



interbike



OF



THE PIONEERS OF MOUNTAIN BIKING

My home town of Capistrano Beach, California, was the site of the B.M.X. footage shot by Bruce Brown in 1969 for the feature film *On Any Sunday*. Working for Bruce on the film about motorcycles introduced me to Mert Lawwill, top Harley-Davidson factory team racer. From the exposure in movie theaters across the nation, B.M.X. became a bicycle racing phenomenon, with competitors all over the world.

Almost a decade later, Mert asked me to do the initial publicity for the Lawwill/Knight Pro-Cruiser, the first production mountain bike. Just 300 were made, and today they're collector's items. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I was a witness to two major movements in bicycling.

Yet another two decades later, Steve Ready of Interbike approached me to produce this special event for the Anaheim and Atlantic City Interbike Trade Shows. Researching the project involved two trips to Marin County, California, and four days in Crested Butte, Colorado.

Charles Kelly's "World Headquarters" is situated above a coffee house in Fairfax. Charles is a collector by nature, and keeper of the flame of early Marin County mountain bike lore.

If Charles Kelly is the king of Northern California mountain bike history, the undisputed queen of Crested Butte is Carole Bauer-Romanik, curator of the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame. The Mountain Bike Hall of Fame is a one room museum containing the best efforts of design and achievement by the pioneers of mountain biking from all over the world. The Crested Butte locals ride "town bikes" — old Schwinn frames with updated components. Some of the relics actually were ridden over Pearl Pass on the legendary ride to Aspen. For serious single-track riding, they have the finest equipment. Working with Carole, photographing the museum pieces, and having the locals ride up on their museum pieces made me feel I was in the Mecca of mountain bikes.

Our intent is to try to capture the pioneer spirit and innovation of the late '70s and early '80s. This is a representational collection of people and mountain bikes of that era.

This project was made possible by the efforts of many people and we especially wish to credit Robert Brazell Studio Photography; Chris Darrow and The Mountain Bike Buckaroos; John Garcia, Plantit Interior Design; Charles Kelly, Author; Jerry Newton Studio Photography; Steve Ready, Interbike; and Carole Bauer-Romanik, Curator, Mountain Bike Hall of Fame.

Allan Seymour
Allan Seymour
Capistrano Beach, June 1991

WE WERE JUST FOOLING AROUND

The invention of the mountain bike was not a deliberate act. Instead, it is a striking demonstration of the creative power of play. And although cyclists everywhere had been playing

BY CHARLES KELLY

IN THE EARLY 1970s, MARIN COUNTY WAS ONE OF MANY PLACES WHERE ADVENTUROUS CYCLISTS FOUND THAT OLD BALLOON-TIRE BICYCLES WERE PERFECT FOR WILD DESCENTS DOWN MOUNTAIN ROADS AND TRAILS. THERE WERE UNDEVELOPED MOUNTAINOUS AREAS LACED WITH TRAILS AND FIRE ROADS, AND A LARGE URBAN POPULATION WITH JUNKED BIKES IN GARAGES. THESE EARLY "MOUNTAIN BIKES" WERE CONSIDERED EXPENDABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE SO CHEAP AND EASY TO COME BY. PERFORMANCE WAS NOT AN ISSUE, AND SOME

DESTROYING A BIKE IN THE RUN. BECAUSE THE BICYCLES BECAUSE THEY WERE OR TWO GEARS, THE PRE-ASCENDING HILLS WAS IN

SERIOUS CYCLISTS REGARDED THESE DAREDEVIL DESCENDERS AS A CIRCUS ACT, AND MOST ROAD CYCLISTS FELT THAT OFF-ROAD RIDING WAS NOT IMPORTANT TO THE REST OF THE CYCLING WORLD. WHILE INDIVIDUALS TAKE CREDIT FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS, IT WAS THE PRESENCE OF A GROUP RATHER THAN THE GENIUS OF INDIVIDUALS THAT SPURRED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN BIKE. MOUNTAIN BIKING IN MARIN COUNTY DEVELOPED AROUND FRIENDLY AND SOMETIMES LESS FRIENDLY COMPETITION AMONG SEVERAL DOZEN RIDERS, AND WITHOUT THIS FACTOR IT WOULD NOT HAVE DEVELOPED AT ALL. SINCE THE OLD BIKES WERE BEST AT DESCENDING RATHER THAN CLIMBING, THE FIRST "CLUNKER BIKE" RACE IN MARIN COUNTY WAS A DOWNHILL EVENT NEAR THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX THAT CAME DOWNHILL. HELD FROM 1976 HELD ON A STEEP DIRT ROAD. ATHLETIC EVENTS, "REPACK"

FRIENDS WHO WANTED TO TEST DESCENDER. A SAN FRAN-

RIDERS EVEN ENJOYED PROCESS OF A GNARLY WERE SO HEAVY, AND EQUIPPED WITH ONLY ONE FERRER METHOD OF THE BACK OF A TRUCK.



Velo Club Tamaulipas membership card 1966. Collection of Gary Fisher.



Crested Butte, Colorado Bicycle License 1965. Collection of Mt. Bike Hall of Fame.

