

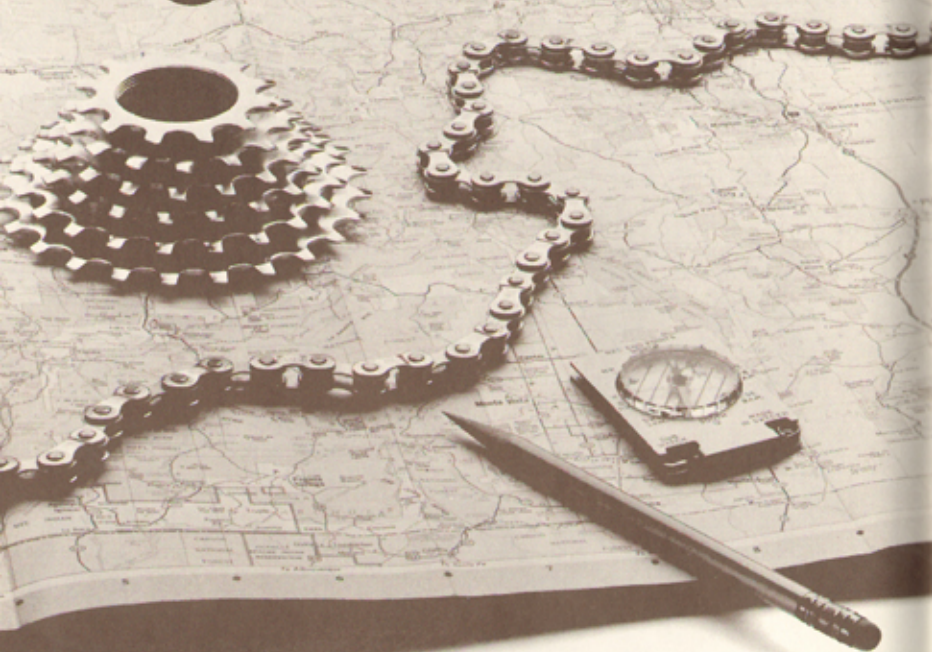
Fat Tire Flyer™



JANUARY/FEBRUARY • VOL. 3, NO. 1 \$2.00

Uniglide On Tour

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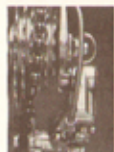


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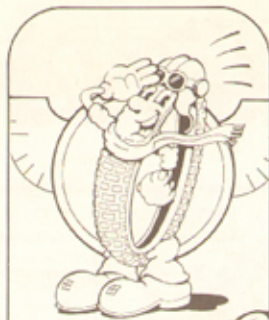
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Fat Tire Flyer

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Editorial

A number of recent developments have given credence, impetus, and other large and obscure but encouraging words to the Fat Tire movement. The recent Rock Hopper race in Santa Rosa drew some 162 entrants and quite a collection of fancy machinery for an event that was conducted with technical polish reminiscent of big-time road bicycle racing. And at the Las Vegas Interbike trade show nearly every major manufacturer had some new balloon tire product. Suddenly, instead of being a bunch of nostalgic cyclists longing for tires and times whose era has passed, we are the future of bicycling.

Now that every manufacturer in the world is bringing out some kind of Fat Tire bike, a lot of readers are asking for advice (that's right, advice) on what kind to buy. This is a more difficult question than it seems at first. Most of us here in the heart of Flyer country are very far into this mode of transpo and as a result have invested some fairly substantial bucks in the necessary equipment, the kind it takes to keep up with what's happening. In other words, we really like the good stuff, and we can be accused of bias toward the equipment we ride. But if we tell people that they need to spend huge amounts on the right gear, it isn't fair either to the manufacturer or to the reader, because there are all levels of cyclists and all levels of equipment, and each has a place in the movement.



Not to belabor the obvious, the more you spend, the more you get in the way of performance and dependability. The minimum you should expect to spend, however, is \$250, and the bike you get for that price will have room for substantial improvement with the addition of better components. At the upper end of the scale, you can pay from \$1500 to \$2500 on a hand-crafted, precision machine with a custom frame and the best components. Most riders will opt for something between the extremes, and will pay from \$500 to \$900 for good, solid, working machinery.

