

CHAINRING

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Table of Contents

DRIFTING ALONG IN THE DRIFTLESS...By Hank Deutsch, President, GVR Cycling Club	2
Local Cycling News	3
Upcoming Cycling Events	3
National and International Cycling News	3
Bike Your Park Day	3
National Infrastructure Bill.....	3
Setting a Cycling Agenda	3
Cycle Racing	3
Riding the Haute Route on One Leg and One Arm	4
Doing Your First Big Climb.....	4
Cycle Health and Safety	4
The Dutch Do It Again	4
Will Technology Solve Car-Cycle Accidents?.....	4
Arizona Cycling and Hydration	5
Indoor Bike Trainer Safety.....	5
All Stretched Out?	6
Tips for Older Riders.....	6
Cycling Gear	6

Cycles and Cycle Parts – No Good News!.....	6
Looking For Mountain Bike Shoes.....	6
What about Socks?.....	6
Can't Find The Perfect Bike Bag?	7
The Three e-Bike Garage.....	7
Cycling History.....	7
A Cycling Museum for Those Not Traveling.....	7
Interesting Cycling Stories	7
The Bad, the Bad and the Ugly: It Has Not Been a Good Week for Cyclists	8
You Thought Cycling Was Just About Fun!.....	8
Finally Getting Ready to Travel?	9
Planning a Bike Tour.....	9
Experts Don't Always Get It Right!.....	9
Another Staycation Story	9
Today's Photo.....	10

DRIFTING ALONG IN THE DRIFTLESS... by Hank Deutsch, President, GVR Cycling Club

I have aged gracefully while riding in one of our nation's best kept scenic secrets - the Driftless Region of western Wisconsin that includes small sections of neighboring Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois. It is one of the area's rare un-glaciated geological regions known for deep valleys, rugged bluffs and ridges and distinguished today by rolling farmland of corn, soybeans and historic dairy farms. Often there are joyous vistas of the watersheds of the Kickapoo and Wisconsin Rivers which frame this geological phenomenon. The rural roads offer the cycle rider a physical challenge, solitude and exhilaration.

My recent morning rides during this time of divisive political and social turmoil framed in a pandemic provides opportunities for proactive and reflective thoughts while mastering the twist and turns of the backcountry roads.

It is no longer the mileage, rpm's, wattage, speed, and nauseam that are important. Now my thoughts turn to home, family and the scenery that becomes inspirational. I search for a restoration of faith, hope and charity with a denial of fear.

Cyclists should ride in the spirit of peace and unity and develop mystical relationships with the beautiful landscape our nation provides.

Local Cycling News

Upcoming Cycling Events

There are a variety of upcoming cycling events being scheduled, some for 2021 and others in 2022. The 2021 events are still tentative although the date is firm but could be impacted if there is another covid outbreak. Go to the website if you want to register for any of these events.

Loop de Loop – September 25, 2021 - <https://eltourdetucson.org/loop-de-loop/>

El Tour de Tucson – November 20, 2021 - <https://eltourdetucson.org/>

El Tour de Zona – March 25-27, 2022 - <https://eltourdezona.org/>

El Tour de Mesa – April 2, 2022 - <https://eltourdemesa.org/>

National and International Cycling News

Bike Your Park Day

The Adventure Cycling Association is sponsoring a *Bike Your Park Day* that is scheduled for September 25, 2021 - <https://www.adventurecycling.org/resources/bike-your-park-day/>. They are encouraging riders to organize in groups or to go individually to ride in a park wherever you live. The ride can be long or short but they just want people to get out, ride and enjoy the beauty of the parks systems. Some local parks include Sahuarita City Park, Saguaro National Park and Coronado National Forest. If you register with Adventure Cycling to ride or lead a ride, you can be eligible to win a Co-motion American bike.

National Infrastructure Bill

The ongoing discussion of the current infrastructure bill will undoubtedly have implications for cyclists if the bill becomes a reality. Because of its size and scope it's hard to know what will be included. However, if it passes it will be difficult to make any changes. One cycling group, The Adventure Cycling Association, is currently lobbying Congress to include upgraded services for cycles on Amtrak trains. If this is of interest or you want to learn more, go to:

https://actionnetwork.org/letters/support-better-bike-service-on-amtrak?source=ADV-AMTRAK&utm_source=BE&utm_campaign=20210628_Advocacy.