TO BE CALLED THE REPACK TO 1984, THIS WAS A TIME TRIAL IN THE TRADITION OF MANY ATHLETIC EVENTS, "REPACK" ESTABLISH WHO WAS THE FASTEST DESCENDER. A SAN FRAN-

with bikes on dirt roads for many years, it was in one place, at one time, that the intensity of that play reached critical mass. From the give-and-take among a group of bike riders, racers and tinkers, the bike that revolutionized an industry emerged.

BURBOWS WON THE FIRST RACE, AND IF EVERYONE HAD BEEN SATISFIED WITH THE RESULT, THERE MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN ANOTHER. AS THE WORD SPREAD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE, RIDERS FROM SURROUNDING TOWNS ASKED WHY THEY HADN'T BEEN INVITED, SO ANOTHER RACE WAS SCHEDULED. THE LIST OF COMPETITORS GREW FROM SEVEN AT THE FIRST RACE TO 20 OR 30 RIDERS WHO MET ON A REGULAR BASIS TO TEST THEIR SKILLS AND THEIR MACHINERY. THE COMPETITION INSPIRED RIDERS TO LOOK FOR ADVANTAGES IN TECHNIQUE OR EQUIPMENT, AND PROVIDED A TESTING GROUND AS WELL AS A PLACE TO SHARE NEW DEVELOPMENTS. REPACK DESCENDS 1200 FEET IN 1.8 MILES, SO THE FIRST MODIFICATION RIDERS MADE WAS THE ADDITION OF A FRONT BRAKE. SINCE THE OLD BICYCLES CAME EQUIPPED WITH ONLY A COASTER BRAKE, ALL THE ENERGY GENERATED BY 200 POUNDS OF BICYCLE AND RIDER DESCENDING 1200 FEET IN FIVE MINUTES WAS CONVERTED TO HEAT IN THE REAR HUB, AND ALL THE GREASE IN THE HUB WAS CONVERTED TO SMOKE. BY THAT TIME THE BRAKE HAD LITTLE EFFECT ON THE SPEED OF THE BICYCLE. THE NAME OF THE COURSE CAME FROM THE FACT THAT RIDERS HAD TO REPACK THE HUB WITH GREASE AFTER EVERY RUN.

FOR SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE REPACK RACE, THE INSPIRATION TO IMPROVE THEIR OLD BICYCLES HAD TURNED INTO THEIR LIFE'S WORK. GARY FISHER HOLDS THE COURSE RECORD OF 4 MINUTES, 22 SECONDS, ALTHOUGH HE ONLY RACED ONE TIME. TOM RITCHEY AND JOE BREEZE RACED AT REPACK BEFORE DESIGNING THEIR OWN BIKES. I WAS THE RACE PRO-



Joe Brown on a Brewer 1970s. Collection of Bicycle Motocross Action Magazine.

Some riders even enjoyed destroying a bike in the process of a gnarly run.

MOTER AND STARTER, AND I KEPT THE RECORDS OF THE RACES. ALTHOUGH I WAS NOT THE FASTEST DESCENDER, MY INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE COURSE ALLOWED ME TO JOIN THE "UNDER FIVE MINUTE" CLUB WITH A RUN 25 SECONDS SLOWER THAN THE RECORD. WHEN RIDERS STARTED TAKING THEIR REPACK BIKES ON RIDES THAT INCLUDED RIDING UP HILLS AS WELL AS DOWN, THE TINKERS GOT TO WORK. SOME TRIED TWO-SPEED OR THREE-SPEED HUBS, WITH LIMITED SUCCESS; THE ANSWER SEEMED TO BE DERAILLEUR GEARS, WHICH WERE INCOMPATIBLE WITH COASTER BRAKES. GARY FISHER WAS THE FIRST RIDER IN MARIN COUNTY TO PUT A DRUM BRAKE ON HIS BIKE, AN ENORMOUS STEEL

TANDEM REAR DRUM. THIS PERMITTED HIM TO MOUNT A DERAILLEUR AND USE FIVE SPEEDS, AND PUSHED THE WEIGHT OF HIS BIKE OVER 50 POUNDS, BUT THE IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE WAS DRAMATIC. WITHIN A FEW WEEKS AFTER GARY HAD FITTED THE DRUM BRAKE TO HIS BICYCLE, EVERY OFF-ROAD RIDER IN THE AREA HAD EITHER SWITCHED TO A DRUM BRAKE OR HAD

ORDERED ONE. FISHER ALSO INTRODUCED THUMBSHIFTERS, WHICH AT THAT TIME WERE ONLY FOUND ON INEXPENSIVE LADIES' BIKES. BEFORE THUMBSHIFTERS, MARIN COUNTY RIDERS USED STEM SHIFTERS ON THE HANDLEBARS. BOTH DERAILLEURS WERE OPERATED BY THE RIDER'S RIGHT HAND, WITH ONE SHIFTER ABOVE AND THE



Joe Breeze 1970s. Collection of Bicycle Motocross Action Magazine.