Rather than put ourselves on the spot by telling everyone else how to spend their hard-earned shekels, we are once again asking for reader input. We want to know if you have had any problems with your bike, what the problems were and how you solved them, and what kind of bike it is. With input from readers we can help target what kind of bikes people are buying, and as a result we will be able to offer more concrete advice (that's right, advice).

Fat Feedback

Hello,

I'm so glad to see an off-road publication in circulation. We've been riding "off road" here in Laguna Canyon for a couple of years and have put together quite a contingency (about 15 riders). We're more into downhill blasting than distance riding, but we do both. I grew up in Durango, Colorado and did this riding quite a bit as a kid. I got into road racing at 18 then moved out here where there's more cars than road, so I'm "off". My partner and I are going to open our own exclusive "off-road" shop, so if you could send me some advertising info, it would be much appreciated. Andy Schoombs Laguna Canyon, CA

Dear Fat Tire Flyer,

My name is Bruce James. I manage a bike shop in a little town called Ojai (O-hi) nestled completely by mountains, about 11 miles inland from Ventura, California.

We boast about fifteen members in our group called TOPA TOPA TERRORIZERS all of which are fatty tire eaters and flyers. (As R.C.A. of Cotati, CA coined so well in your July FTF).

We've found that our town has gone nuts over fat tires, and so in response we're going to have annual tours and races very soon, but we would like some feedback from your local FTF readers.

In response please write to:
Open Space
1203-b Maricopa Hwy
Ojai, CA 92023
(Attn: Bruce)

Thanks!! Happy Fat Tire Flying everybody!!

Fat Ones,

I want to congratulate you on the sheer enthusiastic exuberance of your publication. You clearly believe that ballooners are the hottest thing since sunburn.

However, aside from race results (ho-hum) and advertising, the mag's writing seems to be mostly fluff and little substance. (Some great pix, though) You could better serve your readers with articles on riding technique, hazards and safety, new equipment, and now that every manufacturer's cousin is hopping on the "Cruiser" bandwagon, trail tests and comparisons. Also, the racist, sexist comix are truly tacky and will need to clean up their act.

All that said, though, I like your energy. Here's six bucks for another year; I'd like to see where you go from here. SeeKay's TECHTIPS in July/August is a good beginning. Keep Klunking. Scott Burton Santa Rosa, CA

Dear Fat Tar Flar,

Greetings from the sweaty Southeast. I've just received my first copy of your miniscule mag. It's real nice; perhaps it will grow up and be a real magazine someday.

Here in the real world we call fat tar bisexuals bombers. The name dates back to Schwinn Panther days and represents a heritage we good old boys choose not to forget. None of this cruiser garbage for us. Macho bikes need macho names.

My own love affair with the bomber began with a Schwinn Cruiser 5, a bike truly worthy of the name "bomber". The Cruiser

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from the Fat Tire Flyer

To any and all Fat, Creative people! In order to provide a complete, well-rounded, and objective publication, we need your help. Photographers, writers or just plain readers/riders, we need your stuff. Unsolicited manuscripts are always welcome as are letters or comments. Photographs should be black and white.



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Fat Feedback

had a 13-1/2 lb. rear wheel, guaranteed to build character and massive thighs. The next toy was a Kos Cruiser, modified to include six speeds and almost brakes. Front and rear Blackburn racks and a real saddle made it into a real mean machine. We built up several similar machines, so far only one of the local bomber pilots has bent a fork.

I'm now anxiously awaiting delivery of a Stumpjumper, we'll see if a West Coast bike can survive the jungles of home. It looks to be a real good uphill bike. I hope the forks will stand the test of time. The long wheelbase should make it a real good hub cap hockey bike.

Well, good luck to you and your magazine. I don't see how you can lose with such a great subject. Happy Trails,
Rob Glover, Huntsville, AL.

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FAT TIRES EXPLODE IN AMERICA!

The popularity of balloon-tire bicycles in the United States is growing geometrically, and last year's trickle is becoming this year's torrent, encouraged by the introduction of a wide variety of new bicycles and related products to the market. At several major trade shows the all-terrain bicycle has been the center of attention, and the two major Japanese component manufacturers have shown their commitment to this form of cycling with the introduction of complete groups designed to meet the special requirements of these new bicycles. These components include new derailleurs that will handle the wide-range gearing, cantilever brakes, brake and shift levers, pedals, cranks, hubs, and

seatpost quick releases; in short, every part of the bicycle has been scrutinized from the point of view of the cyclist who must deal with every possible cycling condition.

