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Wandering Wheels Newsletter

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Wandering Wheels Newsletter, December 2005

Wandering Wheels

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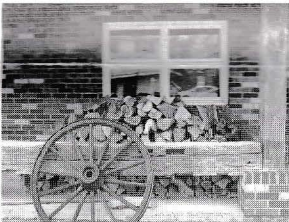
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"KITCHEN"

As I'm writing this newsletter, the phone hasn't stopped ringing, people looking for open dates to use the Kitchen-Retreat House. Last year we had 185 different groups use the facility.



This pile of wood is a good sign for expected use of the "Kitchen" this winter. We have three other piles of wood stacked around the building.

One of the great uses of the "Kitchen" is family reunions. It really lends itself to having a "spot", and things to do, for everyone.

There are so many little corners for chitchat or to sit by yourself and read. Of

course, the men are watching Nascar or a ball game. Many of the women are comparing recipes in the cooking part of the facility. Swimming occupies many hours for the young ones. The teenagers play outdoors (basketball, football, etc.), as well as indoors with all the table games. The fireplace is a natural gathering place and the player piano gets a work out!

As if all this weren't enough, Wheels is in the planning stages for building a mini-miniature golf course out behind the building on the concrete slab. We need an activity where grandpa and the kids can "hang out"--this should work!



Start of mini-miniature golf course.

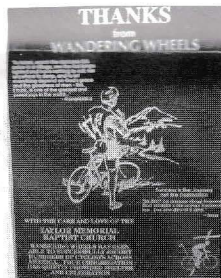
The "heart" of the Retreat House is still weekend church fellowship usage. Stephen Zirkle, a youth pastor from nearby Mount Vernon, Ohio, shared, "Thank you so much for allowing us the privilege of staying at your wonderful retreat center. The many times that I have been there and worked with you have been superb."

COAST TO COAST (62nd)

Great trip! The team was very compatible. Most of us were strangers at the start of the trip and soon became family. Early on in the trip I made the announcement that I had been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Genuine feelings of concern were shared. The expected level of sympathy was short-lived when, after a few days, seven of the 27 men stepped forward and welcomed me to the "Mr. Prostate Club"! That's right, one-fourth of the guys had experienced, and successfully whipped, prostate cancer! My doctor friend guaranteed me there was no relationship between biking and prostate cancer. Most information on prostate cancer suggests the male population will experience prostate cancer if they live long enough. Something else could well get them first. The cancer scare has given me, and I'm sure others, as well, a deeper appreciation for the number of gals who have quietly fought their battle with breast cancer.



Called the sentinel of the desert! When we first see the giant saguaros we feel like they're really looking out for us.



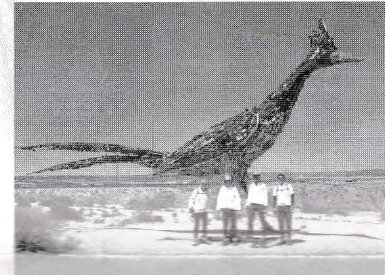
The plaques we gave out over the past several years are still prominently displayed in churches. They are as much a source of inspiration to our new riders as they continue to be to the church members.



Things are definitely bigger in Texas!



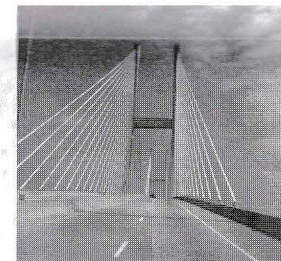
This coming year's ride in Louisiana should serve up some reminders of the devastation of the hurricanes.



Just before entering Las Cruces, New Mexico, you see a large roadrunner on a hill. Curiosity gets the best of you and up you go. Upon closer inspection, this huge bird is made of junk. You name it, the bird has it!



Remember John Wessels? Friend, Carol McEachern, came to encourage John on his make-up miles from where he took a spill the year before. So, John officially completed his 2004 ride.



Beautiful new bridge takes us into Brunswick, Georgia. It's been several years in the making.

One of our riders was riding with a colostomy bag (what a tiger!), not to mention another rider, Bob, who had lost a leg and was riding with a prosthesis!

What a great time to live, considering all the medical advances that provide these wonderful extra years of productivity.



The last three miles of the 2005 coast to coast.