Bicycle Country Quarterly Winter - Number Two 1990s. Collection of Mt. Bike Hall of Fame.

OTHER BELOW THE HANDLEBAR. A SEATPOST QUICK-RELEASE WAS COMMON ON THE MARIN COUNTY BIKES, BUT RIDERS DIDN'T LOWER THE SADDLE FOR STABILITY AS MUCH AS TO PROTECT THE FRAGILE EQUIPMENT. THE SEATPOSTS ON THE OLD BIKES WERE A SMALL DIAMETER, AND THE FRAMES WERE ALL THE SAME SIZE. FOR A BIG MAN TO RIDE COMFORTABLY, THE SEATPOST HAD TO BE EXTENDED SO FAR THAT IT WAS OFTEN BENT BY THE RIDER'S WEIGHT ON A ROUGH ROAD. SINCE MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE REPACK RACES WERE ALSO MEMBERS

OF A RACING CLUB, THERE WERE ENDLESS DISCUSSIONS OF WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BUILD A BIKE FOR THE REPACK RACES THAT USED ALL THE BICYCLE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED FOR THE TOUR

DE FRANCE. THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT A MODERN MOUNTAIN BIKE WAS A FRAME BUILT FOR ME IN 1976 BY CRAIG MITCHELL, WHO ATTEMPTED TO DUPLICATE THE GEOMETRY OF A SCHWINN EXCELSIOR. EVEN THOUGH

For some of the participants in the Repack race, the inspiration to improve their old bicycles has turned into their life's work.

IT WAS MUCH LIGHTER, IT DIDN'T HANDLE AS WELL AS THE 30-YEAR-OLD MACHINE. IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ANOTHER BUILDER ATTEMPTED TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF MOUNTAIN BIKE TECHNOLOGY TO THAT OF A MODERN BICYCLE, AND IN LATE 1976 JOE BREEZE WENT TO WORK ON THE PROBLEM. BUILDING A MOUNTAIN BIKE IN 1976

REQUIRED A COMPLETE REDESIGN OF THE DRIVE TRAIN, BECAUSE THERE WERE SO MANY DIFFERENCES IN MEASUREMENTS OF WHEEL WIDTH AND CHAIN LINE. WHILE ROAD-BICYCLE DESIGN IS BASED ON A HUNDRED YEARS OF EXPERIMENTATION, THERE WAS NO TRADITION FOR BREEZE TO DRAW UPON TO DESIGN HIS NEW TYPE OF BICYCLE. BEFORE HE CUT A SINGLE PIECE OF TUBING, BREEZE SPENT MONTHS AT HIS DRAWING BOARD SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF GEOMETRY AND CLEARANCES FOR THE WIDER TIRES.



The Fat Tire Flyer August/September 1989. Collection Charles Kelly.

INSTEAD OF THE DRUM BRAKES USED ON THE CUSTOM CLUNKERS, HE USED CANTILEVER BRAKES. THIS PERMITTED HIM TO USE HIGH-QUALITY HUBS, BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER QUALITY WHEEL COMPONENTS HE WAS FORCED TO USE STEEL RIMS AND HEAVY TIRES WHOSE DESIGN HAD NOT CHANGED SINCE 1935. BY MODERN MOUNTAIN BIKE STANDARDS, ONLY 14 YEARS LATER, THESE FIRST BREEZE MOUNTAIN BIKES WERE HEAVY AND FAR TOO STIFF, BUT BY THE STANDARDS OF THE DAY THEY WERE THE MOST ADVANCED OFF-ROAD

BICYCLES ANYWHERE. JOE BREEZE'S INFLUENCE IS STILL VISIBLE IN THE MODERN MOUNTAIN BIKE. BREEZE BUILT ONLY 10 OF THESE BICYCLES, AND SINCE THE SPORT WAS CONFINED TO A SMALL

GROUP OF PEOPLE, HE THOUGHT HE HAD BUILT ENOUGH TO SERVE THE ENTIRE WORLD. JOE WAS WRONG, BECAUSE AS SOON AS OTHER CYCLISTS STARTED SEEKING RIDERS ON HIS EXPERIMENTAL BICYCLES,

THEY ASKED ABOUT GETTING THEIR OWN. IN 1978 ALUMINUM RIMS AND LIGHTER TIRES BECAME AVAILABLE IN THE CORRECT SIZES TO USE ON THE OFF-ROAD BICYCLES. THE NEW RIMS AND TIRES TOOK NEARLY A KILOGRAM OFF EACH WHEEL, AND THIS IMPROVED THE PERFORMANCE SO MUCH THAT THE MOUNTAIN BIKE WAS READY FOR THE MASS MARKET. BEFORE LIGHT WHEELS WERE AVAILABLE, IT TOOK A FANATIC RIDER TO APPRECIATE MOUNTAIN BIKING, BECAUSE THE BIKE WAS SO SLOW. THIS SINGLE IMPROVEMENT WAS AS IMPORTANT TO THE POPULARITY OF MOUNTAIN BIKING AS THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MODERN MOUNTAIN BIKE FRAME. BY 1979 THE KOSKI BROTHERS, MOTORCYCLE RACER MERT LAWELL, AND ROAD FRAME BUILDERS TOM RITCHEY AND JEFFREY RICHMAN HAD ALL BUILT MOUNTAIN BIKE FRAMES. RITCHEY WAS ONLY 21 YEARS