Nearly every major American manufacturer is now producing some form of multiple-gear, balloon tire bicycle patterned closely after the expensive, custom machines whose owners were considered eccentric only a few years ago. And although the hard core of rugged cycling explorers is still growing, the real market for these bikes, especially the less expensive models, will be those people who have wanted a bicycle for years, but have been discouraged by the apparent instability and fragility of

traditional ten-speeds and the absence of discernable performance on the part of three-speeds. Even the cheapest of the new balloon-tire bicycles will long outlast a similarly priced ten-speed.

The reasons for the upsurge in popularity include the recent availability of new components that have improved the performance of balloon-tire bicycles immensely, and the only thing the new bikes have in common with the old "newsboy" one-speed, coaster brake bikes is the size of the tires. Steel rims have been replaced by aluminum ones, tires have been improved and lightened, gears have been added, and framesets have been completely redesigned to take advantage of racing bicycle technology. A typical version of the off-road bicycle will feature a diamond frame of chrome-moly, flat handlebars with motorcycle levers and handlebar-mounted "thumbshifters", quick release seatpost clamp, BMX pedals, and of course, FAT TIRES.

The new bikes feature performance on paved roads that is good enough for 100 mile rides, yet they are so nearly indestructible that tourists can take them fully loaded over the roughest of gravel or dirt roads. This means that the new "ballooner" is ideal for most of the reasons people ride bicycles, short of all-out road racing. These include practical uses, such

as errands and commuting, as well as recreational uses in the form of riding for enjoyment or touring. For harder types there is always the possibility of real exploring on rough roads and paths far from civilization, or competition in one of the cross-country events staged by enthusiasts.

The return to fat tires started on the West Coast as enthusiasts evolved their new kind of bicycle through trial and error and quite a few broken parts. With little involvement on the part of industry, it spread slowly through word of mouth and a few magazine articles, and small groups of fanatics sprang up in a number of isolated areas. When alloy rims and improved tires became available, the movement was stimulated and several framebuilders began turning out limited runs of hand-made bicycles. In the last year several manufacturers have introduced mass-produced versions of the custom machines and with enough bikes to go around, the movement gained impetus in the western U.S., especially in California and Colorado where there are hundreds of miles of dirt roads lacing sparsely populated and mountainous areas. Now that balloon tires have gained respect, they are turning up all over the country from the heart of New York City to the wildest extremes of Alaska. With international

manufacturing involvement, balloon tire bicycles are now being shipped all over the world and it seems but a matter of time until they appear in Europe in sufficient numbers to affect the sale of other types of bicycles.

As the number of bicycles grows, so does the number of enthusiasts willing to take part in adventurous events. Not all of these events are competitive; one of the best known is the annual Crested Butte to Aspen Bicycle Tour, now in its eighth year. This two-day tour takes cyclists 40 miles through the Rocky Mountains, crossing Pearl Pass (elevation 12,700') on a road so bad that it defies four-wheel-drive vehicles and all but the toughest of motorcycles. This year over 100 riders from as far as 1000 miles away showed up to brave the inclement weather for the tour. The chief goal on the part of the riders is to swagger into the bar of the Jerome Hotel in Aspen covered in mud, ready to brag to anyone who will listen.

Competitive events are also popular, and organizers have an advantage in that they can use roads that are free of auto traffic, operating under the theory that the worse the road surface, the better the participants will like it. With no formal sanctioning bodies hindering the sporting aspects, competitions are refreshingly free from rules aside from those necessary for basic safety, such as helmet

requirements. Racing formats range from downhill time trials, in which riders take solitary runs down some rough, usually terrifying course, pitting their handling skills against the clock, to cross-country races of from ten to thirty-five miles, over mountains and through streams. In one recent race in Northern California, 160 starters turned up for the opportunity to batter their bicycles over 18 miles of rough roads and paths, with 2000 feet of climbing and descending to keep things interesting. Balloon tires are even invading the traditional sport of cyclo-cross, and last year at the United States National Championships, a sixteen year old rider managed sixth place on a specially prepared fat tire bicycle.

