

CHAINRING

Newsletter of The
GVR Cycling Club

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Club News

March Club Meeting – Mapping Our Route

The Club’s March meeting on March 16 will focus on club planning and a detailed look at *Mapping Our Route* - <https://www.gvrcycling.org/mapping-our-route.html#/>. This document reflects an earlier club discussion. It outlines what you, our members, listed as important goals and aspirations that should be achieved by our club to make cycling a fun and safe experience in Green Valley. We hope as many of you as possible can attend that meeting because we need everyone’s input. We know that we can’t achieve every goal at once so we need not only your help in prioritizing our list but also willing volunteers to help lead those efforts. We look forward to a lively and enthusiastic discussion.

February Meeting – Everything You Wanted to Know About E-Bikes

Over half the club turned out to meet Rob Lamb from The Bike Hub and learn more about E-bikes. About a third of those present already own an E-bike and they and everyone else learned more about E-bike mechanics, batteries and the types of bikes available. It was a lively session with lots of questions and straightforward answers.



Cycling Safety – Being Visible



At the February meeting, the monthly safety tip focused on rider visibility. One part of being visible is wearing clothing that can be seen by drivers and other riders. Light, bright clothing is certainly more visible than dark colors and much of the cycling clothing today incorporates reflective materials on socks, shorts, jerseys and jackets. For added visibility, riders should add lights to their bikes, white on the front and red on the rear. Many lights have different settings that allow lights to be a solid color or blinking. Studies have shown that blinking lights are more visible so that is the most effective setting. Remember – be safe, be visible!

Local Cycling News

Christine Vardaros - A Retired Professional Cyclist Visits to Green Valley

Christine Vardaros is a retired professional cyclist with international racing wins in road racing, mountain biking and cyclocross. (For a description of cyclocross, go to: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyclo-cross>). After her retirement from racing in 2020, she became a journalist following professional cycling, wrote technical and promotional publications for companies like Shimano and is currently president of a company developing a unique new cycling handlebar. She is an American living in Belgium and came to Green Valley to visit a friend. Luckily, her friend, Karen Tobiason, let the club know she was coming. Your editor had the pleasure of spending a couple of hours with her and hearing her story.

Editor – At what age did you begin riding?

Christine – I was a late bloomer and didn't ride a bike until I was 24. I was introduced to biking when a friend arrived in the middle of a snowstorm at my door with the most beautiful bike I had ever seen. It was a *Breezer* mountain bike and looked like something out of *The Terminator* with a suspension fork and knobby tires. I was instantly in love. I ditched the guy and kept the bike. My first real ride was on a New York bike tour on my friend's road bike with clip-in pedals. When we stopped for traffic after a 30 minute ride, I couldn't clip out and tipped over. I was really embarrassed but when everyone heard it was my first ride, the crowd around me clapped.



Editor – When did you decide to ride competitively?

Christine – My third ride was a mountain bike race. I rode in the beginner’s event at the U.S. Mountain Bike Championship at Mt. Snow, VT. Even though I came in last, I was really hooked. I decided then and there I wanted to become a professional racer. I was a student at Columbia University at the time studying to be a doctor and my father, a Greek immigrant, was not thrilled with my choice. I raced as an amateur for a while. In 1996, I signed on as a semi-pro racer with the Breezer Mountain Bike Team while still in Manhattan. However, California was my dream as that was a center for cycle racing. I bought a one-way ticket to California arriving with only a bike box, \$7 in cash and no plan but I made it work. Within a year after arriving in California, with help from an amazing coach, I made it to the pro ranks. Becoming a pro, I found out, though, that was only half the battle. The other half was staying there! As an amateur, I won almost every race based on raw talent. But as soon as I upgraded to the pro ranks, I became roadkill for more established racers. Other gals would ask me if I was ok as they rode past me. I was wheezing, out of breath, and feeling empty. At this moment, I realized that I had never pushed my body to its limits to win. However, now that I was surrounded by a field of talented women, I fell short.

Editor - You are often identified as both a professional cyclist and a vegan. How do those go together?

