

Fat-Tire Flyer

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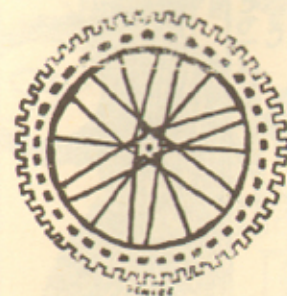
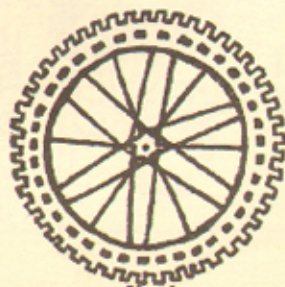
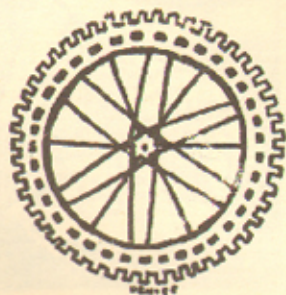
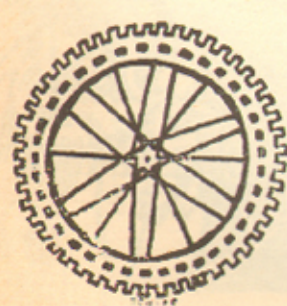


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1982

Fat Tire Flyer

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Fat Tire Flyer

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Flat Tire Anybody?

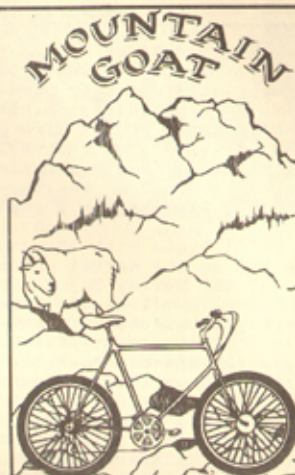
by Francis L. Kelly

In response to underwhelming demand for glass-punctured flat tires and litter related injuries, Californians are pushing a Recycling Initiative. At this writing, 510,000 signatures have been gathered. 346,000 valid signatures are required for the measure to qualify for the November 1982 ballot.

Californians Against Waste (CAW), the shirt-tailed volunteer group which has organized this Initiative, believes these 510,000 signatures provide sufficient cushion to assure 346,000 valid voters.

Recycling measures have been introduced in the California legislature year after year; and year after year, have evaporated before the intense lobbying of well-heeled opposition.

The states which have recycling, container-deposit and returnable-container laws are: Oregon, Maine, Michigan, Connecticut, Delaware, Vermont, Iowa, and Massachusetts. According to CAW, none of these states has suffered the catastrophes predicted by the opposition. Instead their bicycle paths, sidewalks and streets are cleaner; litter collection and garbage disposal costs have decreased by 5 to 7%, and unknown numbers of flat tires have been avoided. Besides, lots of YOU may have earned extra money by collecting and returning cans and bottles!



CYCLES

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The declared opposition consisting of container manufacturers, beverage makers, (i.e. Coca-Cola, 7-up, other soft-drink and beer makers), plus distributors and retailers have stated they will spend up to twelve million dollars to defeat this initiative.

We Flyers wonder why they won't spend twelve million to make it work.

CAW needs all the help you can give: votes, voice, letter\$. Maybe this good idea can spread across the country.

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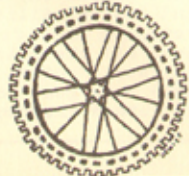
PRODUCT REVIEW

The off-road cycling movement has spawned a diverse lot of equipment, from very inexpensive to hideously prohibitive. For the benefit of Fat Tire riders we will cover the whole range with this fast excursion through the field of heavier-than-air balloon travel.

We'll begin with the cheapest model on the market -- what else but the Murray Baja? This is very heavy, but low cost bike. Murray's balloon-tire answer to the department-store people ten-speed. The bike is limited in true off-road performance by some glaring deficiencies, the most obvious of which is the inadequate braking. Steel rims, cheap caliper brakes, and elastic brake levers all contribute to a brake system that is inadequate when wet. The short seat-tube leaves a long exposure of small-diameter seatpost which can easily be bent by a large rider.

On the positive side, even though they aren't as durable as the more expensive off-landers, Mujas will outlast quite a few of the stamp-out ten-speeds in their price range.

