



Wheelmen Tracks

Vol. 29 Nbr. 9

September 2007

Bicycling The Grand Traverse Bay Area of Michigan By D. Mary Conklin

It was Wednesday, July 25th, and as with any planned get away, the excitement was building inside of me as were questions of whether or not this excursion could be pulled off successfully. You see, I'm not a detail person ... I'm a visionary; leaving the planning of a trip like this to me could prove to be quite dangerous. Things I knew for certain at that point...we had a good map supplied by a Traverse City bike shop that would allow us to pick many good bike routes. We had reservations to stay in a "resort" cottage on Lake Arbutus, about 6 miles south of Traverse City. Clyde, Herb, Ralph, Randy, and I were excited to be trekking to the north for a new adventure. We had our bikes, our gear, and relatively sound minds and bodies to carry us through. Hmm, now on this very day in question, mind you it was the day before we were to set out, I decided to text my dear friend, Arthur, just to see how he was doing. To my utter surprise, Arthur responded by asking if there was still room for him. Why absolutely yes there was room for him. So with that, arrangements were made for Clyde, Ralph, and Arthur to leave Oberlin Thursday morning, and Randy and I to leave Collins Thursday morning with a meeting point on the Ohio Turnpike. Herb's plan was to fly up Friday, ride with us Saturday, and fly home with Arthur in tow Saturday evening.

The drive to Traverse City proved to take quite a bit longer than our friend "mapquest"

suggested. Certainly mapquest failed to take into consideration the many necessary stops bestowed upon us as part of the great human experience. But after what seemed like an eternity, we were finally approaching our destination point: Lake Arbutus. Mind you, as we neared what surely was to be our peaceful, plush, wonderful abode for the next 4 days, I couldn't help but note the distinct change in terrain...yes, hills...and many of them. Finally, there it was, glory be, the road sign indicating we had arrived. And with one word, I will sum up my first impression: "Deliverance." You know, the movie. I was certain we would be greeted by fat men toting shot guns. But we weren't. (Holy Mary Mother of God ... save us). Instead, we were greeted by a kind young man who ushered me into our "resort" cottage. Once inside, I quickly applied the statement "don't judge a book by its cover." The owner had recently redone the inside and all would be okay. With that, I brushed the bloody droplets of sweat from my brow, we claimed our territory, and readied our steeds for our first trek which was a 25 mile loop around Lake Arbutus and Spider Lake.

Ride 1: As mentioned above, our first ride Thursday evening was a planned 25 mile loop around two lakes, Lake Arbutus and Spider Lake. These lakes set about 6 miles south of Traverse Bay and run north and south. Lesson

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Cateye Totals




Minutes

Rider	July	YTD
Maddock, Daniel	1,207	4,528
Cicerchi, Ron	953	4,286
Panek, Carl	421	3,726
Scheef, Mark	0	3,543
Ballard, Ralph	690	3,377
Hohn, Clyde	904	3,375
Paslawski, Peter	638	3,124
Maddock, Tina	1,013	2,584
Petro, Arthur	488	2,475
Conklin, Dolores	723	2,279
Panek, Carol	388	2,070
Krebs, Dave	164	1,980
Ivan Greive	610	1,781
Sloane, Ken	515	1,741
Shomo, Lisa	515	1,741
Haun, Mike	0	1,629
Wood, Ed	406	1,470
Bachman, John W.	277	913
Deucher, David A.	410	554
Blake, Tracy	193	434
Seman, Thomas	140	346
Linneman, Ray	125	303
Moennich, Debbie	41	189
Moennich, Jim	41	189
Hubbard, Dennis	0	165
Wilbur, Frank	0	159
Linn, Ron	87	87
de la Porte, Herb	60	60
Deucher, Peter	57	57
Pauley, Jr., Stephen G.	0	32
Heritage, Wayne	22	22
Totals	11,088	49,219

Our picnic meeting was held at Ralph's house on Aug 16th. There was about 14 attending. The brats were great and we had plenty of desserts to ad to our middles. The only business was to make the September meeting a pizza meeting at Ole Towne. We broke up about 8:45 and retreated home with full bel-



WHEELMAN

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WHEELMEN**

TRACKS

President	John Bachman
Vice Pres	Clyde Hohn
Secretary/ Treasurer	Louise Page
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Editor	Dave Krebs

For ride info, call 967-8580



Grand Traverse

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#1 of our trip: Road names on a map do not always match the road signs posted by the responsible local government agency. Note to self: Thank Ron when you return to Ohio for all his intensive labor regarding map work (thanks Ron). The ride was certainly a bit hillier than we are accustomed to and which road to take always seemed to be questionable, but all in all, we got an idea of our surroundings and with that, ride one was complete.

