

Chainwheel Chatter

B.I.K.E.S. Club of Snohomish County
March 2024



Prez Sez

"Niceties" for Group Rides

Follow the Leader

Going on a few club group rides recently, I'm reminded of a few riding "niceties" which make for a pleasant and safe outing for all of us.

First, follow the leader. I don't mean that you need to stay right behind the Ride Leader. Sometimes we just get an itch and have to zoom ahead to experience a fast downhill or take a quick clip through some curves just to get our adrenaline rushing. But when we do, it's a good idea to let the Ride Leader know that you'll be waiting for the group at the next opportune spot.

When you're riding closely behind the Ride Leader, say in the following two or three spots, stay directly in the leader's path or slightly to the right. I know, our tendency is to drift to the left just a bit so you can easily see what's coming up ahead. The problem is then that the Ride Leader looks in her rear view mirror (on the traffic side) and sees a big beautiful image of you and your colorful jersey filling up her mirror instead of seeing traffic and the riders further behind. After all, the leader is tasked with keeping an eye on the road ahead, on traffic, and on all the whole group. Please don't block her rear view.

Don't pass on the right

Although you might follow slightly to the right, please don't pass another rider on the right. It's a bad idea. The rider ahead of you likely attuned to her left side, looking and listening for traffic and other riders. If you pass another rider, announce yourself and pass on the left. Please.

Also, if you're riding on the right of someone who doesn't know you're there, such as overlapping wheels slightly, and some nasty traffic spooks the rider, guess who he'll run into and push into the ditch. Then your Ride Leader will be pretty upset because there's all that accident paperwork to fill out. That's not fun for anybody.

Clearing your sinuses

Please make sure no one is behind you. 'Nuf said.

You have a mouth. Use it for talking

If you drop off the ride early, say something to the Ride Leader. If you see someone else riding inappropriately, say something gently to that rider. If you see another rider quietly riding by himself, ride up (on the left side) and say hello and ask how they're doing. If you don't feel like talking, then just smile.

Culpability

If I don't follow what I've written above, I claim presidential immunity :-)

Keep on pedalin',

Prez Drew

president@bikesclub.org.



Vice Prez Sez

FIVE THINGS I LIKE **ALMOST AS MUCH AS RIDING MY BIKE**

1. Looking at my bike
2. Talking about my bike
3. Watching television programmes that feature people riding bikes
4. Websites about bikes
5. Eating Cake

Tailwinds

Vice Prez Cindy
vicepresident@bikesclub.org.



A Class You can Use....



Staying Safe in Bear and Cougar Country

Rick Proctor

There have been several bear and cougar encounters across our Pacific NorthWest region in recent years. Here is a free and easy online entertaining education opportunity from The Kula Academy, presented by Lindsay Welfelt, for you to learn about what to do, and not do, if you encounter a bear or cougar:

Outdoor adventures often bring you into bear and cougar habitat, but that shouldn't stop you from enjoying the outdoors. Whether you are hiking, biking, backpacking, or camping it's important to know what to do and what not to do when you encounter wildlife on the trail. This information-packed class will give you information and resources so that you can safely and responsibly enjoy wildlife in their natural habitat.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/staying-safe-in-bear-and-cougar-country-tickets-797365992147?aff=oddtcreator>

I've registered for this webinar, and I suggest all Ride Leaders should also. Most of us lead rides in bear and/or cougar country at some time through the year.

During the BIKES Club Tour de PNW across WA state last spring, we had an encounter with a black bear while on the Palouse to Cascades Trail west of the Snoqualmie Tunnel. The bear was walking on the trail in the same eastward direction we were going. We had to slow and stop several times to keep our distance. The bear would occasionally look back over its shoulder to see where we were. After several minutes of annoying each other, the bear took off away from the trail and we proceeded cautiously onward. Although there was no direct confrontation with the bear, the situation added to the adventure and memories of the day. Bear encounters can get ugly if someone charges at a bear trying to scare it away.