Setting a Cycling Agenda

The Dutch Cycling Embassy has produced a useful video on value and importance of cycling and how to get it onto local, state and national government agendas -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54XQp7sslBc>

Cycle Racing

Riding the Haute Route on One Leg and One Arm

At 15, Christian Haettich was in a moped accident and had his left leg and left arm amputated. He grew up disabled but managed to live a normal life with a wife and family. In his 30s, he decided to take up cycling and became more and more competitive. For 2021, Haettich set a new goal to complete the Haute Route – riding Europe’s Dolomites, Alps and Pyrenees over a period of three weeks. Here is his inspiring story - <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30295759>.



Doing Your First Big Climb

If you are thinking about your first big climb either for fun or in a competition, what is the best way to be prepared? Canadian professional cyclist Sarah Poidevin provides some good tips for the first time event - <https://cyclingmagazine.ca/sections/training-guide/training/taking-on-your-first-big-climb-tips-from-a-pro-cyclist/>.

Cycle Health and Safety

The Dutch Do It Again

The city of Delft has installed traffic lights where cycles and cars meet. In normal circumstances, the cyclist would have to stop, push a button, and wait for the light to change. However, in this scenario, the bikes have the primary right of way and the cars must stop and wait - https://www.fastcompany.com/90650405/at-this-intersection-drivers-have-to-ask-the-bikes-to-stop?partner=rss&utm_campaign=rss+fastcompany&utm_content=rss&utm_medium=feed&utm_source=rss. This may only work in an environment where bicycles are a predominant form of transportation but should be considered where large numbers of cycles are congregated here in the U.S.

Will Technology Solve Car-Cycle Accidents?

If you have been in a recently produced car, and seen all of their features – 360 degree cameras, radar noting cars beside, in front or in back - you wonder why this technology hasn’t penetrated the cycling world. The fact is, it’s beginning to happen. Garmin produces a rear

facing radar/rear tail light that attaches to your bike. It syncs with Garmin computer on your handlebar and issues a beep when a vehicle approaches you from the rear - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/larryolmsted/2018/07/05/the-revolutionary-bike-safety-breakthrough-every-cyclist-needs-including-you/?sh=6852f5adbb4a>. The model number for this piece of equipment is Varia RTL515 - <https://g.factoryoutletstore.com/cat/65472-1025051/Varia.html?cid=506421&chid=1600&campaignid=129808&adgroupid=1206164810948815&adid=75385392144480&targetid=kwd-75385480351325:loc-190&matchtype=p&device=c&network=o&msclkid=4492953658b91acaf4cff5e94b2d2502>.

At the same time, automakers are doing early experiments that will allow onboard car computer to recognize a bicycle and give a dashboard warning to the driver - <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/09/business/bicycle-safety-cars.html>. This technology is in its early stages and is connected with both the rollout of the 5G network as well as companies developing driverless vehicles - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vehicle-to-everything>.

On another front, individual car-makers are looking at solutions that protect their passengers and passing cars and bicyclists. Hyundai has developed a lock-out mechanism for their car's rear doors that is connected to a rear bumper radar mechanism - <https://driving.ca/auto-news/news/cyclists-kids-get-a-rare-win-with-hyndais-safe-exit-assist-feature>. This feature will not allow a rear passenger to open a door if a car or bike is approaching from the rear.

In the meantime, have a good rear view mirror, have front and rear lights, and ride without headphones so you can hear a car approaching as well as being extra vigilant.

Arizona Cycling and Hydration

Between Arizona's dry climate, its heat plus cycling exercise, keeping hydrated is a big deal. For many years, the only solution was carrying bottles of water/other liquids to maintain your body's fluid balance. That all changed in 1989 when Michael Eidson took a plastic medical bag, attached a tube to it, put it in a sock for a bike race and the *Camelback* was born - <https://highonmountainbiking.com/blog-mtb/history-of-the-camelbak/>. What you may not know is that this technology has been adopted by the military which has resulted in many recent technical improvements. If you are in the market for a new or replacement hydration pack, *Bike Radar* recently tested 12 models and provides some recommendations - https://www.bikeradar.com/advice/buyers-guides/best-hydration-packs/?utm_campaign=Best+hydration+packs+%7C+12+packs+tried+and+tested&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=AppleNews.