1982 was the first year that all-terrain bicycles received widespread attention, but already many in the industry are predicting a worldwide explosion in popularity. One major American cycling magazine has even gone so far as to predict that sales of balloon-tire bicycles will overtake those of ten-speeds as soon as enough are available. This is a strong statement in light of the fact that most advertisers are still selling narrow tire bicycles, but with the American and Japanese cycling industries gearing up production as rapidly as possible, it seems inevitable that the rest of the world will come to the same conclusion. ♣

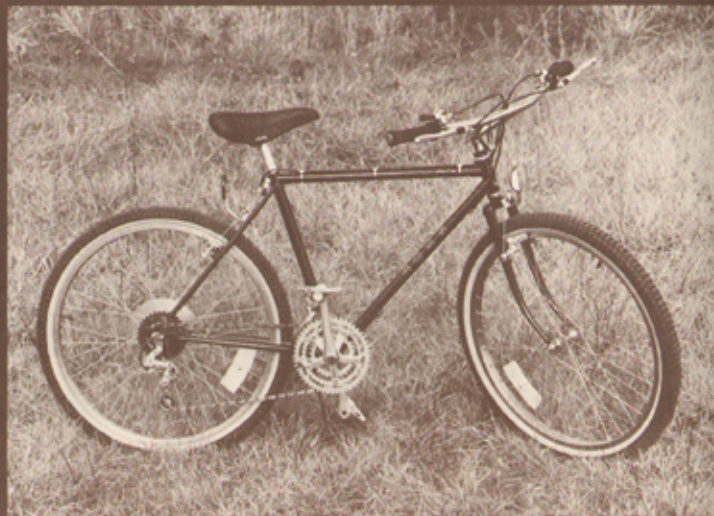
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Model No.: 385
Color: Black
Frame Size: Men's 15", 21", 23"
Tubing: Ross Aero-Lite
Lugs & Bottom Bracket: Nikko
Crown: Tange
Dropout: High tensile steel
Rims: Ukal gold alloy
Tires: 26" x 2.125" G.W.
Brakes: Dia Compe cantilever
Crankset: Shimano AD 25-39-48
chainrings
Stems: Nitto cro-mo
Handlebars: Nitto cro-mo
Hubs: SR gold alloy
Saddle: Ross Strada
Seat post: Alloy futed
Pedals: SR quilt alloy
Headset: Ross pro
Chain: Shimano Uniglide 600
Freewheel: Maillard 14-32T
Derailleurs: Suntour AG 15 speed
w/ thumb shifters
Weight: 32 lbs.
Also included: Cushion grips