Christine – My early pro career was not going well. Either I was going to have the shortest bike career in history, or I needed to find a solution. With my science background, I put my knowledge to work by turning to diet for answers. I realized that all signs pointed to a plant-based diet. At that very moment, I made the switch from a vegetarian diet to vegan. I was aided by Alex Albertus, a world class coach! Within a few weeks, I had a higher energy in races and was breathing well. What I learned from switching to a vegan diet is that diet is one of the three main components to becoming a successful racer along with genetics and training. Going from a vegetarian diet to a vegan one, I had that higher energy level. I recovered faster from hard workouts and races and from injuries and, best of all, I started winning races!

Editor – What are some of the highlights of your career? (See Wikipedia for more detail - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christine_Vardaros)

Christine - I started off with the mountain bike racing in New York. When I moved to California, I discovered cyclocross and dove right since it is excellent winter training for mountain biking. I eventually transitioned to road racing for new challenges and then back again to cyclocross. I’ve represented the USA at over 30 combined World Cups and World Championships & won many international events over the years. I was ranked as high as 6th in the world in cyclocross and for many years I was in the top 20.

Editor – You are often referred to as a vegan cyclist. How did that impact your career?

Christine - It’s been a bit of a challenge at times when traveling and racing with the team as a vegan. During the Tour de France, for example, I had to survive on green beans and baguettes as this was what a vegan diet meant to the French chefs. I must admit, though, I did question my diet quite a few times during those early years. During one back-to-back weekend racing event, I performed poorly during the first of the two races. That evening I found myself in the

fish aisle struggling whether to eat animals. Luckily I called my life line – my vegan coach – and he talked me out of the fish aisle. The next day I not only did well but kicked other riders’ butts.

Editor – Your biography lists your residence as Belgium. Was this a professional choice?

Christine - I moved to Belgium from California as it is an international center of cycling, especially cyclocross. While America’s major sports are football, basketball and baseball, cycling is a major sport in Europe along with soccer. It is not unusual for 50,000 people to turn out for a cyclocross race and most of the big races were within an hour and a half from my first home in Belgium. I originally made the move to Belgium to race for Team Lotto and I now live in Leuven, Belgium.

Editor - I noticed that most of the winning riders in cyclocross come from Holland or Belgium. Why is that?

Christine - Cyclocross started off in France but Belgians quickly took it on as their own. In Belgium, if you have designs on becoming a pro cyclist, being a cyclocross racer is a viable career choice. Cyclists are groomed from an early age, starting at 5 years old. As for the women from the Netherlands, we really have no idea how they dominated the sport for years. Maybe it’s the water?

Editor – You have had both a cycling career as well as promoting a vegan lifestyle. How do you balance those two?

Christine - Balancing vegan promotion and racing was not always easy. I’m an athlete spokesperson for In Defense of Animals (IDA), The Vegan Society and Switch 4 Good. I also represent *VeganHappy* clothing and *HempAge* clothing. Sometimes I’ve had to give a talk, for example, in Scotland on a Saturday, and then take the two planes back to Belgium to race in a World Cup on Sunday or be at a vegan activism event in Los Angeles on Saturday, then be back in Belgium by Monday to leave for a race in China on Tuesday. It’s my passion to educate others on the benefits of a plant-based diet and I make it work.

Editor – What are three personal goals for the future?

Christine – That’s a tough one. First is to get everyone on bikes. Second, is to encourage as many people as possible to transition to a plant-based diet. Even if they start off with having 1-2 vegan days per week, they’ll be healthier while helping to save the environment and animals. Third, of course, is world peace!

National and International News

[A Washington County Repeals Mandatory Helmet Law](#)

King County, which includes the City of Seattle, recently repealed its mandatory bicycle helmet law - <https://road.cc/content/news/mandatory-helmet-law-dropped-seattle-290463>. The law was enacted in 2003. The Cascade Bicycle Club and Seattle Central Greenways both argued on behalf of the repeal arguing that a high percentage of cyclists in other municipalities are using

helmets without a mandatory law. However, one of the major arguments against the law was the apparent discriminatory ticketing by police of minorities and the indigent in the metro area.