Several companies are offering bikes in the low-medium price range. The Schwinn Sidewinder and the Univega Land-Cruiser 5 are typical of this level of equipment. The Sidewinder looks like it will be a big seller for Schwinn, basically an off-roader similar to the Varsity, the Model of ten-speeds.



The big brother to the Sidewinder is the King Sting; at \$550 it is \$300 more expensive, with a chrome-moly frame and more alloy parts. Most serious riders will want to change a few things around; the handlebars are "BMX" style and aren't positioned right for cross-country, and the caliper brakes could be cashed in for cantilevers.

Imports are showing up from Japan, and the best of these occupy the high-middle price range. The Univega Alpina Sport and the Specialized Stumpjumper are mass-produced versions of the diamond-frame custom bikes. T.I.G.-welded frameset, curved tapered forks, oversize tubing and flat handlebars give these bikes the look and most of the performance of the more expensive units. The Stumpjumper features no-dish rear spacing, TA crankset, sealed hubs with stainless steel spokes, and Tomaselli motorcycle brake levers. Weight of these bikes is in the respectable 31-lb area.

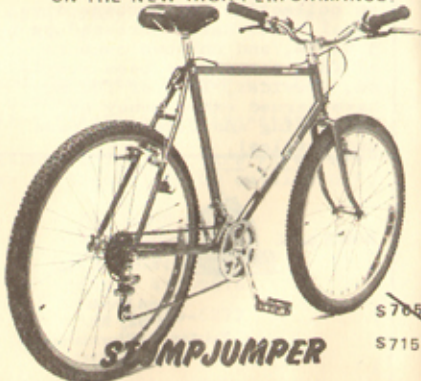
--continued on page 5



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Review continued

T.I.G.-welded frames are turning up from a number of manufacturers, including Cook Brothers, VVA, Ira's, and Trailmaster. Of these, the Trailmaster gets our award for being the most bulletproof of any of these bikes, with 1 1/4" tubing all around the main triangle.



MOUNTAIN GOAT

At the top of the price and performance pyramid are the ultra-customs built by expert frame-builders in a manner similar to race-bike construction, but with modifications of construction, materials and technique to fit the off-road use. While there are a number of builders who have made frames, the ones commercially available are Mantis, Mountain Goat, Ritchey/MountainBikes, and Breezer. All are similar in geometry and design, although the Mountain Goat uses oval top and down tubes. Prices for these bikes start around \$1100 and can run up to \$1600. continued on page 15



STUMPJUMPER

Bruiser

The frame dimensions are as follows:
72° head tube angle; 70° seat tube angle;
44" wheel base; 11 1/2" bottom bracket height;
5" head tube; 1 1/8" .035 wall seat, top, and down tubes; 5/8" .035 wall seat and chain stays; 4 lb, 8 oz overall weight.

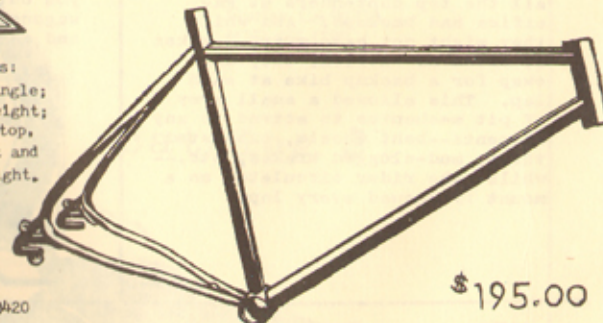
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Cyclo-Cross

by Darryl Skrabak

Consider, if only for a moment, that other kind of off-road bicycle, the cyclocrosser.

How can this skinny-tired wimp survive the conditions which have produced our much hardier fat-tired breed?

The cyclocrosser must also suffer the rocks and ruts, the lofts over logs, the occasional dumps--in short, all the off-road abuse which turns ordinary bikes to junk. and yet the cyclocross bike appears so ordinarily fragile. What is the secret of its endurance?

The answer surfaced recently in the San Jose Mercury. This local sheet ran a piece on the United States Cycling Federation National Cyclocross Championship race, held December 27 at Pacifica. In the article winner Clark Natwick of Pacifica was quoted thusly: "I used three different bikes on each lap, one with high-pressure tires on the road part at the start of each lap."