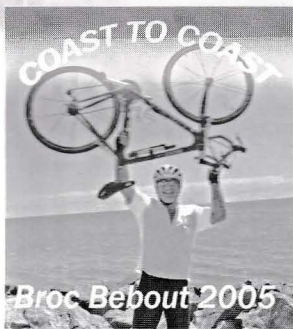


Bob Benhoff was a real testimony to toughness on the coast-to-coast trip. He lost a leg many years ago and has continued normal activity over the years. Look closely--he turned his prosthesis around and created quite a stir!

I'm equally thankful for the number of people who prayed for my recovery. The cancer was a wake-up call...don't waste these wonderful years left to live!

Several years ago, Wheels experienced its first death of a rider. Dick Brown, a brawny, tough guy who ran marathons all over the world, over extended himself on a major climb. He'd had heart by-pass some months earlier and had a clean "bill of sale." What a shock! Well, on this past Spring's coast to coast, we had another similar incident.

Broc Bebout, 57, had heart by-pass 18 years ago and, like Dick Brown, was robust and the "picture child" of health. Broc was very upbeat, an encourager, and simply a "giver." After his by-pass 18 years ago, he learned to eat right and take care of himself, adding years to his life. Biking spiked his health. Pat, his wife, paid her husband a surprise visit a week before the end of the trip. She said that the coast to coast was the trip of a lifetime for her husband. In retrospect, her visit was very timely. They had a few great hours together. Wonderful closure!



Broc Bebout -- Mission accomplished!

Everything that could have been a negative turned positive. The big surprise was how far Broc's story traveled. Here at the Wheels' Office we learned his story was carried by the wire services as far away as South America, England, Central Europe, Asia and Russia. Newspaper article titles read: "Hoosier Cyclist dies one day after ride of a lifetime." "Man who had heart by-pass crosses U.S. on bike, dies." One article quoted his wife saying, "Bicycling became Bebout's ticket to nearly 20 years of good health after quadruple by-pass surgery."

Trinidad was a sleepy, old town, mostly Spanish, having seen its better days. We found out it was once the "sex change" capital of the world. I guess the main business, sex changes, went the way of so many businesses (out sourcing)! The route from Trinidad to Stonewall, and on up to

God has spared Wheels over the years. So many close calls, all of which have a way of increasing the faith of those who have been on rides with us. Sixty-two crossings and still counting!

MOTOR SCOOTER TRIP

When the 2005 schedule came out, Wheels' vets who lived near where we would be traveling, made arrangements to meet us en route. Stan and Valli Yoder dropped by as we passed through Kansas City, Missouri. Wheels helps support the Yoders as they minister to students from Iraq. Stan and Valli were a part of our early Possum bus ministry. They're doing a super job, very patient.

The scooter continues to be a blessing. More and more people who can't do the bike trips are joining us. Most of the good stuff that happens on the bikes happens on the scooters (probably get a little fatter on the scooters!).



Just a few feet off the highway on scooter run.



"Bass" store in Springfield, Missouri.

COLORADO

Colorado! What a beautiful place! Already too many people! In 18 days of travel we went from Trinidad north to Steamboat Springs and back east to Loveland, about 700 miles. Considering the tough climbs, it was all we wanted. The joy of our trips is as much in the mystery and surprise waiting for us in places we've never been.



The bikers were really "pooped" after this climb up Trail Ridge! Some of the scooters even had to be pushed to the top!

Walsenburg, is a little known treasure. We camped at Stonewall, once called Purgatory. According to Beverly, owner of Wall of Legends Guest Ranch, the Spanish discovered gold in the area. They enslaved the Indians and forced them to mine the gold. The Indians rebelled and killed the Spanish. More Spanish returned to perform "Last Rights" for their brothers. Their belief was that without the "Rights" the dead were lost in Purgatory forever. This sprinkling of history along the way continued to liven up the tour.

Up the road, we spent the night at the Community Church in Gardner. Don't blink, or you won't see this small, once vibrant, little community! The congregation is doing a wonderful job of keeping Jesus a part of the community! They fed us, comforted us, and provided a welcoming feeling. At 60 miles an hour, in cars blasting up the road, you'd never

experience this kind of warmth!



Scooters in rainstorm during Missouri run.

Berry Huffman, Wheels' vet of the '60's, was our host in Colorado Springs, the evangelical mecca of the U.S. Young Life and Navigators were some of the first Christian organizations to settle in Colorado Springs.