Indoor Bike Trainer Safety

Many cyclists have gone indoors with their exercise as a result of covid or for a more comfortable climate during the winter or summer. If you have already followed that trend or are thinking of doing so, one should be doing this safely. *Bicycling Magazine* recently offered some tips about how to set up and use indoor cycling equipment safely - <https://www.bicycling.com/training/a36382455/indoor-bike-trainer-safety/>.

All Stretched Out?

One way or the other if you are cycling, you are doing stretching. If you always follow a stretching routine, your body stays loose and healthy. If you don't stretch, your muscles will get tight, you'll end up going to a physical therapist and they will give you a stretching routine. The first option is the best and safest option. Here is a recommendation for some good cycling stretches: <https://www.welovecycling.com/wide/2018/03/08/3-important-stretches-cycling/>.

Tips for Older Riders

The League of American Bicyclists has an online Learning Center with a variety of resources and videos. One section is devoted to older riders - https://learn.bikeleague.org/products/smart-cycling-tips-for-older-adults#tab-product_tab_overview. Some of the videos are fairly basic but there are some issues for everyone such as balance.

Cycling Gear

Cycles and Cycle Parts – No Good News!

The bike and parts situation is not getting better. A recent article in *Bicycling* magazine suggests that something resembling normal won't happen until 2022. It recommends that if you see something you want – buy it now! And if you have a good bike, maintain it and keep it on the road. An article in the *Spokemans Review* talking about the bike shortage was titled, "It's like Ordering a Mercedes," - <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2021/apr/16/bike-shortage-not-going-away-anytime-soon/>. A more detailed explanation of how we got to where we are and where we are going comes from *The Bicycle Retailer* - https://www.bicycleretailer.com/opinion-analysis/2021/06/14/jay-townley-supply-chain-nightmare?source=nl&utm_source=nl_byc&utm_medium=email&date=070421&utm_campaign=nl24354766&utm_term=BIC_Bicycling_Membership_Newsletter_Master_PAID#.YOH5i5hKhaQ. It you have a bicycle that you love (or at least don't hate), treat it nicely and keep it maintained until better times arrive.

Looking For Mountain Bike Shoes

If you are in the market for new or replacement mountain biking shoes, you might want to read a recent review that appeared *Mountain Bike Rider* - https://www.mbr.co.uk/buyers_guide/best-mountain-bike-shoes-322000. The review covers both flat sole and clipless shoes and gives a recommendation for five shoes of each type.

What about Socks?

How do you choose what cycling socks to wear – top pair in the drawer, color, those you got free for entering a race, or whatever is clean? Not all of these are valid reasons for what socks to wear. Kendra Wenzel of Wenzel Coaching provides some insights into how to choose and care for the right sock - <https://www.wenzelcoaching.com/blog/choosing-cycling-socks/>.

Can't Find The Perfect Bike Bag?

There are lots of different styles, shapes and sizes of bags to fit your bike. You can start with your local bike shop or go online to Amazon or e-Bay. However, if your bike frame is not standard or you are very particular about the size, shape or type of material, there are some alternatives. One of those is Buckhorn Packs located in Albuquerque, New Mexico - <https://www.buckhornbags.com/about> . Buckhorn makes some standard bags but will also make a bag to your specific requirements. All bags are American-made using American-made materials. For one person's experience, go to: <https://theradavist.com/2021/06/a-look-at-albuquerque-based-buckhorn-bags-custom-full-and-half-frame-bags/>.



The Three e-Bike Garage

Here is a question for your e-Bike owners, are your bikes dependable or do they require a lot of maintenance or do they often go back for repairs under warranty? I only ask this question because I ran across an article by a British cyclist who bemoaned the fact that his two electric cycles were constantly going off for repair - <https://www.mbr.co.uk/news/star-letter-july-2021-408569>. He indicates that he finally bought a third e-Bike to have something to ride or reverted to his "bullet-proof" non-e-Bike. If this is an issue one way or the other with e-Bikes, I'd be happy to publish a "letter to the editor" so that we can share a response on this issue.

Cycling History

A Cycling Museum for Those Not Traveling

Britain's Online Bicycling Museum offers tours of British bikes circa 1900 - <https://onlinebicyclemuseum.co.uk/>. You can browse the collection by subject or by manufacturer and they even sell vintage bikes.