Detail: Force I



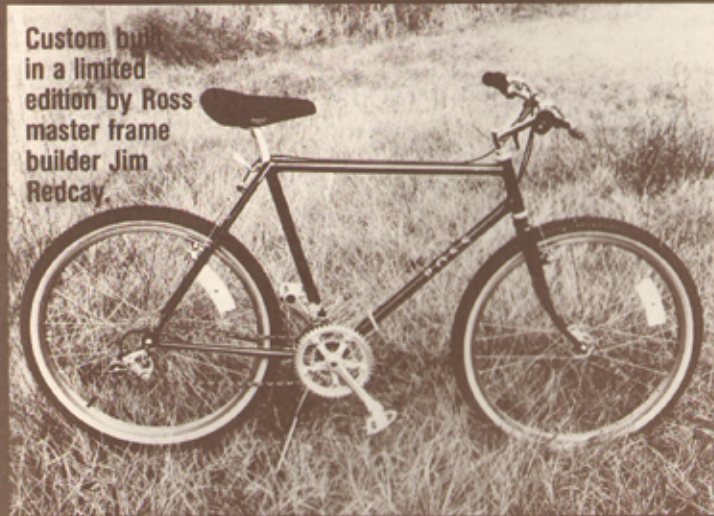
Detail: Force I



Detail: RedCay Mountain



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Redcay



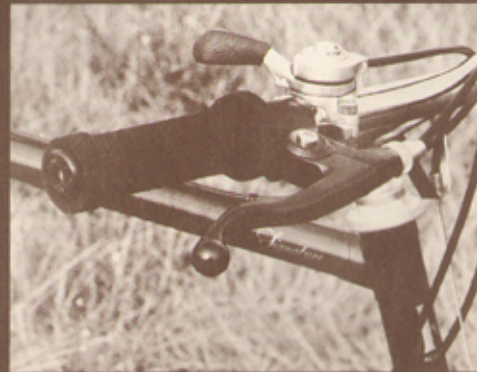
REDCAY MOUNTAIN

Model No.: 600
Color: To order
Frame Size: 15", 21"
Tubing: Tange Chrome Moly-
Mountain
Lugs & Bottom Bracket: Nikko
Crown: Tange
Dropout: Shimano Vertical
Rims: Ukal Gold Alloy
Tires: 26" x 2.125" G.W.
Brakes: Shimano Deore EX
Cantilever
Crankset: Shimano Deore
30-45-58
Stems: Nitto Cro-mo
Handlebars: Nitto Cro-mo
Hubs: Deore—XT Sealed
Mechanism
Saddle: Avocet Touring II
Seat Post: SR Laprade
Pedals: Deore Platform
Headset: Shimano SR Ex
Chain: Shimano Uniglide
Freewheel: Shimano Deore 14-34
Derailleurs: Shimano Deore XT
w/ Shimano XT Thumb
Shifters
Weight: 31 lbs.
Extras: Cushion Grips, Brake-ems,
Tap hole cable guides, Water
bottle mounts

Detail: RedCay Mountain



Detail: RedCay Mountain



Race Reports

E. L. Hopper



rock hopper a heart stopper bike bopper lip flopper fun copper to popper

by Art Read

162 riders funneled out of the starting gate of the first annual Rock Hopper in Annadel Park this October 10th, making it the biggest fat event in his (or her) story. A benefit for the Redwood Empire Lung Association, it was well sponsored by Specialized, MountainBikes, the Bike Peddler,

Dale's Schwinn Cyclery, Cycle Path, Mike's, Perfetti Ice Cream, & Works of Art. The prizes ran five places deep in four categories with some impressive loot, plus a plethora of other prizes that got raffled off. These, plus the two kegs that got inhaled after the race and mostly, the 19 miles of "R" rated roads (for rocks) and trails made for fine fat fun.

In absence of an old record, Gary Fisher set a new one with

his 1:31:12 ride. Don Davis was right there with him the whole way, until he did some product testing a mile or so from the finish ... his frame broke and let the road get through to sack his body. After Gary finished, he rode back out to let Don finish on the same bike; so I guess you could say that the first two finishers came in on the same bike, 2:35 apart. Sounds like a zen paribixical bichotomy.

Other notable product testers that day included the FTF's own Charlie Kelly, whose technical focus was mainly bottom bracket

spindles. He was seen, not even 5 miles into the race, headed back to the start/finish with his bike in one hand and his crank in the other.

David Brainard, one of Promoter John Stillwell's Santa Barbarian friends, was third overall and first in the Novice class. Not bad for his first off-road race, but it does beg the question, "What 'na'ell's a Novice?"

The Santa Rosa locals (locos, more like) who've been placing high all season in the northern end of the state, used their 'homecourt advantage' to be only slightly outdone by the first three. Steve Striepeke and Gordon Burns, riding for the Bike Peddler, and Bill Schum of the Howlin' Coyotes, finished 3rd, 4th, and 5th in the Expert class, for 4th, 5th and 6th overall.

Denise Caramagno was the first woman to finish, 64th overall, which meant that she also beat more than half of the men. Local Susie Babcock was a little over a minute down to Denise, and the two had been in sight of each other for much of the race.

Tom Hillard, who did a lot of work on this event, wants all to know that he, of course, would have won had it not been for a rear derailleur that went limp on him when the mounting bolt backed out, relegating him to a humble 14th placing. Fire your mechanic, Tom! Everyone else who finished wrongly; fire your support, divorce your spouse, curse the referees and send your excuse, in five words or less, plus your REAL placing, and we'll reprint the stats the way they could and SHOULD have been.

Another local, from Graton actually, was Kurt Kabica, the first BMXer in at 1:45:09 for 11th place overall. That's keeping

the short wheels rolling pretty good. There was a fair wad of 20" types at the starting line, with a smattering of one-speed cruisers as well.

Now, about the rocks: yes, we had rocks. As one competitor who was riding near me alot kept putting it, "You guys weren't kidding about these rocks!" The real well-peppered sections were mostly on the ups, but there were plenty of rocks to go around most of the way. I mean, why lie? If there weren't a lot of rocks, we'd have called it something else.

Starting 162 bikes at the same time can be a problem. The starting line was a big steel-posted gate that squeeze the pack through like toothpaste, stringing it down around the first turn, 1/3 of a mile away, before the last rider took their foot off the ground. Most everyone seemed well-mannered and calm, confident that the next couple of hours would be plenty of time to sort things out.