OLD AT THE TIME, BUT HE WAS ALREADY AN EXPERIENCED CYCLIST AND FRAME BUILDER. HE HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF THE JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM AND HAD BEEN BUILDING FRAMES FROM THE AGE OF 14. IN 1978 JOE BREEZE

ASKED RITCHEY TO BUILD HIM A TANDEM, AND AT THE SAME TIME SHOWED HIM THE FIRST MOUNTAIN BIKES HE HAD BUILT. RITCHEY HAD BEEN RIDING HIS ROAD BIKE ON TRAILS FOR MANY YEARS, AND HE WAS INTERESTED IMMEDIATELY. JOE GAVE TOM SOME ADVICE BASED ON HIS OWN EXPERIENCE BUILDING MOUNTAIN BIKES. RITCHEY ADDED A NUMBER OF HIS OWN IDEAS AND IN 1979 TOM BUILT HIS FIRST MOUNTAIN BIKE. THIS BIKE INCLUDED FEATURES WHICH BECAME STANDARD ON THE FIRST MASS-PRODUCED MOUNTAIN BIKES, PRIMARILY



Kelly-Fisher Mountain Bikes Decal 1980s. Collection of Gary Fisher.

THE FRAME GEOMETRY AND THE ONE PIECE "BULLMOOSE" HANDLEBARS. WHEN GARY FISHER BOUGHT ONE OF RITCHEY'S FIRST THREE MOUNTAIN BIKES, TOM ASKED HIM IF HE THOUGHT HE COULD SELL ANY MORE OF THEM. WITHIN A MONTH TOM HAD BUILT NINE MORE FRAMES, AND GARY ASKED ME IF I WANTED TO HELP HIM SELL THEM. WE PUT TOGETHER A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY AND STARTED OUR BUSINESS, WHICH WE CALLED MOUNTAINBIKES. AT THE SAME TIME MERT LAWELL STARTED MARKETING HIS PROCRUISER, THE KOSKI BROTHERS DESIGNED A CULT CLASSIC CALLED THE TRAILMASTER, AND JOE BREEZE WAS WORKING ON HIS SECOND PRODUCTION RUN OF BREEZERS. THE NEW BICYCLES WERE NOT EASY TO GET. FIRST, THEY WERE EXPENSIVE, COSTING MORE THAN A FINE ROAD BICYCLE OF THE TIME. SECOND, THE PRODUCTION FROM ALL SOURCES WAS PERHAPS A DOZEN BIKES A MONTH. OFTEN THE CUSTOMER HAD TO PAY FOR THE BICYCLE FIRST, AND THEN WAIT AS



7th Annual Appetite Seminar 1981. Collection of Charles Kelly.



National Off-Road Bicycle Association decal designed by Joe Breeze. Collection of Mt. Bike Hall of Fame.

LONG AS SEVERAL MONTHS WHILE THE BUILDER PURCHASED THE COMPONENTS AND ASSEMBLED IT. THE HIGH PRICES AND LONG DELIVERY TIMES WOULD DRIVE AWAY A MODERN MOUNTAIN BIKE CUSTOMER, BUT MANUFACTURE WAS NOT THE NEAT PROCESS IT IS TODAY. IN 1979 THERE WERE NO MOUNTAIN BIKE COMPONENT GROUPS AVAILABLE, AND PARTS CAME FROM MANY SOURCES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CRANKSETS WERE TA, BECAUSE THESE WERE THE ONLY CRANKS THAT CAME WITH TRIPLE CHAINRINGS, A 24-TOOTH INNER GEAR AND ANY-LENGTH

CHANKARMS. THE BRAKES ON THE RITCHEY BIKES WERE MAVAC TANDEM CANTILEVER BRAKES, WHICH REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS TO FIT ON MOUNTAIN BIKES, AND ON THE PROCRUISER THEY WERE HARD-TO-FIND DRUMS. BRAKE LEVERS CAME FROM MAGURA, AND THE BRAKE CABLES WERE HAND-MADE. HUBS WERE PHIL WOOD OR COOK BROTHERS SEALED HUBS. BY 1981 THERE WERE SEVERAL

SMALL CALIFORNIA COMPANIES MAKING MOUNTAIN BIKES, INCLUDING MOUNTAIN GOAT (JEFF LANDSAY) AND VICTOR VINCENTE OF AMERICA. WHILE MASS PRODUCTION OF MOUNTAIN BIKES WAS INEVITABLE, MOST OF THE LARGER BICYCLE COMPANIES WERE TOO CONSERVATIVE TO INVEST IN THIS MARKET. IN 1982 TWO CALIFORNIA COMPANIES, SPECIALIZED AND UNIVEGA, SOLD THE FIRST MASS-PRODUCED MOUNTAIN BIKES. WITHIN ANOTHER YEAR OTHER COMPANIES BEGAN PRODUCING SIMILAR BICYCLES, AND WHEN AT LAST MOUNTAIN BIKES BECAME AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE, THEY BEGAN TO TAKE OVER THE BICYCLE MARKET.