David C. Cook Communications, a Sunday School material printing operation, Focus on the Family, Youth with a Mission, and a number of missionary societies, also call the Springs home. Interestingly, next door is Manitou Springs, home to many followers of witchcraft and the New Age movement.



"Which way did they go?"

Had breakfast with Dave and Nanci Pyle in Denver. Galen Classen greeted us in Loveland. He was a major player in the '70's and '80's. Traci (Grier) Minarski and husband, Mike, visited us in Grand Lake. Traci and her family

Even the motor scooters had a hard time on the passes in Colorado.

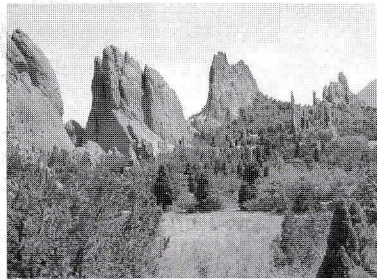


Even the motor scooters had a hard time on the passes in Colorado.



Colorado at its "high altitude" best!

have been a part of Wheels in past years. Wonderful remembrances! Many bouquets thrown our way reminding us of the spiritual purpose of Wheels. It takes looking back to celebrate God's working in our midst!



Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



Malcom Kane, trying to warm up high in the Rockies.

Wheels completed two Circle America tours, 1985 and 1987. The bunkhouse was given to a sister Christian organization located in the Smoky Mountain area under the name of Eagle Rock. The following article was sent to us:

Big Wheels Keep on Turnin'

"Last month, we reached a bittersweet milestone as the infamous Wandering Wheels bunkhouse was finally removed from the grounds of Eagle Rock. Nicknamed 'The Mobansion' by youth from First Presbyterian of Orlando for being part mobile home, part mansion, the bunkhouse was finally hauled away to its new home in North Carolina. This major endeavor involved clearing trees, moving large rocks, and circumventing the barn to ease 'her' out over the basketball court. Once out of Eagle Rock, the semi-truck hauling the Mobansion strained to make it up the steep grade of Flats Road, and then narrowly missed a telephone pole as it turned onto the Foothills Parkway. It was a somewhat sad sight to see as the bunkhouse was only the second structure to be put in place at Eagle Rock in the early '90's.

"Originally used by the cross county Christian bicycle ministry, Wandering Wheels (WW), this revamped tractor-trailer sported over 40 bunks and several lounges. Coach Bob Davenport, former UCLA fullback and founder of WW, worked with Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ in the early days of that ministry. WW gave Eagle Rock the rolling bunkhouse, and now, we have passed it on to Icthus Retreat Ministries

directed by our new friend, Bill Dingle. This process has allowed us to free up land which prepares the way for our new permanent bunkhouse. As I recalled all the laughter, prayer, fellowship, and late night pranks that went on in the Mobansion - and the goodness of God's provision - all I could do was smile."



Source of inspiration on the way.



Small Country Store that served as home. Literally in the middle of nowhere!

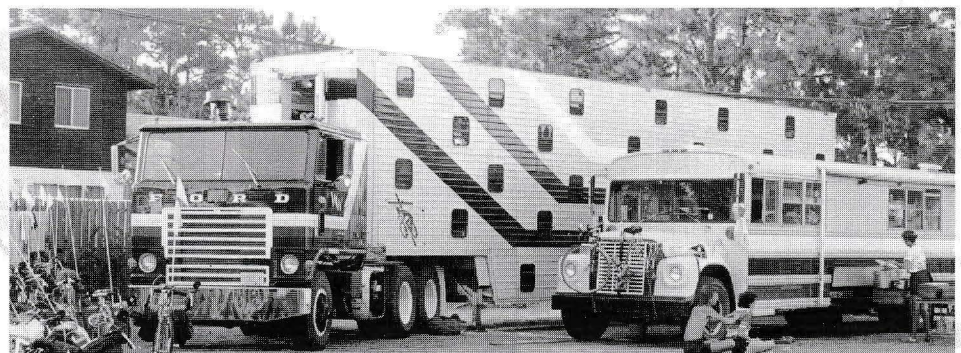
Toponas hardly exists. It was the only possible place for an overnight on our way to Steamboat Springs. Here in the middle of nowhere is a place on the map with a population of TWO people! They invited us to stay in behind the store (filling station/liquor store/post office/tourist trap). They had some of the classiest collectors items seen in Colorado. They cooked for us and became our life source for the afternoon, night and next morning. Wouldn't want to be on the road without these kinds of "welcomes!"