Get that, three bikes--and a team of runners to relay them between exchange points on the 1.3 mile course.

Actually, Natwick probably had more than three bikes. He may well have had additional backup bikes on hand. Almost all the top contenders at Pacifica had backups. And while they might not have swapped bikes as often as Natwick, they did swap for a backup bike at each lap. This allowed a small army of pit mechanics to attend to any ailments--bent wheels, exhausted tires, mud-clogged brakes, etc.--whilst the rider circulated on a mount freshened every lap.

And that is how cyclocross bikes survive--with frequent fettling. If they look fragile, it is because they are. The only span of endurance they require is that of a single circuit on a typically brief course.

There's nothing wrong with this, in the USCF view of things. In fact, bike swapping is the norm in all sorts of racing based on the European model the USCF follows.

No doubt you've seen pictures of European road races. Notice that in them the lead racer is pursued not by his fellow racers so much as by a mass of vans and cars. A few of these vehicles carry race officials and the press. But most carry spare bikes, spare wheels and mechanics at the ready, to be immediately invoked at the first sign of mechanical breakdown.

The European "let's swap" attitude toward bicycles leads to a conclusion that in European racing, equipment is unimportant. To this Europeans readily assent. "It's the man, not the bicycle," they say.

USCF, following the European model, says the same thing.

It's not like that with woods bikes. What you ride into the woods, you depend upon to carry you out again. There are no sag wagons full of spare bikes, parts and mechanics in the back country.

continued on page 6

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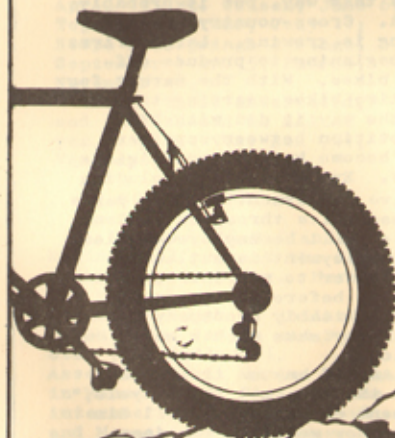
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And that's why fat tire bikes are rugged. Not being closely attended by a phalanx of artificial life support, they have to be.

The point of this discussion concerns fat-tire off-road racing, which is burgeoning. There aren't many rules governing this racing yet, and that's a good thing. In contrast, USCF racing masters with rules, and a cumbersome administrative apparatus to see after them all.

But there ought to be a rule.

At least to ensure that fat-tire racing doesn't slip into USCF-style artificiality. This rule should disallow equipment substitution and parts replacement during a race.

The rule would require that what a racer starts on, he finishes on. If the bike breaks in mid-race, he fixes it in order to continue, just as any back-country rider would.

A non-substitution rule would see to it that one of the traditional functions of racing is carried out: improving the breed. When substitution is allowed, as in USCF racing, the impetus to improve reliability descends to zilch. Who needs reliability when a replacement is always ready?

A non-substitution rule would also save a lot of people a lot of money. A racer would only need one mount, not three or more, such as Natwick used at Pacifica. It would ease the burden on rider sponsors, who would otherwise be virtually forced to provide large support teams to truck and pack parts and machines into the woods.

It's important that, if a non-substitution rule is to be adopted, it be adopted now, in the early development of fat-tire cross-country racing.

Sexist Salutations

The Fat Tire Flyer staff is composed of members of both known sexes. For this reason we do not appreciate letters that begin with the salutation "Dear Sir(s)" or "Gentlemen." Since these appear to address only part of the staff, in the future all such letters will be ignored, unless, of course, they contain large amounts of money.

Right now a race meet is casual, low key. It would be nice if it stays that way, but it probably won't. Cross-country bicycle racing is growing. Larger firms are beginning to produce off-road bikes. With the market for fat-tire bikes starting to take off the way it did with BMX, competition between suppliers will become keen at prestigious races. Every tactic, including massive deployment of team parts and mechanics throughout a long course, will be employed--unless such deployment is outlawed.

Better to nip this in the bud now, before the pressures that inevitably accompany big-time money make such a move difficult.

And if anyone tries that "it's the man, not the bicycle," argument on you, just tell him to see how well the man does without his bicycle at the next race.