Have a great ride!



News You can Use....

Advocacy and Infrastructure News

by Rick Proctor

National Trail Network

An article in the winter 2024 issue of *Rails to Trails* magazine, from [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#), indicates there are over 150 trail networks across America providing over 41,000 miles for non-motorized walking, biking, and other outdoor fun. More trail networks, and many more miles of trails, are being funded, designed, and built to eventually connect all parts of America.

Many of the railroads that were built across America are being abandoned as commercial operations cease. The foundation and bridges of a railroad transition nicely to trail use after the rails are removed and the surface is repurposed. Rail trails are former railroads that have been converted to trails and are vital parts of our national trail network.

I invite you to check out the [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#), become a member, and get your own quarterly *Rails to Trails* magazine to keep up with development of our trail network. Each issue highlights future and present trail developments as well as trails ready for you to ride now. Of those 150 existing trail networks, how many will you ride this year?



Tech Corner:What's A Dropper?

Rick Proctor

Would you like a feature that would make it easier for you to get on and off your bike, allow you to have both feet flat on the ground while seated when stopped, allow you to be in your best position while pedaling, and even be more aero for descents? If so, read on . . .

A new chunk of bike tech was born into the mountain bike scene several years ago and since then it has matured and spilled over to other biking flavors of cyclo-cross, gravel, and road riding. Originally, some mountain bike riders wanted flexibility in the positions of their hands, feet, and butt while riding in order to improve maneuvering their bikes on rough terrain. They had to bridge the gaps between what's truly necessary, what's really desired, and what's perfectly practical. The feet were busy going in circles to pedal the bike and the hands were busy with steering, shifting gears and braking. However, the butt was either on or off a fixed-position saddle on a rigid seat post, and this became the focus of attention. What eventually emerged from this scenario is now known as the *dropper-post*, or simply the *dropper*, and it's used to lower, or drop, the saddle a few inches or so when desired and raise it back up. Both dropping and raising the saddle can be done easily either while riding or while stopped – with no tools required after installation.

The basics of a common dropper system include a lever mounted on the handlebar in a position out of the way of steering, shifting and braking activities. Actuation of the lever with an unoccupied finger or thumb will cause a mechanical cable to be pulled a little bit. The other end of the cable is connected to the bottom end of a dropper seat post assembly (which replaced the rigid seat post). The little bit of cable pull releases a clamp mechanism in the dropper seat post which will allow the moveable portion of the seat post to drop under the rider's weight or rise up fully to the rider's best pedaling position if the rider's weight is off the saddle. Releasing the lever will clamp the moveable part of the post in place. All this functionality adds about a pound of weight to the bike at a setback starting at a couple hundred dollars.

There are lots of dropper-post options available regarding drop travel, shock absorption, weight, post sizes, and more. Wireless battery powered options are available for those who want it. There are a variety of lever types depending on handlebar type, where you want it mounted, and how you want to actuate it. Some levers are intended for thumb actuation and others with a finger. There are also combination levers for drop bars that can be actuated with a finger when hands are on the hoods or with a thumb when hands are in the drops. Your local bike shop can help you get all these options sorted out.

Riding with a dropper is easy to learn, fun to use, and will enhance your bike riding experience. A dropper will probably not make you faster, or help you do jumps and wheelies, but it should make the bike riding you do more comfortable. The improved comfort might even brighten the radiance of your swagger as you move about, and onlookers may accept your visual influence to ride a bike because you make it look like fun.



Ask The Wrench

SO YOU WANT TO GO TUBELESS, REALLY?

Let me first explain what a tubeless setup is. Tubeless setups are wheels and tires which don't have ... <drumroll please> ... tubes! What they do have is a sealant inside the tire which is intended to plug leaks and holes in your tires while you're riding. That's pretty cool, eh?