Ride 2: We awoke early Friday morning to the wonderful smells of Chef Clyde Hohn's cooking. Our cottage came complete with a fully stocked kitchen so we decided to make good use of it. After a breakfast of scrambled eggs and toast, we loaded our vehicles and drove north to Traverse City where we parked on the bay on the western side of the city. The morning was cool and clear and already, the area was bustling with activity. Today's ride was a 60 mile ride that would take us up the Leelanau Peninsula. The plan was to ride a figure 8 around Lake Leelanau, north to Northport, take in a bite to eat, then head south to Cedar and back to Traverse City. We headed out the bike path toward the peninsula and met up with an off-road bike club who was headed to Sutton's Bay. We fell into formation and rode as one to the end of the trail where we parted ways. Eventually, see, we took a wrong turn here and ended up a few miles off course, we headed up the peninsula riding on the eastern side of Lake Leelanau enjoying the views and different terrain. About half way up the peninsula, the sky started to look a bit questionable. As luck would have it, we discovered a neat little coffee shop called The Pedaling Beanery nestled snugly (and most

conveniently for us) between the upper and lower lakes of Lake Leelanau. It was an interesting coffee shop complete with a TV which was tuned to the Tour de France. This beanery also sported wireless internet connection and the locals were making good use of it. Several accommodating fellows checked the local radar which clearly (clearly) indicated any bad weather was miles north of the peninsula so we had nothing to worry about. After enjoying this fine establishment (and I do highly recommend you stop should you ever be in the area), we continued north on



Here's a view of Torch Lake

our excursion. Lesson #2 of the trip: Apparently radar doesn't mean much when you are on a bay. Seemingly the skies split open and a form of precipitation quite foreign to those of us residing in Northern Ohio burst forth. Within minutes, we were soaking wet. Clyde determined it simply wasn't prudent to continue north so with a little lassoing of Ralph, Randy, and Arthur who were a bit ahead of us, we regrouped and headed south to Cedar. Eventually, the rain stopped and we began to dry out. Now here's where the story gets interesting. Let me remind you of lesson number one above...the one about names of the roads listed on maps may not match the road

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Grand Traverse

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signs....this is where it comes into play yet again. After careful scrutiny of our current location related to our destination of Traverse City, it was determined we should take a “right.” So we headed “right” not realizing that this particular “right” was taking us WEST to Maple City. And as it goes when a person gets lost, the hills always seem to be a little longer and a little steeper and with that grows a bit of anxiety or frustration or call it what you will, there we were, and there the hills were, and that’s how that went. But as with any adventure, always keep in mind that new things lie ahead. Now, if you’ve ever ridden with Arthur Petro, you know the most familiar view of him is a vague jersey far off in the distance. Suddenly, and without any fair warning, we seemed to be seeing Arthur standing in the road pointing to something off on the berm. As the scene comes into focus ... there it was; a large bovine standing on the edge of the road with Arthur Petro but feet away trying to master a photo with his newly purchased cell phone. Now not knowing the mentality of this particular piece of beef, I was quite concerned for Arthur’s safety. After all, he was wearing a red jersey. Unfortunately for Arthur, this friendly neighborhood nomad wasn’t in the mood to be photographed so it crossed the road headed toward Arthur and meandered off into a woody area without incident. Talk about classic moments. Lesson #3 of the trip: No matter where you go, there you are. It’s true. Moments tend to spread themselves out in front of you, if you’ll just take the opportunity to grasp them. And Arthur did! All worthy of a hardy laugh. We mounted our Treks and with Clyde’s excellent map skills, got back on course headed EAST toward Traverse City. Shortly thereafter, we encounter another cyclist who had the

nearly the same story of the day to tell as us (minus the bovine incident of course): traveled north, encountered heavy rain, turned south, then an unfortunate wrong turn and landed at the same intersection as this group of wheelmen. Being the kind folks we are, we welcomed him into our group and safely arrived back in Traverse City. Around 6:00 p.m. that evening, Ralph, Clyde, and I met Herb at the airport and ushered him into our version of “Deliverance.” We enjoyed a great evening together and eventually hit the hay to dream of what great riding may be ahead of us on Saturday.

