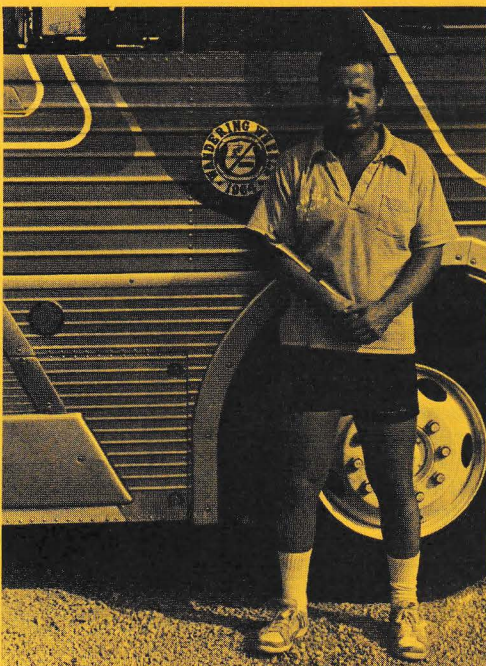
Yea General Motors! This little lady affectionately known as "Grey Lady" has 150,000 miles. It looks like Zane Huffman is trying to figure out where he is. No corn fields on this map!



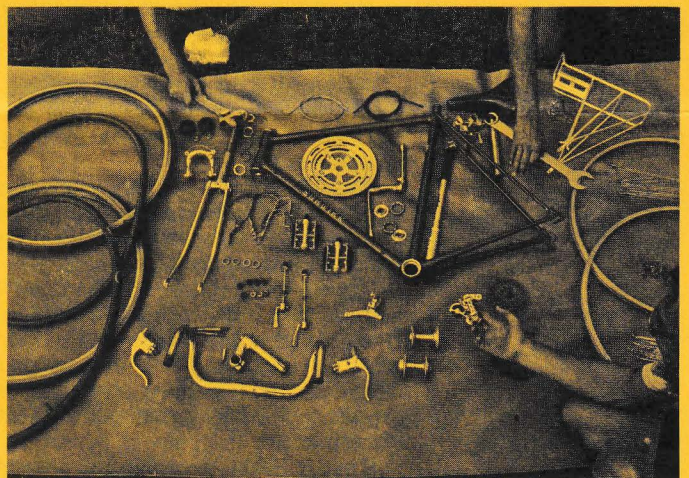
The van and the man, Phil Sommerville. The van has 130,000 miles, the man 24 years! Two good pieces of equipment.






Suzie Beers and Dawn Starks showing off the cooking grills and stove on the "Camel". Our other staff gal, Julie Dyson, missed the picture because of wedding duties (bridesmaid).



Almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  million miles on Possum Four. Wayne Dalland is one of the reasons for all the good miles--great mechanic, but real messy!



Galen handles one of about 1,500 parts on a single bike--a continuing miracle, all those parts moving, moving, moving.

degree of success does not mean that when disaster comes we will wonder where God is. I am confident when that happens that the ability to rejoice or to see good in it will be as reasonable as the times when everything is fitting together just right. I guess my  note is simply that it feels so good to run hard with  hundreds of people and then know they have all returned  safely to their homes and have been aimed more than ever toward living for Jesus Christ! **James 5:13** "Is anyone among you suffering? He should keep on praying about it. And those who have reason to be thankful should continually be singing praises to the Lord."



The Kitchen is coming along inch-by-inch. I was asked when I thought it would be finished. I realized as I was answering that question that it probably won't ever be finished--it will always be about 10% undone. However, it is getting nicely broken in. It is booked about every weekend from now through November. Most of these are Friday night through Sunday afternoon retreats and the bicycles are used in conjunction with the kitchen facility. The combination makes for a real ministry.

By the way, did you know that one of our best church services is held in a junkyard? Upland is famous for many things and one is a farm that is affectionately known as "Pigland". Granted, this place is a little run-down, but the farmer and his wife are special people. They have allowed people to dump old cars, machinery, you name it, on the farm, and at first glance it's not too desirable a place. When you get under the surface, however, there is a gold mine of history and memory in all the junk. It dawned on me one day that holding church out there would be a natural. The kids could rummage through the junk, find something that they could relate to and share a "God-story" or spiritual hope with the group. So far we literally have had to cut short the response on the part of those sharing in order to get the group back to the Kitchen in time for Sunday dinner.



One of the kids sharing at the junk yard. Quite a place for church, huh?

We have had our first meal with some of the single gals and their children. It is our hope that this will become the standard "bill of fare". Along with activity picking up in the Kitchen is our first staff of gals to help with work related to running the Kitchen. We have rented an apartment for 3 gals, one working full time and the other two part time. It is very reminiscent of a much earlier time when we started with a smattering of part-time men who lived in a trailer (mobile home) owned

by Wheels. The gals are to the Kitchen what the guys are to the buses.



You're looking at the new building that is replacing the old original Wheels' shack.

Steve Manganello's office area is getting a major overhaul. In fact, it is being replaced from the foundation on up. It should be real functional and quite cute with a Cape Cod look à la "Dave Stouse and Company". Sue's office will go in there, along with mine. The upper story will be for silk-screening and other lay-out type projects. The building we are replacing was 40 years old and was intended to last through World War II! For those of you who remember old "Fairlane Village"...well, this was the last building to go.