Our good friend, Win Dermody, played host in Steamboat Springs...very helpful. "Thanks for the breakfast rolls, Win!" The remaining legs of the trip east were filled with encouraging welcomes. No small feat getting everyone packed and on their way home!

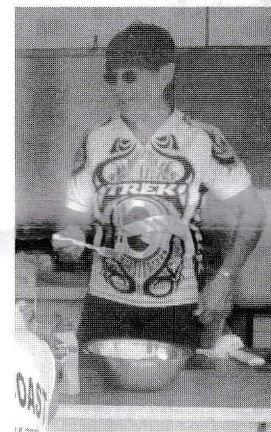
WHEELS' "BUNKHOUSE"

Twenty years ago! Wow, it seems like an eternity! Maybe like it never really ever happened! 1985 was the year Wheels ventured out on an 11,000-mile, 11-month bicycle trip. The 1985 Circle America tour involved some 70 participants. Most of the riders combined the cycling with academic studies, work projects and the satisfaction of nearly one year of travel.

Semi-tractor and trailer.



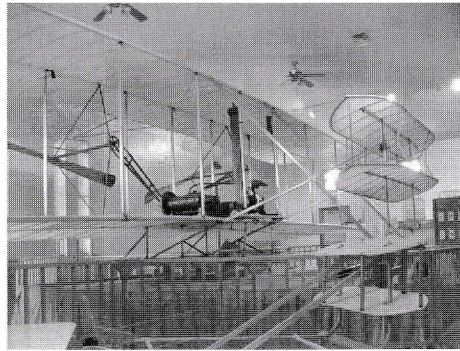
A real "roadside restaurant!"



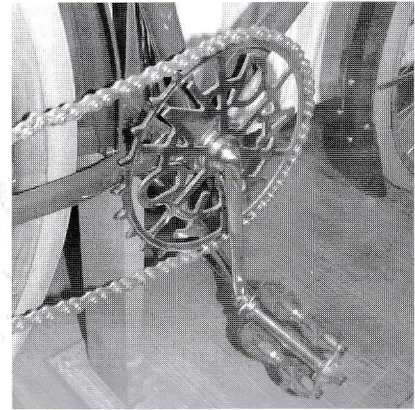
Marilyn Lehman, faithful cook, truck driver and wonderful spirit, suffered a heart attack this past Fall. What a shock! She hardly missed a beat (no pun intended). She's recuperating in Texas. A model patient!

FALL BREAKAWAY

We changed our route for the Fall Breakaway. Janech and I felt, "Better stay close to home in case complications set in on the prostate treatment," so we did a big "Indiana thing". Really quite good! Most of us were surprised at how much there is to see close to home. We visited the gym in Knightstown where the movie, "Hoosiers", was filmed; rode to Wilbur Wright's boyhood home and museum; hit a great little country zoo (lions, tigers, the whole nine yards!). Muncie has the world's most complete model airplane museum...great show! We worked our way back to Upland and the Wheels' Kitchen. The next day we checked the wind and bused the team 40 miles against the wind and let them ride home with a tail wind. Berne, Indiana, was another day...Amish and all, plus a Bed and Breakfast. Fun! Fun! Fun! It was back to Upland for a "T" shirt contest. Riders were invited to bring "T" shirts from past Fall Breakaway trips. Prizes were awarded. We wound out the week by visiting Chip and Janice Gosnell and did the James Dean car show in Fairmount. All in all, a great week of fellowship. Our 90-year-old hero, Ed Slaybaugh, took an unfortunate spill the first day of the ride. He's mending well. "Hope to see you next year, Ed!"



Great transition, visiting Wilbur Wright's Home, realizing he started the flying project as a bike mechanic.



One of Wright's early bikes.



Ross Redford getting a camel ride in the middle of Indiana's Me's "Mom and Pop" Zoo.