Golf versus Cycling – Who Wins?

During covid and the need for more protected cycling lanes, Edinburgh, Scotland installed a 7 km cycle lane with barriers bordering the private members Kingknowe Golf Club - <https://cyclingmagazine.ca/advocacy/this-golf-club-has-asked-to-remove-bike-lanes-so-cars-can-park-on-road/>. As golfers have returned, they are complaining that when the club parking lot is filled, there is no on-street parking and club members have to carry their clubs long distances. So far 231 people have signed a petition asking for the bike lane and barriers to be removed. The Edinburgh City Council will need to make the final decision.

And the Bike Thefts Keep Coming!



Bike thieves struck again, this time in Great Britain - <https://cyclingmagazine.ca/sections/news/127-giant-e-bikes-stolen/>. The thieves broke into a container and made off with 127 Giant E-bikes. Giant's British managing director has circulated the bike models' descriptions and serial numbers and is asking local bike shops to be on the look-out for high-end bikes being offered at bargain prices.

Cycle Racing

Whatever It Takes to Win

Cycle racing like every other form of competition has rules to ensure fairness and safety. Of course, competitive riders are always looking for an edge to improve their speed and win races. The latest conflict between riders and the International Cycling Union comes from riders who are doing super tucks and puppy paws -

<https://pezcyclingnews.com/features/super-tuck-puppy-paws-what-the-riders-think-about-uci-banning-the-super-tuck-aero-position/>. What you may ask are puppy paws and super tucks?

These are positions on the bike to give the rider a more aerodynamic position to improve their speed. Puppy paws are defined by the rider putting both hands, one over the other in the center of the handlebars and a super tuck is when the rider crouches as low and as far forward as possible to improve their aerodynamics. Both positions are considered dangerous and riders using them will be suspended from races beginning in April, 2022.



El Tour de Tucson – Some Interesting Numbers



There were 6,000 riders in the 2021 Tour de Tucson. The estimated economic impact on the city of Tucson was approximately \$10-12 million dollars. Assuming an average bike cost of \$1,500, the total value of the bikes ridden in El Tour was \$9,000,000. One participating group, Rotary International, raised nearly \$3 million dollars for polio remediation. Overall, there were nearly 50 non-profits benefiting from donations through El Tour. That's not small change!

Cycling Gear

Looking For the Best: Bike Tubes and Bike Stands

While many cyclists are going tubeless, the majority of riders are still riding on tubes. *Bicycling Magazine* recently posted an article on the ten best cycling tubes -

<https://www.bicycling.com/bikes-gear/g39188582/best-bike-tubes/>. They included tubes for all bicycle types and give readers things to look for when selecting tubes. Not everyone works on their bike at home, in the garage or the basement. However, for those who do, a bike stand makes bike repair or even cleaning the chain an easier task. *Cycling News* recently did a survey of bike repair stands - https://www.cyclingnews.com/features/best-bike-repair-stands/?utm_source=SmartBrief&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=A8C132A5-BD9C-4737-AC90-016639AFE3E&utm_content=7B48F501-DD7B-410B-BB17-2611A4667706&utm_term=.

Their top rated model was Feedback Sports Pro Elite priced at \$330 on Amazon -

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B001CSPTSC?tag=georiot-us-default-20&th=1&psc=1&ascsubtag=cyclingnews-us-7853510039246542000-20&geniuslink=true>.

Other stands ranged from \$80 to \$400+ with most in the \$300 range.

Is Expensive Clothing The Only Option?

While cycling is an inexpensive sport compared to golf, having the right gear is important. A good quality bike and appropriate clothing can make the difference between an enjoyable ride and one that discourages you from riding on a regular basis. The right cycling clothes do make a difference, but are there alternatives to \$200 jerseys and \$300 bib shorts? *Cycling Weekly* recently offered a review of less expensive jerseys and bibs and evaluated some alternatives -

<https://www.cyclingweekly.com/group-tests/cheap-cycling-clothing-a-buyers-guide-463638>.

Prices for jerseys ranged from \$17-38 and for bibs, \$35-75. While they titled their article "cheap cycling clothing", I would call them inexpensive. While reviews may be helpful, only the rider finishing her/his three hour ride will know whether inexpensive clothing will meet their needs.