Interesting Cycling Stories

The Bad, the Bad and the Ugly: It Has Not Been a Good Week for Cyclists

My in-box has not had much happy news this week. The first story is about a cyclist in Montana who was on an adventure cycling tour. Stopping overnight east of Missoula in the wilderness with a number of other riders, the woman was attacked by a grizzly bear and killed - <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/officials-hunt-grizzly-killed-camper-montana-town-78710156>. The bear has since been caught and killed. While unusual, it does make one way of wilderness adventure cycling.

The second story involves a group of seniors in Glasgow who were disturbed that law-abiding cyclists were riding in “their park” - <https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/latest-news/runner-confronts-pensioners-who-were-setting-traps-for-cyclists-in-popular-park-498208>. Trying to put a stop to this, they dragged trees across the trail to stop the cycling traffic. Luckily, a runner came along, removed the obstacles and reported them to the local authorities and injuries were avoided.

The third story involves another cycling death. Boryana Straubel, a 38 year-old philanthropist, businesswoman and jewelry designer was killed by an SUV that crossed the center line and struck her while she was riding in a bike lane near Reno Nevada - <https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2021/06/19/fatal-crash-washoe-valley-kills-bicyclist-closes-us-395-a/7754824002/>. Ms. Straubel and her husband, JB Straubel, had both been employees of Tesla and had retired early to establish foundation to support leadership, the environment and education - <https://www.straubelfoundation.org/focus>.



You Thought Cycling Was Just About Fun!

Cycling is like everything else in the world as scientists and scholars are researching and studying cycling as a scientific topic. For example, there is a scholarly publication, *Journal of Science and Cycling*, that regularly publishes research done by cycling scholars - <https://www.jsc-journal.com/index.php/JSC/article/view/613>. The articles are peer-reviewed and come with titles like “An Aging Cyclists’ Time Trial Performances over Four Decades: A Case Study” and “Does participation in downhill mountain biking affect measures of executive

function?” While these may not be something that affects or interests individual cyclists, you can bet that cycling companies and cycling teams are reading and paying attention.

You may wonder who are these scholars and where are they located. One program, the Urban Cycling Institute, is located at the University of Amsterdam (where else?) - <https://urbancyclinginstitute.com/> and another is located at Lee-McRaes College in North Carolina - <https://www.lmc.edu/academics/programs/cycling-studies/index.htm>. Bicycling research is also carried on in University Urban Research Programs as well as in University Transportation Centers. As the world addresses the impact of a changing environment, you can bet that the interest in and the study of cycling will only expand.

Finally Getting Ready to Travel?

Are you thinking about planning a cycling vacation or tour? If so, where do you start? 2021 is still pretty much a crap-shoot outside of tours going on in the U.S. although that may change as the year goes on. An earlier suggestion is looking at Bike Tour Reviews that provides reviews from individuals who have used a particular cycle travel/touring company - <http://biketour-reviews.com/>. The site breaks down by the types of services they provide and gives a general idea of tour costs. Another company that does a variety of travel including cycling tours/trips is Tourradar - <https://www.tourradar.com/f/bicycle>. Tourradar provides specific information about different tours from what is included to prices. You can do a variety of searches depending on your needs/perspectives such as tour location, types of tours – road, mountain biking, barge tours, etc. Both of these sites provide a good starting place to learn, study and ultimately find the perfect trip.

Training for a Bike Tour

Adventure Cycling offers a training plan to prepare to a short or a long bike tour - https://www.adventurecycling.org/blog/how-to-train-for-your-tour/?utm_source=C1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ConversionEmails. Suggestions include building up to the daily riding miles needed, building up your strength and adding weight if you are doing an adventure ride carrying your own gear.

Experts Don't Always Get It Right!

Selene Yeager, a training and fitness expert at *Bicycling Magazine*, admits that she still makes bicycling mistakes even after 22 years of experience. As she says, “do as I say, not as I do” - <https://www.bicycling.com/skills-tips/a36756980/cycling-mistakes-to-avoid/>.

Another Staycation Story

Marie Koltchak of Vashon Island, Washington was depressed when she realized that her bike-riding was limited to an 8 miles wide by 14 miles long island for the duration of the covid epidemic. This is her story about how she decided to take a “Staycation” and how this impacted her thinking about both riding and her surroundings -

<https://www.seattletimes.com/life/outdoors/in-a-pandemic-year-this-vashon-island-resident-found-respite-and-refuge-in-her-bicycle-travels/> .

Today's Photo

If you live in an area where you have grass and you find you are not putting on enough miles on your daily ride, you can always hitch your bike up to a mower and do “double-duty.”