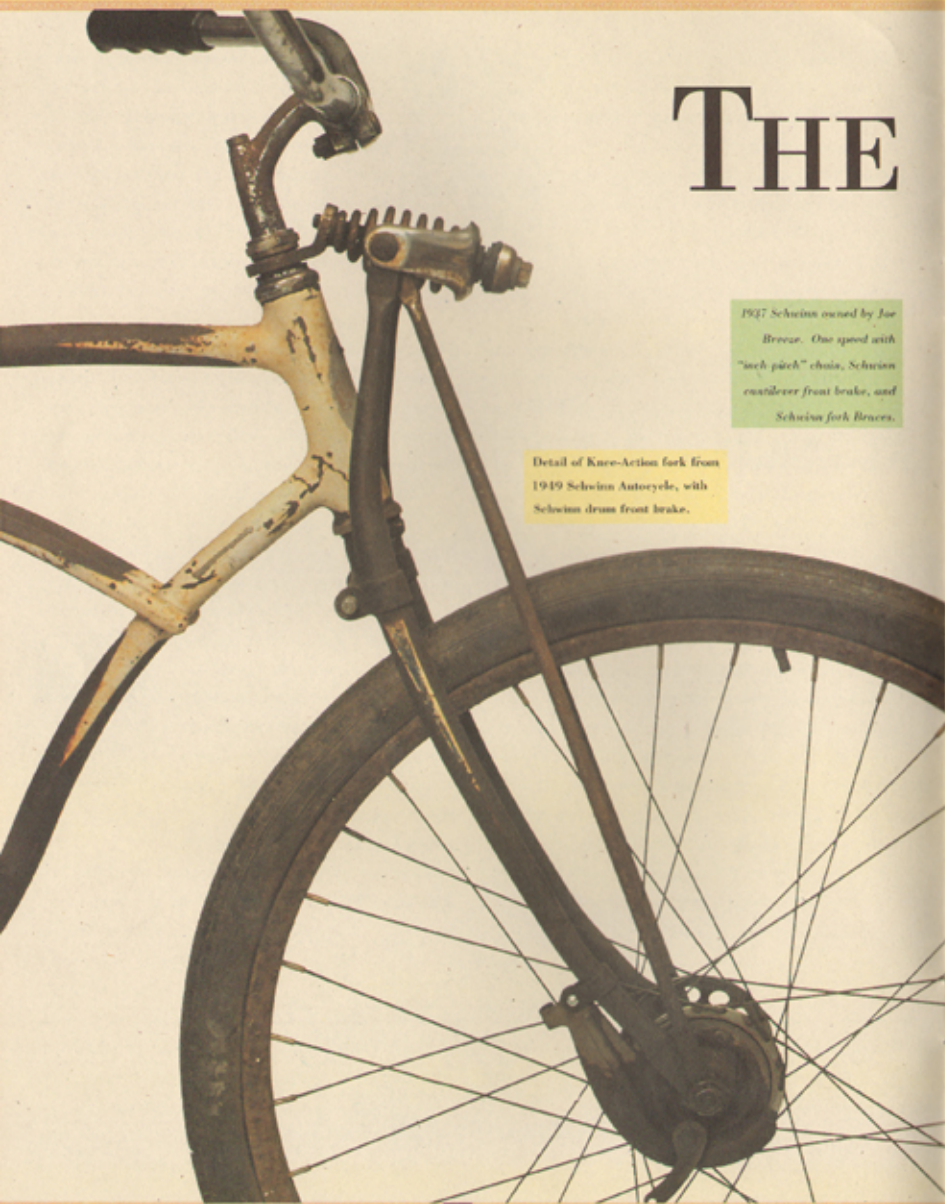


Gary Fisher on a Ritchey bike in Marin County 1980. Photo by David Epperson.



Sierra Nevada Fatbike Fest '84. Collection of Mt. Bike Hall of Fame.

THE BIKES



1937 Schwinn owned by Joe Brevar. One speed with "mch-päch" chain, Schwinn cantilever front brake, and Schwinn fork braces.

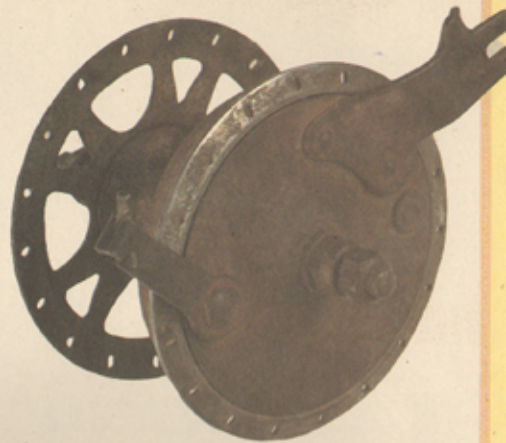
Detail of Kuro-Action fork from 1949 Schwinn Autocycle, with Schwinn drum front brake.