Not a day goes by and someone invariably asks The Wrench "should I go tubeless?" And The Wrench always answers "I dunno." That response always stumps 'em ;-)

Let me clarify, please. There are advantages and disadvantages to going tubeless, and certainly some equipment and parts requirements to make tubeless a viable option.

ADVANTAGES

Better ride feel and faster. Some people swear that their tubeless setups are faster and they ride so much better. Maybe that's true, maybe not. Usually, tubeless tires are of better quality than the tires they are replacing so they ride better anyway, even with tubes. Yours truly has two bikes set up tubeless and he can't tell the difference between tubeless and tubes. They both roll really well, but it's probably due to the better quality tires than the ones replaced.

No flats! Well, actually, you can still get flats (ha ha ha ha ha), but you'll probably just get fewer. The sealant used in tubeless setups do plug up small holes and punctures you get when you're riding along. Did you get a big giant slice in your tire? Sorry, you're outta luck. Hope you brought a spare tube!

Lower tire pressure. Because the risk of snake bites (twin punctures from bottoming out your tire against the rim) is minimized, you can run your tires at a little lower pressure which increases comfort, especially on rough roads or trails. Lower pressure also increases traction, so cornering and handling feels more secure. The Wrench once rode a gravel event with his tubeless tires (43 mm wide) at about 10 lbs. pressure because it was a quite chunky route - lots of potholes, ruts, large rocks. No flats! With tubes, flats would have prevailed.

What about weight, you ask. It should be lighter, right? Weight between standard tubed and tubeless is about equal. You don't have a tube, but you're putting in 2-4 ounces of sealant in each tire. And sometimes the tires can be a tad heavier than their non-tubeless (is that a double negative?) counterparts because of extra material in the tire. Tubeless tires are made with extra material because the tire is doing double duty - that of the tire and holding air like a tube.

DISADVANTAGES

Special Rims, Tires, Valves, Sealant. Tubeless setups require rims or wheels that are designed for tubeless. And that means you need tubeless tires. And you need valves to work in the wheels which don't have tubes attached. And you need sealant to put in the tires through the special valves. Many newer bikes are coming already set up for tubeless. If you have an older bike, going tubeless would mean a big investment in new equipment. You might as well admit it - you like to buy new bike stuff and going tubeless would be a good excuse to get some new gear.

Regular maintenance. "I've been riding tubeless for two years and I got this little pinhole and it didn't seal!" That's because you didn't "refresh" your sealant. The stuff dries out which means you ought to add some new sealant to your tires every six months or so. And maybe once per year, take the tire off the rim, clean out the old dried up sealant and re-do it with fresh sealant. You might find spots on the tire inside where the sealant has coagulated. That's where it's plugged a hole and you didn't even know it!

Installing a tire can be difficult. Installation of a tubeless tire onto a tubeless-capable rim can sometimes be difficult. It can be a very, very tight fit and just getting the tire on the rim can be a challenge. Proper technique can help (that's a topic for another article) but tolerances have to be very tight for tubeless tires to interface properly with the rim.

Messy. Setting up tubeless and dealing with a flat on the road or trail can be a mess. But don't worry, by the time you've done half a dozen tubeless setups and repairs, you learn how to not spray it all over your shirt or dribble the sealant down your leg into your shoe.

Not for skinny tires. It really only makes sense for tires that are 30 mm or wider. The wider the better. Gravel bikes with 38 mm wide tires or wider are great candidates for tubeless. Your old '90s racing bike with 23 mm tires, nah, don't even think about it.

YOU WILL STILL NEED TO CARRY WITH YOU ...

Spare tube. Just in case you get the big gash or large puncture. Or if you haven't refreshed your sealant in a long time. (See Regular Maintenance.)

Pump. It's better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it.

Tire levers. By now, you know why you might need these.

Bacon strips. "Hey, I like bacon!" It's not that kind of bacon. These are little strips or plugs which can, in case the sealant isn't quite doing the job, be poked into the hole which allows the sealant to seal better.