The course was tough but enjoyable, varied, and with the start and finish in the same place, every inch of down shreddin' was earned. Gordon Burns, after altering his state with a 1:37:40 ride, unleashed a realization at me that it was the kind of course that even if you hated most of it, there were probably one or two stretches out there you really loved, no matter who you were. Stu Smith, who swept the course, bore this out as he came upon a young bonked BMXer somewhere in the middle of the last long hill before the five miles of cruisin' to the finish. He conned, cajoled, coaxed and all but carried the fried youngster up that stretch ... he even pushed his bike all the way to the top for him when it was looking like they'd be out there 'til midnight

otherwise. Once over the crest onto Steve's S trail, the elbow-high lad performed a miraculous recovery, and Stuart, who'd had his new Stumpjumper just 10 days, had a hard time keeping up with him all the way down. The real snidgit in this story was that the beer was solid gone by the time that Stu got back with the likewise gone short-wheeler, a mere four hours or so after the start! This may be a record of some sort, when you figure that half the crowd was gone for about 2 1/2 of those hours (with a standard deviation of plus or minus 2.13 beers!)

Well, it was so much fun that it's going to happen again next year, the fat tires of fate be willing; so watch for it, thanks to those who made it, who MADE it, and ... hop on!

P.S. For Rock Hopper t-shirts, contact the Bike Peddler in Santa Rosa.

STATS:

Experts	overall	time
1 Gary Fisher	1	1:31:12
2 Don Davis	2	1:33:47
3 Steve Striepeke	4	1:37:17
4 Gordon Burns	5	1:37:40
5 Bill Schum	6	1:40:28
BMXers		
1 Kurt Kabica	11	1:45:09
2 Don Myrah	43	2:00:24
3 Robert Self	44	2:00:27
4 Greg Blodgett		
5 Garrett Wilson		
Novices		
1 David Brainard	3	1:35:13
2 Rory O'Reilly	10	1:45:02
3 David Favello	18	1:47:41
4 Brian Blair	21	1:48:21
5 Scott Merritt	22	1:48:32
Women		
1 Denise Caramagno	64	2:08:47
2 "Cruzy" Babcock	65	2:09:53
3 Mary Hillhouse	78	2:16:47
4 J. Pajarillo	93	2:30:44
5 Jennifer Moyer	107	2:42:01

Tech Tips by Sue Kay

Some parts of off-road bicycles are subject to extreme wear due to use under less than sterile conditions. The one part that takes the most abuse is the chain, which has literally hundreds of tiny parts wearing on each other, and the added insult of having to operate occasionally while covered with mud can wear out your chain very quickly. The single most important piece of maintenance you can do is to clean and oil your chain after every muddy or dusty ride.

The chain is part of a drive system which includes the front chainrings and freewheel cogs, and these are also subject to wear. Once again, dirt in the system ages these parts fast. The chain and the freewheel cogs tend to wear together; chains wear faster than freewheels, and a worn chain will wear a freewheel faster because it will be "stretched," that is, the links have worn to the point where they are sloppy and slightly longer than they were when new. Since chains are cheaper than freewheels it makes sense to change your chain fairly often. Whenever you change your freewheel, remember to also use a new chain, because an old chain will not work with a new freewheel without skipping.

Many off-roaders use a 26 or 28 tooth small chainring, and these should almost be considered expendable. The time this gear is used is when it is the muddiest, and the small number of teeth means that each one makes contact with the chain more often than those on the big rings. Since this ring is usually made of some aluminum alloy, the brass and steel chain will

eventually wear it out, "hooking" the teeth. Then, if a new chain is installed, it doesn't fit perfectly and as a result the chain can hang up on the chainring under extreme load, just as you surge up that last little steep part, causing a stall and many expletives.