Making Your Cycle Clothing Last

Whether you have inexpensive cycle clothing or the latest from Rapha, you want to keep it looking good for the next ride and many rides to come. There are two schools of thought about washing cycling clothes – hand washing and machine washing. The former is considered safer and more protective of your clothes but is time consuming and requires careful rinsing to

remove excess soap. If you are traveling and want clothes to dry quickly, you can roll them in towels to remove excess water for quicker drying. If you are washing cycling clothing in the machine, always use cold water and the gentle cycle and air or flat dry the clothing. Clothes with zippers should be washed inside out to avoid snagging other garments. If clothes have stains or grease, pre-treat clothing with liquid detergent or with a stain remover like “Stain Stick.”

If it's Good, Don't Change It



We live in a world of constant changes. There is always something new trying to entice us to replace the old. However, if someone comes up with a good bicycle design, it is nice to know that it is still around. Seven mountain bike models recently passed their 20th Anniversary -

<https://www.pinkbike.com/news/throwback-thursday-7-bikes-turning-20-in-2022.html?trk=rss>. Among the better known names were the Specialized Enduro, the Gary Fisher Supercaliber 29 and the Santa Cruz V10 VPP. Obviously, there have been some upgrades over the years but the model name and basic bike have remained the same. Something that hasn't changed at all is the Shimano Saint M820 disk brake. This has been on the market for nearly ten years without an upgrade which speaks well of its initial design and its high quality manufacture - https://www.betamtb.com/gear/still-in-service-shimanos-saint-brakes-havent-been-updated-in-nearly-a-decade-heres-why/?utm_campaign=BRN%20-%20NL%20-%20Editorial%20Newsletters&utm_medium=email&hsmi=204489036&hsenc=p2ANqtz--KnLCKwkv-5-qoLmUedsuli9GZvz3Eb6TYhe1wKloEEgTQzOXI2uGBo9ptBbHc2vI20b0FBlgalqPUz-bofrg0d4DUkg&utm_content=204486565&utm_source=hs_email. It is nice to see that quality endures.

Bicycle Health and Safety

Being Visible – The Lowly Bicycle Bell

A bicycle bell used to be standard equipment on most bicycles. However, most riders seem to avoid this piece of equipment. A bell can be used in a number of ways when passing another rider or pedestrian or announcing your whereabouts to another rider. While many riders are concerned about keeping their bike as light as possible, there are bells that are very lightweight. *Bicycling Magazine* recently did a bike bell review which might be a good place to start if you are thinking of adding this piece of equipment to your visibility tools - https://www.bicycling.com/bikes-gear/g39106743/best-bike-bells/?utm_campaign=arb_ga_bic_d_bm_g39106743.



Spice It Up!

Can a spice improve your riding prowess? How about paprika or garlic powder? So far only one spice has proven to be helpful – cinnamon - <https://sports.yahoo.com/cyclists-spice-things-using-cinnamon-145000752.html#:~:text=Cinnamaldehyde%20may%20improve%20insulin%20sensitivity,can%20be%20burned%20for%20fuel>. Cinnamon has a number of health benefits. These include helping to control blood sugar and cholesterol. It also has anti-inflammatory value which could help with rider's aches and pains. To get the full impact, you need to consume between ½ to 2 teaspoons per day. However, don't go out and eat three cinnamon rolls as the sugar content will cancel out the value of the cinnamon itself.

Planning A Century – The Ride Not the Years

Selene Yeager at Bicycling Magazine has put together an eight week plan to prepare for a century ride –

The plan includes extending your weekly rides, speed riding, steady riding and choosing the best type of riding for you. If you are planning on riding one hundred miles as a challenge or doing the 102 mile ride for El Tour, this might be a good preparation to get ready for that exciting day.