THE FINAL QUESTION

"Mr. Wrench, should I go tubeless?" I dunno ;-)

BIKES Club Meeting.

March Meeting

The next BIKES Club meeting is set for **6:30 PM**, on March 14, 2024 at the Snohomish County PUD Building. 2030 California St. Everett, WA 98201

BIKES Club has monthly club meetings for members on the 2nd Thursday of each month from September to May. No meetings in the summer or December.

Coming Up...

March Club rides

There will be a variety of BIKES Club rides scheduled through March on the [Calendar](#). Some rides may be posted the day before the scheduled activity. Rides can be cancelled or changed when weather conditions are forecast to be sufficiently foul as determined by the Ride Leaders and which forecasts they think may be accurate. Keep up with ride changes by subscribing to [Ride Updates](#).

[Rides Calendar >>>](#)



Ride Leader Corner

Ride leaders,

This month is a good time to think of upcoming rides that you would like to do, and perhaps revisit old favorites. However, if it's been quite awhile since you pedaled them, conditions may have changed. Now might be a good time to pedal, or drive if the weather won't permit riding, your route to check it out. Doing this at the time of day you would likely lead a ride is the best, and make note of traffic levels, street level changes, new stores along the route etc. And maybe a new bakery has opened—better check it out too.

As always, contact me if you have questions or issues posting your ride.

Thanks for leading.

Dan Scott,

Ride Leader Coordinator

leadaride@bikesclub.org

New Membership options

[Membership Benefits>>>](#)

[Online Reg - Step by Step>>>](#)

Rider Miles

Top riders for February

Linari	Steve	786
Proctor	Rick	325
Warren	Wayne	309
Bardin	Earl	261
Sorensen	Lee	247
Tweedy	Christine	231

[How many Club miles do you have?](#)



Club meeting minutes

For answers to these issues of great importance, see the minutes of our February club meeting:

- Where will the club picnic be held this year?
- What's new on the Ride Leader Vest ordering?
- What is *micromobility*?
- Are there really '8' new Eastside light rail stations opening up this spring?

[Meeting Minutes >>>](#)



Sharing Wheels

Sharing Wheels News

Nonprofit partnerships make biking better

By Drew Ellison

Sharing Wheels update for March

If you haven't been into the Sharing Wheels shop lately, please stop by. Shop Manager Ed and the crew have been hard at work organizing the shop. Maybe you need fenders (it's still raining, after all) or lights or bags or racks or a new bike or a softer saddle or ... You get the idea. We've got much more than bikes. We've also got a self-service stand and tools so you can easily work on your bike yourself.

Oh, you don't know how to service your bike yourself? We've got Bike Tuneup classes you can take. See the [Classes page](#) and sign up!

Are you too tired to go to the shop and do some shopping? Then visit our [Online Store](#). We've got some good stuff there and you can shop from the comfort of your barcalounger.

Finally, Sharing Wheels largely operates by volunteers. We love our volunteers! You don't need to be a bike mechanic as there are lots of ways to help out. If you want to find out more (and we hope you do), stop by the shop and talk to Ed or Christy (or one of the volunteers) to find out more. There's more information on our [Volunteer page](#).

Event Calendar for March

See all the events at [Sharing Wheels Event Calendar](#)

[Sharing Wheels Website >>>](#)

Other Links

League of American Bicyclists

Click on the link below to read the League blog and catch up on League efforts around the country. BIKES is a member of the League of American Bicyclists and it is through the League that we purchase our club insurance.

[League of American Bicyclists>>>](#)

Adventure Cycling

Whether you like your adventures in the saddle or from the armchair, Adventure Cycling will inspire. You might also find reviews of new bikes and equipment and tips on how to enjoy or improve what you already have.

[Adventure Cycling >>>](#)



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Comments or suggestions? Send an email to:

[Newsletter Editor](#)