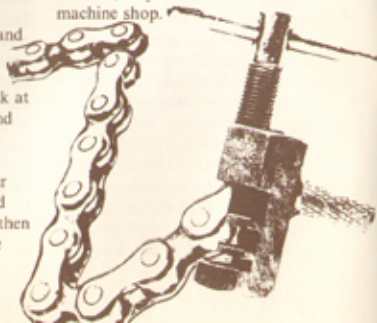
Brakes and shifters will work much better if the cables are properly lubricated. Ideally you should coat the cable with waterproof grease before installing it in the housing. If you use motorcycle brake cables, try to get the kind with a nylon or teflon liner. You can use a section of housing liner to cover the bare cable that runs between stops on the top tube; with a little grease this will totally prevent corrosion. After installing the cable either cap or solder the end to prevent fraying. There are cable greasing tools available from motorcycle shops that will let you shoot pressurized grease from a spray can through the housing without removing the core; this not only is an extremely effective method of lubrication, it is also the easy way to lube.

If you think it necessary to carry a spare brake or derailleur cable, for instance on a long cross-country trek, use a rear cable on the front brake or derailleur, coil up the excess and tape it out of the way. If you break a cable, just switch the two, since they generally break at the derailleur or brake end and the broken rear will be long enough to replace the front.

Cantilever brakes have their own idiosyncrasies; it's a good idea to check them now and then to see how well they meet the

rim. As the brake shoe wears down, the arm will swing through a longer arc, and the shoe will contact the rim at progressively lower points. Eventually the shoe will dive under the rim, just when you most need it, possibly causing serious repercussions. (If you have a repercussion, see a doctor immediately.) All cantilever brakes have provisions for adjusting the shoe angle, so if the shoe doesn't fit, repair it!

Most Fat Tire-ites use a quick-release seatpost clamp, but if the seatpost doesn't slide easily in the seat tube it becomes a slow-release seatpost clamp. Lube up your seatpost with some good waterproof grease for fast action. If it still doesn't slide easily you should look for other problems. In the manufacturing process the seat cluster will be heated from welding, and this can distort it slightly so that it is no longer perfectly round. This can either inhibit seatpost movement, or it can force you to put more pressure on the quick-release for a firm grip, because the inner surface of the seat tube has less contact area with the seatpost. The solution is to ream the inside of the seat tube to restore roundness; most bike shops have the tool, or you can check out a machine shop.



technique

In response to our readership, here is a repeat of an earlier article on riding technique. This ran in the *Flyer* when the subscription list was about fifty, so if you've read it, congratulate yourself for being one of our oldest subscribers.

PEDAL POSITION

The most common error made by inexperienced riders descending on very rough ground is dangling one foot while supporting the weight on the other pedal. While this may be an effective technique to prevent falls to the side with the dangling extremity, it reduces ground clearance as well as throwing off the balance of the bike. If the rider loses his balance to the side with the weight on the pedal, the result is usually a fall.

Proper technique is to keep the

pedals horizontal with equal weight on each. This will take getting used to, and confidence is an important factor in this kind of riding, but once mastered, it will make possible descents that may have previously looked unrideable.

SADDLE HEIGHT

The quick-release seatpost clamp is essential equipment for off-road bikes. When climbing, especially on loose surfaces, it is important to keep weight on the rear wheel to prevent it from spinning. This means that the saddle must be high enough to allow the rider to push hard but stay seated.

When descending the rider should lower the saddle, since pedaling efficiency is not necessary; the lower center of gravity permits radical maneuvers that are just not possible with a high saddle, for example those rooster tail slides that are popular with BMX-oriented types.

PUMP TIPS

Simple little items such as valve caps on tires can have major consequences if ignored. People who ride only on pavement may never miss their valve caps, but they perform an important function for off-roaders. If the valve core gets dirt in it, the action of pumping up the tire can drive the dirt into the valve, inhibiting the sealing action and resulting in the equivalent of a leak in the valve. It can be disheartening to patch a tire miles from anywhere, then not be able to pump it up!

Another area that can stand scrutiny is the pump itself. For the reasons stated above, it's nice to keep the business end clean. One way that we have found effective is to cut a small section of skinny-tire inner tube and slip it over the pumphead. In addition to protecting the pump, this is an excellent way to use these tubes.

T-SHIRT!



Fat Tire Flyer T-shirts are now available, printed in four colors on light blue heavy-duty 100% cotton shirts. The low, low price is \$8.75.

The little guy is on the front, and the back reads, "Survival of the Fattest."

Although some other dealers carry similar shirts, you can show your support for the Flyer by ordering direct. Discounts are available on quantity orders.

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the wheel thing



By Allan Lewis

By now most FTF readers will have realized that their Fat Tire Bike has totally eliminated the need for any other kind of bicycle. Fat Tires can be just as effective on the street as on the dirt; however, the equipment can be fine-tuned to produce the best possible ride for the conditions.