Race Schedule

VVA RACE SCHEDULE

Victor Vincente of America, surely the most active off-road race promoter alive, has just sent us his 1982 schedule of events, and it looks as though it's going to be a great year in SoCal.

The first event on the calendar is the Third Annual Reseda-to-the-Sea Classic, to be held on March 7. The start will be at 11:00 am in Reseda, \$5 entry fee.

According to the Press Release, the course will include the Brian Skinner shortcut (used last year) and the newly discovered Kurt Brown shortcut (radical downhill trail.) With Gary Fisher, two-time winner, on hand to defend his title we can expect a dynamite Classic.

Other events on the VVA calendar include: Mt. Pinos, April 18; Mt. Wilson, June 6; Topanga Sun Tour, July 11; Sespe Hot Springs 2-stage, September 4 and 5; Puerco, November 14.

All those interested, and that should be all of you, contact VVA, Box 701, Van Nuys, CA 91408.

COYOTE DERBY

On March 28 Badlands Racing will present the Second Annual Coyote Derby. Here's the hype:

Location: South of Redlands between Reche Canyon and San Timoteo (The Badlands).

Assembly point: Behind the bank in MountainView Plaza at the intersection of Barton Road and Mountain View Avenue. Course: Approximately 20 miles of fire roads and trails; challenging uphill, tightrope ridges, and hairy descents. Course will be limed and rib-boned.

Format: Race/Tour--trophies will be awarded to the first five finishers and Iron Person (1st one-speed). Coyote Derby limited edition water bottles will be given to all survivors; riders of all abilities are encouraged to ride the course at any pace and collect a water bottle. Time: Assemble 9:00 to 9:30, start at 10:00 sharp. T-Shirts: Coyote Derby t-shirts will be sold to pre-registered riders for \$7; any left over will be offered on a first-come basis.

Information/Registration: Badlands Racing (Jim Harlow) 25888 Chula Vista, Rt. 2 Redlands, CA 92373 714-796-8527 Entry Fee: \$3 before March 15, \$4 post-entry. Note: "Waiver of Liability" will be required.

COORS CLASSIC RACE

The biggest traditional bicycle race in this country is the annual Coors Classic stage race in Colorado, which draws competitors from all over the U.S. and Europe. Rumor has it that the promoters are planning to hold an off-road race in connection with the event, and if this comes to pass, it will guarantee the biggest audience and prize list ever for a Fat-Tire race.

The tentative location for the (proposed) race is Vail, which is a place well supplied with mountains. A number of hard-core road racers are expected to enter, which means that the competition will be extremely tough.

Stay tuned: by next ish of the Flyer it will be either Go or No, and we'll keep you posted.

History

In our continuing effort to fill all this space with flat-Tire related subjects, we are hereby publishing a bibliography of the movement for any students serious enough to look all these articles up. If any of our readers are aware of any other articles which have escaped our attention, we would love to receive either a copy or a mention of where to look.

BMX Plus, February, 1980: "Road Test"

Co-Evolution Quarterly, Spring 1978; "Clunker Bikes"

Bicycling, February 1979: "California Clunkers Hit the Hills"

Bicycle Motocross Action, January, 1980: "Full-Bore Cruisers"

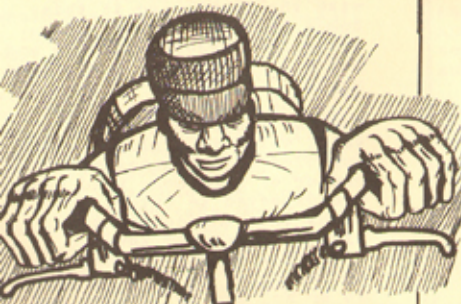
Bicycle Dealer Showcase (trade magazine), May, 1980: "Mountain Biking: Off-road to Happiness"

Bicycling, April 1980: "Rocky Mountain High"

Outside, September 1979: "Built to Take It"

City Sports (San Francisco), December 1979: "Working Up an Appetite"

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Technical

The most common form of damage to off-road bicycles is buckling of the frame behind the head tube, the area that absorbs the most shock from the forks. This is usually caused by poor riding practices, either riding into a stationary object, or more commonly, dropping into a ditch or hole, especially with the front brake locked.