1955 Schwinn World owned by Bob Barrowes. Modified with Atom drum brakes circa 1980. 2nd to the last bike to race at Repack, May 1984.



1949 Schwinn Autocycle with Schwinn drum front brake.



Sun Tandem drum brake, used by Gary Fisher to convert his one-speed Schwinn to five speeds. Purchased in 1976 at the Marin County Flea Market.



1950 Schwinn Spitfire modified by Gary Fisher in 1976 for Al Strong and sold to Bob Barrowes. Used by Barrowes to win the first Repack race in the fall of 1976. Features drum brakes front and rear, extra-long 17" cranks, Schwinn fork brace, BMX high-rise handlebars, Sunstar thumbshifter, seatpost quick release from Schwinn Exercise.

THE BIKES



Schwinn Excelsior circa 1935 built and owned by Gary Fisher and used to set the Repack course record of 4:22. Equipped with Union front and Workman rear drum brake, Honda motorcycle brake levers, Campagnolo seatpost quick release, SunTour thumbshifters, Shimano 600 rear derailleur, SunTour Spirit front derailleur, TA cranks.



1977 Breeze owned by Charles Kelly. Second Breeze built, equipped with Phil Wood hubs, Magna handlebars and brake levers, SunTour thumbshifters and derailleurs, Weinman cantilever brakes, Campagnolo seatpost with custom modification to accept Brooks B-72 saddle, TA cranks, Cook Brothers fork custom modified by Joe Breeze.



1979 Lanesville Knight Pro cruiser 5-speed owned by Mert Lanesville. Sturmev-Archer Drum brakes, Tomaselli brake levers, Mert Lanesville custom stem, motorcycle handlebars, SunTour thumbshifter and rear derailleur.



Crested Butte town bike circa 1978.



Crested Butte town bike circa 1978.



Charlie Cunningham 1979 5-speed with handmade toggle brakes, magnesium stem, titanium chainguide, titanium toeclips, Type II fork, SunTour ARX rear derailleur. From the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame and Museum.



1982 Stumpjumper with TA cranks, Tomaselli brake levers, Mafac cantilever brakes, SunTour derailleurs and thumbshifters. From the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame and Museum.



Fisher bike used by Joe Murray to win the 1985 NORBA National Championship.

Line up for first cross-country race, Marin County, 1977: Fred Wolfe, Wende Cragg, Mark Linflow, Robert Stewart, Chris Lang, Jim Preston, Ian Stewart, Charles Kelly, Gary Fisher, Joe Breeze, Eric Fletcher, Craig Mitchell, John Drum, Roy Rivers, Alan Bonds, Unidentified.



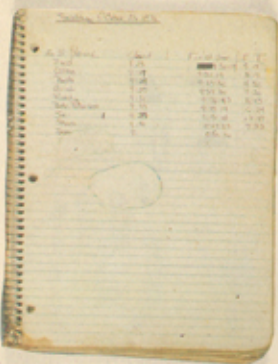
Photo by Jerry Rebol

THE

SOUVENIRS



T-shirt printed by Bob Burrows in 1977. From the collection of Charles Kelly.



Oldest known Repack results page, from second race held. First names only, and two of the names are of dogs (Ariel and Junior). From the collection of Charles Kelly.

Page of notes from the First Annual Clunker Awards Banquet organized by Charles Kelly in 1978. From the collection of Charles Kelly.

1st Annual Awards

- CK Best Organizer / Most Mach failures
- Joe Breeze Most wins / fastest 1500
- G. Fisher - Fastest time
- Fred - Most Bombing Missions
- Wende - Most Attendance / fastest Warden
- Alan Bonds - Fastest Dog
- Bob Burrows - oldest Teenager
- Craig Mitchell - Most Bizarre
- Marc Vendetti - 1st Crash
- Les Bogan - Most Colorado
- Law Stewart - Most Dost
- Phil Repack -
- Jim Stern - Self-Appreciation
- Chrisang - Best Dressed
- Bob Peterson - Most Mature
- Howie Hammerman - Best Pose
- Eric Brest - Most Photogenic
- Otis Guy - Fastest fireman
- Howie
- Fred
- Otis
- Alan
- Bob Burrows
- Craig
- Les
- Eric B
- Howie
- Chris Stern
- Bob
- P.R.
- Eric
- Wende
- Joe
- Gary



Bob Burrows racing at Repack, fall 1978. (Wende Cragg photo.)



Charles Kelly and Joe Breeze with Breezers #1 and #2 at Farewell Gap above Mineral King in 1978. This was not illegal then, but it is now. (Wende Cragg photo.)

Breezer owners on the 1980 Pearl Pass ride. From left, Wende Cragg, Denise Caramagno (with Charles Kelly's bike), (unidentified), Joe Breeze, Dave Sigmund, Steve Potts, Erik Koski. (Wende Cragg photo)



Crested Butte 1981. Left to right, Alan Bonds, Tom Ritchey, Gary Fisher, (unidentified), Dave Epperson photo.



1978 "Clunker Award" presented to Joe Breeze for fastest one-speed Repack time of the year and most wins on the year. Made by Wende Cragg.