THE EIGHT-WEEK PLAN

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
M	RIDER'S CHOICE							
T	1 hr	1 hr	1.25 hr	1.25 hr	1.25 hr	1.5 hr	1.25 hr	1 hr
W	RIDER'S CHOICE							
T	1 hr	1.25 hr	1.5 hr	1.75 hr	2 hr	2.25 hr	2 hr	1.5 hr
F	RIDER'S CHOICE							
S	1.5-2 hr 20-25 mi	2-2.5 hr 25-30 mi	2.5-3 hr 30-40 mi	2.5-3 hr 35-45 mi	3.5-4 hr 55-60 mi	4-4.5 hr 60-65 mi	4.5-5 hr 70-75 mi	CENTURY 100 mi
S	RIDER'S CHOICE							

This schedule is only a suggestion. Plan your week according to what works best for you and schedule a day of rest (rider's choice) – an hour-long easy spin, a core workout, yoga, a hike, a swim, whatever gets you moving – between each of the three workout rides.

<https://www.bicycling.com/training/a20026691/eight-week-training-plan-to-ride-a-century/?source=nl> .

Interesting Cycling Stories

A 28 Year Riding Streak Comes to an End

Jim Langley, the Technical Editor of *Road Bike Rider*, began a daily riding streak on December 30, 1993 - <https://www.roadbikerider.com/langley-streak-bites-the-dust/>. Since that time he has ridden every day for at least an hour bringing his total number of riding days to 10,269 consecutive days or 28 years and one month. A urinary tract and kidney infection resulting in a hospital stay ended his streak this year. Asked how many miles he rode, he estimated it at over 250,000. An interesting read on other streaks and why and how people keep at it day after day.



Jim Langley and His Travel Bike

Two Years on a Cycle

Dutchman Martijn Doolaard has just published an account of his bicycle journey from



Vancouver, BC to the tip of Tierra del Fuego, a trip that took two years and accounted for 12,226 miles -

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/02/17/bicycle-travel-doolaard/>. Doolaard is not the first to make this long journey as Americans June and Greg Siple made a more than 18,000 trek from Alaska to the bottom of South America in 1972. Doolaard is both a photographer and writer and the final work includes a wide array of photographs. The book is

available from both Amazon and the book publisher - <https://us.gestalten.com/products/two-years-on-a-bike>.

Tiva, the Reluctant Rider

I've posted a number of photos of riders and their dogs, but this is a story about Tiva, a dog rescued from a garbage dump, who was deathly afraid of loud engine noises of any type -

https://www.adventurecycling.org/blog/tiva-to-tekoa/?ruid=437746&utm_source=bikebits&utm_campaign=20220216_BikeBits&utm_medium=email. This is a story of how a couple worked slowly and carefully to acclimate their dog to getting out of the house and eventually to ride in a dog trailer on a rail trail. It is not only a wonderful dog story but a great description of the John Wayne Rail Trail in Washington State.

From Bikepacking to Bikesketching

Nuri Galba is both an avid cyclist and an artist. She grew up hiking and biking and followed that passion with training as an artist. When she goes on a bikepacking trip she takes her pens and brushes with her to record what she is seeing and doing. Her art often combines pictures and text to describe what she is seeing and records her emotional response -

https://bikepacking.com/plog/riders-lens-bikesketching-nuri-galbe/?utm_source=bikebits&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20220216_BikeBits.



	<p>Today's Photo</p> <p>If this cold weather continues, You may need one of these!</p> 
<p>Today's Cycling Quotation</p> <p><i>Your bike cost how much? And it doesn't even come with pedals?</i> Mark Turner</p>	

Today's Funny -Ring That Bell

A cyclist with a broken chain stuck out his thumb hoping for a lift home. Eventually, a guy in a sports car pulled over and offered him a lift but, of course, the bike wouldn't fit in the car. The driver got some rope out of his trunk and tied it to his bumper. He tied the other end to the bike and told the rider, 'If I go too fast, ring your bell and I'll slow down.'
Everything went well until another sports car overtook them. The driver forgot all about the cyclist and put his foot down. A short distance down the road, they hammered through a speed trap. The cop with the radar gun radioed ahead to his colleague that 2 sports cars were heading his way at over 100 mph. He then added, 'And you're not going to believe this - there's a cyclist behind them ringing his bell to pass.'

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