In order to avoid damage to machine or body, off-road riders must learn techniques and control that are unnecessary for paved transit. On especially challenging terrain, critical downhill slopes and ditch crossings use the front brake sparingly. Looking up the front wheel is sure disaster not only because it's the one you steer with, but also because when it stops, so does the bike, although not usually the rider.

Timing is the key to negotiating ditches, holes and logs. Just as the front wheel reaches the obstacle the rider pulls it off the ground; not a wheelie, just an unweighting and lifting of the front end a few inches.

Simultaneously with the front wheel crossing the obstacle, the rider stands and throws his weight forward to minimize contact by the rear wheel.

If all that sounds difficult, it's not really. The easiest way to check it out is to ride straight at a square curb and up it. By doing it slowly at first and then faster, the rider can learn to do this without even a jolt. An expert can ride at such a curb at speed and lift the bike onto it in a smoothly flowing motion.

continued on page 13

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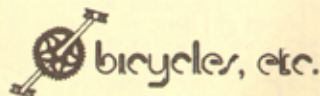
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Photo by Karen Schwartzman

History continued

Bicycle Journal (trade magazine)
June 1980: "Cruisers: New Variation on an Old Theme"

Action Now, December 1980:
"Cruisers: The Past for the Future"

Bicycle Dealer Showcase, May 1981: "A Bike For All Seasons"

Bicycling, May 1981: Several articles

Action Now, March 1981: "Repack Realities"

Action Now, May 1981 "Mountain Bikes

American Bicyclist and Motorcyclist (trade magazine),
July 1981: Several articles

City Sports (S.F.) July 1981:
"A Rebirth of the Big Bikes"

Velo-News, November 13, 1981:
"Fat Tires Gain Ground in West"

In addition to the coverage by various magazines, Fat Tires have been the subject of at least two nationally aired TV presentations. In March 1979 the nationally syndicated show "Evening (or P.M.) Magazine" ran a segment on the famous "Repack" downhill race. Also, the Showtime program "What's Up, America" showed footage of the 1980 Crested Butte-to-Aspen Tour during January, 1981.

For the future, look for a road test of several off-road bikes in an upcoming (probably June) issue of Bicycling.

Technique continued

By far the most difficult type of ditch to hop is one that crosses a steep downhill. In this situation the rider is using his front brake firmly to check his descent, and he must let go of it to get enough speed to clear the ditch. Riding into the ditch with the front brake engaged will at the very least be an occasion for a rest stop.

If a ditch or hole is too wide for the front wheel to clear it, then it is big enough to ride through. In this case the technique reverses; as the front wheel hits the hole, the rider pushes it down, then pulls it up on the other side. By doing so the rider keeps his body weight moving in a straight line while the bike follows the fluctuations of the terrain.



ATTENTION DEALERS

Get the Flyer at wholesale for over-the-counter sales. If you order twenty more Flyers for your shop, we'll sell them to you for only half the retail rate, or \$4 each. And in the unlikely event you can't get rid of them all, we'll buy them back at the same price. The only way you can lose is by ignoring this offer!

T-SHIRT OFFER



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Fat Tire Flyer t-shirts in four colors on Hanes Mens beefy T's are now available to you at the low low price of \$6.75. The shirts are printed on both sides.

The little guy at left is on the front and the back reads Survival of The Fattest.

These shirts will be available in bike shops for from 2-3 dollars more. Order yours from the Flyer.

Please send me _____ t-shirts at \$6.75 each, also enclosed

is \$1.50 per shirt for postage and handling.

Total enclosed _____ circle one S M L XL S M L XL
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Late Report

We have here a late report from the Southern California Hillclimb-Downhill Championships held on October 18, 1981 (this is a late report).

The uphill phase was won by none other than Jim Harlow, the Willy Coyote, with nearly two minutes in hand over Kurt Brown on the Santa Monica Mountaincourse. VVA himself was third, 2½ minutes off the winning pace. Harlow's time was 28:49.

In the downhill race Mike Waldman powered to a ten-second victory margin over Kram Jacobs in 7:39. Jim Harlow was fourth, only one second behind Randy Smith's 8:05.

Harlow's strong showing in both phases of the race marks him as one of the strongest competitors from SoCal.