"Mr. Repack" trophy presented to Charles Kelly at the Second Annual Clunker Awards Banquet in 1979. Made by Craig Mitchell from a broken TA crank from Kelly's bike. From the collection of Charles Kelly.





1983 Whiskeytown Downhill trophy won by Jim Harlow. From the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame collection.

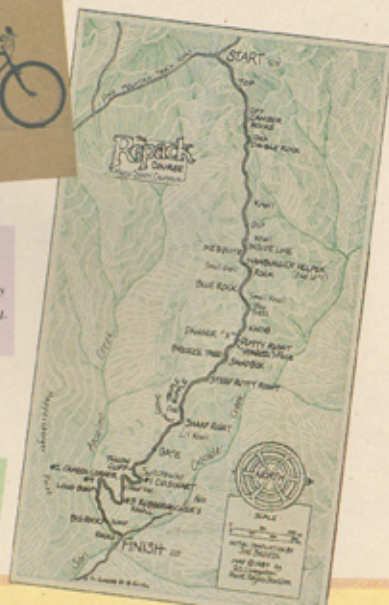


Cover of "Cycling the California Outback" by Chuck Elliott, AKA "Bodfish." Copyright 1985.

Cover of 1981 Ritchey MountainBikes catalog. (From Gary Fisher's collection)



Poster of Mark Green riding at Repack. Published by Rodale Press, 1981, photo by Wendie Cragg. From the collection of Charles Kelly.



Map of Repack from Cyclist magazine October 1984. Drawn by D.S. Livingston.

THE PIONEERS

BEFORE THE PIONEERS

Although Marin County occupies an important place in the history of mountain biking, it was not the first place where anyone experimented with off-road bicycles. The first cyclists of any kind were mountain bikers, because the roads they used were as bad as many of the trails now sought out by mountain bikers. Even after roads became smooth, cyclists experimenting with riding on difficult terrain developed the sports of cyclocross and bicycle motocross. In 1953 an American cyclist named John Finley Scott built a bicycle very similar to a modern mountain bike. Except for the heavy balloon tires and steel rims, which were the only ones available then, this bike would not have been out of place at a modern mountain bike event. Scott's "woods bike" had flat handlebars, a diamond frame, cantilever brakes and derailleur gears. But in 1953, in the United States, the times were not right for the development of a new type of bicycle. Scott found himself the only practitioner of an unconventional sport.

CAROLE BAUER-ROMANIK was one of the original women riders in Crested Butte. She is the creative force behind the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame and Museum, taking her display to mountain bike events all around the country.



A road racer in the 1970s, **JOE BREEZE** started riding trails on his old one-speed, and in 1976 built ten mountain bikes for his friends, the first production run of such bikes. He won the Repack race more times than any other rider, and influenced Tom Ritchey's first mountain bike production in 1979. The history of modern mountain biking can be traced to Joe's first bikes.



San Francisco firefighter **BOB BURROWES** was one of the original Repack riders, and won the first race held there. His competitive spirit was important to the series and helped develop the rivalry that resulted in the modern mountain bike.



DENISE CARAMAGNO was one of the first female mountain bikers in Marin County, and won the women's division of the first Rockhopper race, and the first Central Coast Clunker Classic. From 1980 to 1984 she was the co-publisher of the Fat Tire Flyer.



MIKE CASTELLI was the photographer for the first magazine article ever to appear on the subject of mountain bikes, published in "Co-Evolution Quarterly" the spring of 1978. He was also one of the five Marin County riders who first visited Crested Butte in 1978 for the Pearl Pass Tour. He was a partner in the Point Reyes Bike Shop, the first mountain bike-only bike shop anywhere.

Massachusetts frame builder **CHRIS CHANCE** was the first East Coast manufacturer to recognize the potential of mountain bikes and he is primarily responsible for introducing mountain biking to that region. His knowledge of the eastern riding conditions and the market for mountain bikes has established him as the trend setter among eastern builders. For ten years Fat City Cycles has been recognized as one of the uncompromising, quality oriented American builders whose products still set standards worldwide.

COOK BROTHERS. In the 1970s, Cook Brothers Racing, owned by Craig and Gary Cook, was known as the premier component manufacturer for the booming BMX market. When the first mountain bike manufacturers needed high quality parts, they used Cook Brothers products.



STEVE COOK missed excellent chances at national mountain bike titles with badly timed injuries in 1984 and 1985. A pioneer rider in the Crested Butte area, he was the dominant racer in that area and is credited with exploring and mapping many of the most popular trails in that area. In 1989 he was presented with a special award at the Hall of Fame induction for his efforts in behalf of local riders.

Along with his wife Wende, **LARRY CRAGG** was responsible for capturing on film many of the fleeting images of the emergence of mountain biking in Marin County, at a time when no one realized that the growing sport would ever be of importance outside a small circle of friends.

WENDE CRAGG was the only woman taking part in Marin County clunker rides in the mid-70s, riding a fifty-pound-plus bike and trying to keep up with a strong group of male riders. Her photographs are virtually the only documentation of that era, when no one realized that the bikes they were riding would change the world.