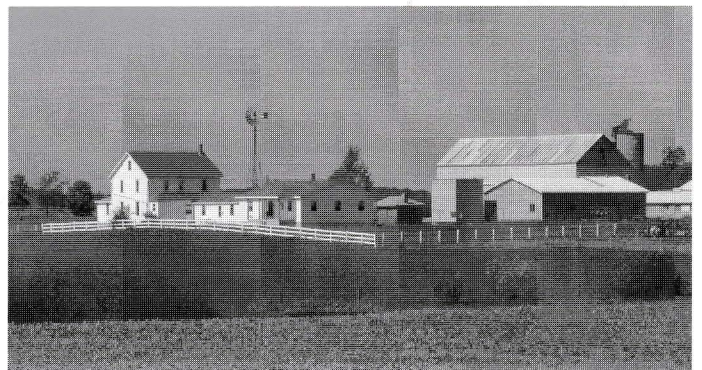
Not far from Wright's Home was a World Class model airplane museum recounting all the advancements from first flight to today.



Great story! Dotty Luttrell, former Wheels' rider, put together this beautiful quilt made out of Wheels' jerseys from the past. It is a real work of art!



James Dean and the '50's was the Fall Breakaway theme!



Great tour of Amish homes in the Berne, Indiana, area.

CHINA

We called off the proposed China trip for 2005. Again, the prostate thing. The trip is back on the schedule for 2006. The dates will be posted this coming Spring. The travel time will be October. The 2004 China tour was very well received. We plan on spicing up the 2006 trip by closing out in Beijing. We're hoping to have the same good price. You'd love Yangshuo...good cycling, a lot of country visits, and an unbelievable folk show with cast of hundreds.

HIS WHEELS INTERNATIONAL



Alice Teisan, a Wheels' vet of years past, sent information regarding an exciting program she was led to start called His Wheels International. The program is a bicycle service organization created to assist Christian mission organizations in providing bicycles to national workers. The initial focus is on procurement, shipping, and maintenance of bicycles while offering bicycle expertise to African countries. HWI is currently working on developing a three-wheeled, hand-pedaled tricycle to be used in war-torn countries where people have been disabled and can't find work because of their lack of mobility. If interested you can write to Alice at P. O. Box 423, Wheaton, IL 60189, or e-mail info@hiswheelsintl.org.

FAMILY COAST TO COAST



Kelly Family

Todd and Jennie Kelly, both coast-to-coast Wheels' vets, did a family solo across America! This was a ten-week, 3,740-mile trip! They averaged 60 to 70 miles a day. Todd rode one of the kids on a tandem. Jennie and the other children pulled their own weight. Family members helped with sagging and food prep. They took the northern route: Montana, North Dakota, Twin Cities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, across Lake Michigan and on east through the White Mountains and out to the Atlantic Ocean. One outstanding family feat! Jennie told me over the phone that they pedaled the Road to the Sun in Glacier National Park! Unbelievable, considering Todd was riding a tandem with one of the kids with the others in tow!

If you want to say "hello" to Todd and Jennie, here's their e-mail whippetreefarm@hotmail.com

SUMMER SUNDAY RIDE-INS (FROM MY SON, DANE DAVENPORT)

What do you get when you mix a fun morning bike ride with a time of fellowship and food at the Wheels' Kitchen Retreat House? You get the Summer Sunday Ride-Ins! We would like to take 4 or 5 Sundays next summer when folks can ride their bikes to the Wheels' "Kitchen" and gather for a time of fellowship and food.

Why have Summer Sunday Ride-Ins? For a number of fun reasons. Namely, bike rides are fun, fellowship is fun, and, if you are a bike rider, food is really fun! You know how bike riders love spending time together telling stories and munching on a delicious morsel. That's what this is all about.

We also hope this will turn out to be an opportunity to invite a biker friend to come to "church" with you. This might be a chance for someone you know, who may never desire to step into a church building, to hear the gentle words of encouragement and hope from God's Word. Like a biker friend of mine whom I happened upon last week riding his bike on a bike trail, his wife was having medical problems and he had gone out on a ride to "just let off some steam". We rode side by side for 3 or 4 miles just talking about his situation at home. The conversation ended with my saying, "I'll pray for your wife." He followed with, "Yeah, I believe in some of that stuff."

"How can I encourage my friend spiritually?" I thought. I know this guy and I know that he would rather ride his bike on two flat tires and just a seat post than go to "church", BUT, he would go on a bike ride and hang around other bikers where there is food! So I'm hoping he will be one of the many visitors that the Summer Sunday Ride-Ins attracts next summer. I hope you'll join us, too!

THE DORM

The Wheels' dorm was built to house Wheels' staff. It's almost 30 years old. Recently, it has been empty, used occasionally for overflow by the Wheels' "Kitchen" groups.