Results

Hillclimb	
1. Jim Harlow	28:49
2. Kurt Brown	30:32
3. VVA	31:13
4. Dan Duffy	34:05
5. Garry Tourtillotte	37:56
6. Kram Jacobs	52:25

Downhill	
1. Mike Waldman	7:39
2. Kram Jacobs	7:49
3. Randy Smith	8:05
4. Jim Harlow	8:06
5. Brian Skinner	8:10
6. Kyle Sharp	8:10
7. Eric Odner	8:32
8. VVA	8:42
9. Kent Shelbourne	8:44
10. Ken Beach	8:48
11. Kurt Brown	8:57
12. Kacy Blazer	9:03
13. Gary Wright	9:49

Review continued

These custom frames are all lugless and brazed, a tube joining process that uses a low temperature and consequently does the least weakening of the chromoly.

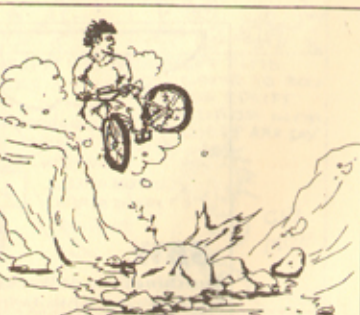
To date the most expensive off-roader we know of is a limited production aluminum frame number from Charlie Cunningham of Fairfax. The price: around \$3500.00.

Happy riding!

Schedule continued

SAN ANSELMO RACE

Last year's San Anselmo race promoted in part by your own Fat Tire Flyer was such a success that it will be repeated this year, again with an assist from the San Anselmo Fire Department.



Finding True Fear on the first ride since the rains.

Fat Notes

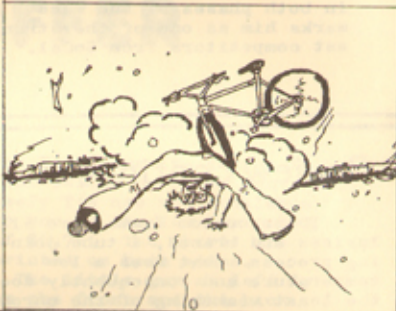
Fat-tire bikes have recently been the subject of a scholarly treatise by Tony Brown at the University of Montana in Missoula. The weighty title is: "Off-Road Bicycling, Its Impacts, and Impact Mitigations."

Although Tony is sympathetic to off-road bicycles in general, he points out that there is a potential for their abuse. The most obvious example would be a collision between a rider and a pedestrian. (This is not what he means by "Impact.")

Solutions to problems created by conflicts among users of recreational areas range from mild -- improvement of trails for better visibility and safety -- to extreme -- prohibition of use. Tony suggests that the best solution would be self-policing by the cycling community, although he points out that (in his opinion) it may take total closure of areas before off-road bicyclists become effective at policing themselves.

We hesitate to comment on this report beyond the observation that in our years of riding we have rarely found any conflict between users of wilderness areas. Anyone who is interested in seeing the whole paper should write to: Tony Brown, 5030 Elk Ridge, Missoula, Montana, 59802. Since we doubt that Tony is prepared to give them away, be sure to send him a couple of bucks for his time and trouble.

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Pre-Spring Edition

With this edition, we feel that Spring is just around the corner. Maybe a couple of blocks up the road, but it's there somewhere. And with Spring, a young or old person's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of Fat Tires, a loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and thou beside me, singing in the wilderness...

But we digress.

If Spring is right around the corner, that means that it's Winter right now, a Fat, Tired season for sure. Here at the home of the Flyer we have recently been treated to a rising of the waters which rendered much of the road system unusable to normal traffic for varying periods of time, although perfectly usable to Fat Tire vehicles. Also, in the hours following The Flood, the most conspicuously unencumbered vehicles in sight were the off-road bicycles plowing through mud and knee-deep water.

It's just possible that we're on to something here.

CREDIT

Giving credit where it is due, the following passage is shamelessly lifted from the Pink Thing issued by the Bicycle Journal, a trade magazine. "Quoting Randy Ross, Vice President of the Chain Bike Corporation: 'Star performer of 1981 sales was our diamond-frame, multi-speed "Cruiser." He believes this 'mountain-type bike' has already passed the toy/fad stage and is expecting greatly increased sales in 1982."

BIKE SAFETY MESSAGE No. 10,025 -A PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE FAT TIRE FLYER- CORRECT MANEUVERING OF BLIND CORNERS