Israel via bicycle, at least, has been scratched for January. There is still some interest in a bus/walk tour, however, so if you are interested contact us. Last year's was so good that we are going to repeat the trip again this



January only starting farther north in San Francisco and coming all the way south to San Diego. The riders will have a good ministry on this trip and, as in the past, good growth should take place. Although it is basically for the Taylor gang, anyone is welcome to participate.

Just in case you are wondering what's up our sleeve for a little twist, hold on to your hat! Wheels plans to sponsor a coast-to-coast ride basically involving "older" people. More and more there are people in their 40's and 50's who want to ride with us, so why not take a whole team across America on bikes?! (I used to think 50 was "old"... until I turned 49!) If the trip comes off it will begin the first of May and run through the middle of June. Wouldn't that be "neat", a team of well-seasoned tough old birds doing what, traditionally, the younger ones have done??



This is really the start of our busiest Possum runs' season. The guys continue to plug into the weekend bus ministry and do all the good things with the buses and through the various environments visited that also take place while riding bikes. They just finished putting new carpet in Possum 4 and it is now going into its fifth year of service. It will soon need to be re-upholstered, as well. Oh, the sweet hours spent sitting and sleeping on the bus cushions in #4! Pray with us as winter comes on and the driving gets more and more serious.



Your financial HELP continues to be a blessing! Most people who are ministered to through the program are amazed that we can do it so cheaply. I tell them that about 20% of the price comes via gifts from people who have also personally experienced the Wheels' "thing". I feel pleased to be able to brag about YOU, the unsung heroes of the program! THANKS!!

Love and warmest Christian regards,

*Bob*

Bob

# Bicyclists pedal way from coast to coast

By NANCY RIDGEWAY  
of the Journal Star

PEKIN — Cycling through a hailstorm may sound exciting and dangerous until you consider the experience of slowing your bike while a herd of cattle passes among you and your friends.

"I have overcome my fear of cows," exclaims Alexandra Mena of Ohio. She then skips from the cattle drive story to another adventure about her fear of being sucked up by a "Killer Combine" as she passed the monstrous red machine on a road in Iowa.

Mena is one of 76 hot, tired and hungry cyclists who stopped in Pekin last night as they completed their fourth week of biking coast-to-coast through the Wandering Wheels program at Taylor University, an interdenominational Christian college at Upland, Ind.

The group departed from the Pacific Ocean at Portland, Ore., June 16 and expects to roll the tires of their bikes into the Atlantic Ocean, 3,300 miles later, at Rehoboth Beach, Del., on July 28.

This is the 23rd trek across America for the Wandering Wheels program, organized by Bob Davenport, all-American football player in the mid-1950s and football coach at Taylor University.

Davenport's football career led him to speaking to youths, and he learned, "It seemed their (youths') one plea is there is nothing exciting happening in church. I decided to haul off and do something adventurous (the coast-to-coast trip), and the kids came back excited. That was my inspiration."

Davenport estimates nearly 1,400 people of all ages have made the voyage across America through the program since its inception in 1964.

This year's group includes 27 women and 49 men ranging in age from 15 to 57. Cyclists spent the night with families in the congregation of First Baptist Church here.

"This is the first time on this trip we will sleep in real beds," says a freckle-faced Randy Dodge of Florida, obviously eager to savor the comfort. Up to now, sleep has been found at swimming pool sites, fairgrounds, high school gymnasiums and other unlikely spots.

While in Pekin, the group also presented a musical program and a film of a previous coast-to-coast trip at the church.

This is the second coast-to-coast trip for

Dodge, whose brother and sister also are pushing pedals across the nation with the group.

"I decided to go last summer," says the 1981 graduate of Taylor University, clothed in the group's uniform, a navy and white T-shirt advertising the Wandering Wheels program and navy shorts. "I enjoyed it so much, I decided to go again."

Dodge adds, "One of the most important aspects is getting to know ourselves better, both our faults and strengths. With this much stress, and living together day in and day out, there is no way you can put on a false exterior," Dodge says. "It's a mental challenge, trying to stay motivated and be enthusiastic."

But, there also is the physical challenge.

In addition to the magnitude of miles the group is biking, surroundings also play a big part. Cyclists have pedaled through a section of desert in Oregon, strained muscles as they pumped up mountains, experienced genuine fear as they were pelleted by hail Togwotee Pass, Wyo., shivered as one got a flat tire on his bike and built a fire along the road to keep warm, and stood motionless as a cattle drive bustled among the bikes in Oregon.

They also have experienced the thrill of jumping into a cool mountain stream, viewing many of nature's wonders and being hot when snow surrounds them.

And they have a new perspective on things once taken for granted. "Unlimited showers, sinks and toilet paper. ... That is heaven," says Mena, laughing, as she recalls the group's stop in Douglas, Wyo.

But there's much more than that. Mena adds, "I wanted to learn more about myself, people and God. This is an incredible learning experience."

Galen Classen, a veteran biker who has made the trip nine times adds, "I know I can make it now; so I try to meet people along the way. I talk and get a feeling for the community. The trip is unique because of the kindness and friendliness of the people we run into along the way at supermarkets or churches. Everybody likes us."

Davenport expresses the main goal. "I want to get everybody across safely and do it with as much adventure as the people want. But, in the long run, I hope there is a residue of the spiritual things they learn that they can draw on for the rest of their life."