During the 70s, **CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM** rode the dirt trails of Marin County on a modified skinny-tire bike of his own design. When lighter balloon tires and rims became available in 1978, he built his first aluminum mountain bike, using oversize tubing and adding many component innovations. Cunningham is now a principal partner of Wilderness Trail Bikes, which develops components and tires for major manufacturers, and also produces a limited line of the highest quality hand-made mountain bike components.

CHUCK ELLIOT, also known as Bodfish, lives in Chico, California, far from the Marin County mountain bike scene. He took up off-road riding independently for the same reasons that inspired the Marin riders, and in 1976 he put on an off-road race that predated the first Repack event by several months. Bodfish is well known as a tour leader and the author of numerous mountain bike touring guidebooks.

DR. AL FARRELL is one of the most traveled of mountain bike tourists, having toured on his bike in the Andes and Canada's Northwest Territory. He is also the donor of most of the cash prizes awarded for the NORBA National Championships and the patron of the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame and Museum. Dr. Farrell's generous support and his standing in the community have helped change the image of mountain biking from an outlaw recreation to a sport worth a world championship rainbow jersey.



GARY FISHER was the first Marin County rider to convert his old "clunker" to five speeds, and he introduced the use of the seatpost quick release and thumbshifters. A principal in MountainBikes with Kelly and Ritchey, which in 1979 was the first company to sell mountain bikes on a regular basis, holder of the Repack course record, and well-known mountain bike designer.

RAY FLORES was a professional skateboarder and an amateur film maker during the 1970s. When he heard about the Repack Downhill, he brought his movie camera to the second race and captured the only existing motion picture footage of the one-speed era of downhill racing.

JACK INGRAM was a salesman for Panda Bikes in 1982, and his interest in the organization of the racing community was directly responsible for the formation of a small organization of Northern California riders who called their group the National Off-Road Bicycle Association. Today NORBA is part of the United States Cycling Federation, and is respected as the first sanctioning body for the sport.

CHARLES KELLY promoted Repack races from 1976 to 1984, partner in MountainBikes with Gary Fisher and Tom Ritchey from 1979 to



1983, editor of the *Fat Tire Flyer*, the first publication for mountain bikers, from 1980 to 1987. One of five Marin County riders to travel to Crested Butte in 1978 for the Pearl Pass tour.

THE KOSKI BROTHERS Don, Erik and Dave, worked in the family business, the Cove Bike Shop in Marin County. As part of the clunker movement, they helped launch the sport by stocking the obscure and unusual parts needed to replace the machinery destroyed at Repack. The Koskis designed the prototype that became the Lawwill-Knight Pro-Cruiser, Erik Koski designed the fork that was the state of the art until shock-absorbing came into its own.

MERT LAWWILL, former national champion motorcycle racer, made the first production mountain bike, The Lawwill/Knight Pro-Cruiser.

JOE MURRAY raced his Schwinn clunker in the first Marin County cross-country mountain bike race in 1977. He was the first superstar of mountain bike racing, winning national championships in 1984 and 1985, and putting together an unmatched string of eight straight wins in 1984. Still a prominent racer, Joe's a designer of mountain bike components and tires.

GLENN ODELL took over the leadership of a foundering National Off-Road Bicycle Association in the summer of 1983, and promoted the first national mountain bike championship in the fall of that year. Glenn produced the newsletter and organized the competition committee that structured the current rule book.

KAY PETERSON is one of the principal organizers of Fat Tire Bike Week in Crested Butte, the premier mountain bike festival in the country.

STEVE POTTS took up mountain biking in 1980 when he accompanied Joe Breeze on a tour of New Zealand. He studied with Joe and Tom Ritchey, then began building his own bikes in 1981. Steve is now a principal in Wilderness Trail Bikes, a Northern California mountain bike development company that designs and produces high-quality components.



JACQUIE PHELAN took her first mountain bike ride in 1980 on a three-speed. She took up the sport, and was the US women's national champion in 1983, 1984 and 1985. Now the leader of the Women's Mountain Bike and Tea Society (WOMBATS), she is one of the best known female mountain bikers. Jacquie married Charlie Cunningham in 1988.



TOM RITCHEY started building bikes at the age of 14, and built his first mountain bike in 1979. He had been a trail rider for years before that on road bikes and custom bikes with 650-B tires. Now the owner and engineer for his own company, Ritchey USA, he has designed tires, rims and other accessories as well as producing a highly regarded line of bikes.



MIKE SINYARD is the owner of Specialized, and in 1981 he took the California mountain bike design to Japan for mass production. Since introducing the mountain bike to the general market, his company has been among the leaders in the industry in developing new mountain bike products.



VICTOR VINCENTE of America was born Michael Hiltner, and rode in the 1960 and 1964 Olympics as a member of the US team. He set the first coast-to-coast cycling record. VVA was the first mountain bike race promoter in Southern California and produced one of the first lines of mountain bikes, the Topanga, which had 20" wheels. His Reseda to the Sea race in 1980 was the first event that brought Northern and Southern California riders together.