A local family was in need of some emergency housing, and the dorm was offered as temporary lodging. It looks like a wonderful combination of meeting a family's needs and maximum good use of the facility. So, we have a new family!



Wheels' Dorm.

CLOSING

Just had lunch with two veteran coast-to-coast riders, Bob Kiser and his daughter, Jane Steadman. Jane's son, Billy, rode with us in 2003 (three generations). Bob and Jane are so grateful for Wandering Wheels. Wonderful visit! Over the years we have played host and friend to so many people.

Some months ago, Carl Miller, an Upland legend, passed away. Carl owned several acres of land south of town. He raised pigs. He was known as "Hoggie" Miller. He used to buy loaves of stale bread and throw them over the fence to the pigs, wrappers and all. There were



Carl Miller

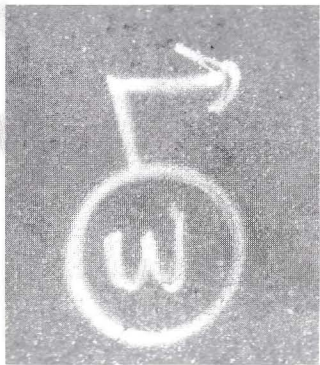


"Junk Yard Church"

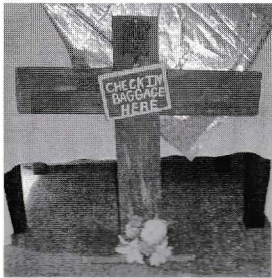
bread wrappers all over town. The Taylor college students' embellished "Carl Miller stories" became bigger than life. His property, over the years, became a junk yard (never intentional, just happened). The State Board of Health fought with him for years. Carl won most of the battles. All of this to say Carl became a friend of Wheels. I took youth groups to his property for "Junk Yard Church". (You can find God even in a junk yard!) Some people were uncomfortable around him. He felt at home with us and we with him. What a surprise when Wheels was included in his will! We have no idea what might become of it, if anything, but the gesture was a warm compliment of hidden feeling he had for us. In all truth, he scared some people, but challenged us to express our Christian spirit unconditionally.

Our first love continues to be that of serving. Your financial input helps us to serve more people. It is our prayer that some day we'll be in a position to provide program for any one who wants or needs it.

Bob & Staff



Our "brand!" We've emptied hundreds of spray cans of paint over the years marking roads. You can't believe the number of veteran riders who have been out riding and have come across one of our marks. Often they phone and share the special surprise and blessing found in a simple spray can mark on the roads. Memories galore!

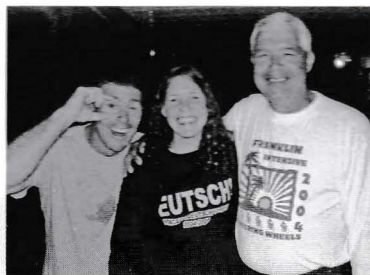


Inspirational sign along the way.

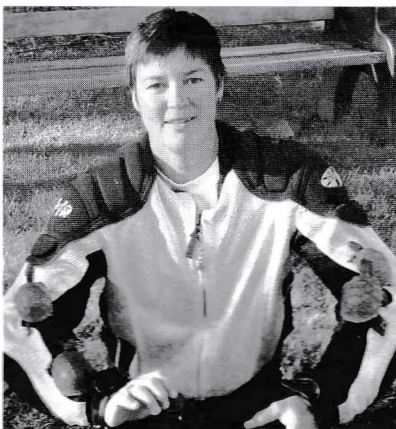


Don't have a birthday on a Wheels' trip. They'll make you dress funny!

Larry Trueblood, right, due to school policy changes, is saying goodbye to Wheels. Franklin High has had ten years of bike trips in Florida with us. It's been a good run.



Our faithful follow-up driver, in biking circles called a "sag." Audrey Coburn does a super job!



I think Janech has taken her fondness for turtles a bit far!

2006 TRIP SCHEDULE	
Florida Keys #1	JAN 22-FEB 01
Florida Keys #2	FEB 05-FEB 15
Spring Coast to Coast	MAR 24-MAY 03
Scooter Coast to Coast	JUN 16-JUL 07
The Best of Ontario Canada	JUL 28-AUG 11
Fall Breakaway	SEP 15-SEP 23
<i>(Southwest Indiana-Northern Kentucky)</i>	
China	MID-OCT (TBA)