Ride 3: We woke up early Saturday morning, grabbed a bite to eat, and headed in our vehicles northwest to Kedadin which is nestled between Traverse Bay and Lake Torch. Finally getting the picture that the photocopied maps were not really working, we had taken some time the night before to make a few cue sheets which included hints that road names may be questionable in certain areas. Any way it goes, this ride seemed pretty clear cut as we simply needed to follow 60 miles of shoreline. We found parking at a park in Kewadin and headed north along the shore of Lake Torch. The roads were nice, the lake was beautiful, and the company was great. A ways into our ride, Herb suggested we take a lunch break in Bellaire, a small town a few miles to the east of Lake Torch on Lake Bellaire. Great idea. As we rode into Bellaire, we found a local who suggested a small diner on the main drag. We enjoyed a breakfast lunch and headed back to Lake Torch. I’ll just note that on the approximate 3 mile jaunt between Lake Torch and Bellaire, we had a great down-hiller where we gained top speeds of 40 mph. While enjoying the wind whistling through my helmet, I can’t help but confess that part of me, a very small part of me, was questioning Herb’s great

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idea because in the back of my mind I knew in reverse, this down-hill wasn't going to be such fun. But for some strange and unknown factor, on our return to Lake Torch, that hill didn't

seem like such a bad thing after all. I rode away from that one thanking Herb for his desire to get off the beaten path, enjoy the moment and be on our way. All was well. We then continued south around Lake Torch, coming across a festival of some sort in Alden. Let me say that little town was hopping. Parade, race, people everywhere, etc. etc. As we rounded the bottom of the lake we noted the absolute



beauty of Lake Torch. Heading back north to Kewadin, we encountered quite a flotilla of small boats in the middle of the Lake. It was quite a sight to behold as I'm not just talking 15 or 20 boats, I'm talking many small boats all gathered together in the center of the most beautiful blue and aqua lake my eyes have seen. Again, nice ride, great company, good experience. On our return to the "homestead," we stopped at a local grocery store in Traverse City to grab some things for the evening meal. Griller King Ralph and Chef Clyde prepared an awesome meal of BBQ chicken and hamburgers with the appropriate sides. Shortly after eating, Ralph and Clyde ushered Herb and Arthur to the airport for their departure fully intact with some lasting memories.

Ride 4: Our final day had arrived. We woke up extra early, grabbed a bite to eat and headed north into Traverre City where the plan for the day was to ride the Old Mission Peninsula. I was especially looking forward to

this ride as the description was "flat." My kind of ride. We parked at the high school and the trek north on the east side of the peninsula. The bay was beautiful, the traffic was extremely light, and ride was quite enjoyable. We cut across the peninsula about 15 miles north and headed south back into Traverse City which concluded a great morning ride. We were able to ride fast, enjoy great views, and conclude our trip with a great ride.

Arthur never learns. Never nap when there's a camera close by!

So there you have it. Clyde's, Ralph's, Randy's, Herb's, Arthur's, and Mary's trek up north to Traverse City. Several lessons learned, some great rides, survived camp "Deliverance," heard the sound of a Loon for the first time, and

got to know some good people a little better, I feel like I'm quite a lucky person.

PS. If you ever need a map of the Grand Traverse Bay suggested bicycle rides, I really do have a great one that sports only a few minor problems that promise to take you on an adventure of your own.

Ride starting times:

Saturday Morning rides will start from Oberlin (Prospect School) at 9:00 AM.

Evening rides:

Evenings are back to the summer schedule now that Daylight Savings Time is here.

The start time is 5:30. That's plenty of time for 20+ miles before sunset even if it's cloudy and gives more folks time to get home from work and changed. The TUE will depart from Oberlin (Prospect School)



Calendar

Date	Starting Point	Destination	Miles	The etc's
09/02	Oberlin Inn	Spencer	59-52-48	Same place 3 distances
09/03	Amherst	U-Show	30	A Labor Day ride
09/08	N. Olmsted	Cle Zoo	53	a long SAT ride
09/09	Amherst	Valley City LaGrange	56 40	A nice rolling ride to Michelle's
09/13	Nordson Depot Ole Towne	Prolog Pizza Meeting	5:30 7:30	a warm-up ride maybe a little business
09/16	Oberlin Inn	West Salem Spencer	58 43	Flat to rolling Pretty flat
09/23	Lodi	Canal Fulton Smithville	68 35	Should be a roller same terrain, shorter
09/30	Amherst	Milan Berlin Heights	56 43	A little rolling same but shorter

Starting Times and Locations

Sunday & holiday ride times are 8:30

Amherst:

The Amherst start is the City parking area 3 located between Tenney & Park Avenues just east of Church Street. From SR-58, go west on Park Avenue. When you get to the bowling alley, look to the left ... that's the lot! We meet on the south end near Tenney.

Oberlin:

The Oberlin start is in the Oberlin Inn parking lot located in the rear of the Inn.

Lodi:

Starts at the Drug Mart on SR 83 just west of town a couple of miles.

North Olmsted:

Starts in the Water Tower shopping center at the corner of Lorain Road and Dover Center Road. Take 480 to Sterns Road, exit north to Lorain Road and turn east to Water Tower Square on your left.