The ideal setup is to have two sets of wheels for both dirt and street riding. This means you can have completely different gearing for street riding, with a much closer ratio for optimum efficiency. Also, you can keep your street tires on the rims rather than having to switch them over. Just for the record I'll list here my choice of wheels.

NOTE: This should be considered just an example, not a recommendation, since equipment selection is very much a matter of personal preference.

For off-road wheels: Phil Wood or Cook Brothers hubs, both of which are sealed-bearing types with allen-keyed end-bolts. The Cook Brothers hubs are easier for the user to service, but are also slightly heavier. In strength I give the edge to Cook Brothers, which are very stout looking. Any hubset will do,

although I recommend solid axles over quick-release. Rims should be Araya 7X or Ukai 26 x 1.75, but riders anticipating very rough ground might consider using the Ukai 2.125 width. On the other hand, expert riders can get away with lighter rims and might select Staral or Ambrosio rims, which are lighter, but aren't box-section.

Spokes should be stainless 14 gauge; 270mm will lace four-cross in most combinations, with 268mm on the rear wheel drive side. One exception is the Ambrosio rim, which seems to require either a 266mm (3-cross) or 274mm (4-cross). Of course, neither of these lengths is currently available; on a low flange hub you can get away with 268mm and just file them down, but other combinations can require cutting and threading.

I like extremely wide ratio gears for off-roading; in steep, hilly country lower than one-to-one is handy. About 13-32 feels right with a top front gear of 48 teeth and a low of 26 teeth.

My choice for off-road tire is the IRC Racer X-1, which has knobs to spare for maximum bite. Second choice is the Stumpjumper, and although I have no personal experience, I've been told that the Schwinn Maximizer has made some folks very happy. (I hear you Joel.)

Road wheels should be as light as possible, so I use Shimano Dura-Ace Freehub road hubs with a built-in cluster. These are low flange with a quick-release, and gearing can be just about any possible set of cogs. For road use I ride a 12-21 six speed, which gives me a 108 inch top gear. Rims are Ambrosio laced three cross with butted stainless

spokes and alloy nipples; this combination of spokes and nipples saves 64 grams per wheel.

In order to keep weight to a minimum, I employ a few tricks. Instead of a rim strip I use filament packing tape, which saves an ounce. Using an undersized tube can save weight, so I use 24 x 1.75; radical racers also use 24 x 1 1/2, but I suggest you carry a standard tube as a spare, since mounting an undersized tube can turn into a wrestling match.

For street tires I've been using the Mitsubishi Cruiser Mits pumped to 70 psi for minimum rolling resistance. The Streetstomper is also a good street tire; both are available in 2.125 and 1.75, but I prefer the Fat Ones, even on 100 mile rides.

Pedals are subject to different tastes for different uses; for dirt riding I prefer not to use clips and straps, although some riders like them. Instead I use the large, gnarly, sharp-toothed BMX pedals that look like a hazard to life and limb. There are several versions available, including Titron and Hutch, as well as some large Shimano BMX pedals from the DX series. All of these provide a large, unmissable platform for rapid remounts.

On road rides I just use regular road pedals with clips and straps, even using cleated racing shoes for long rides. These provide comfort and an efficient pedal stroke, essential for maintaining a high-speed spin over a period of hours. Complete fanatics might even want two sets of cranks, a long set with wide range gears for dirt and a short set for close ratios for the road, but this sounds extreme, even to me.

LAS VEGAS BIKE SHOW

On September 24, 25, and 26 the city of Lost Wages, Nevada was host to the assembled bike dealers of America at the Interbike Trade Show. It appears that Fat Tire bikes are (gulp) getting very popular. They were, in fact, rolling out of every major display in the convention, and also were the subject of a brief 'seminar' held to acquaint bike shop owners with problems Fat Tire riders face.

SunTour and Shimano both displayed new lines of off-road bicycle components. These included new shift levers, front and rear derailleurs, cranksets, pedals, and brakes. Other components are promised as soon as the prototypes are tested in the field.

Tom Ritchey's original design for handlebars has become the standard equipment on a number of other bikes in several versions made in Japan. Two new models of his custom bikes were on hand, as well as a tandem, shown by MountainBikes.

Kent Erickson of Moot's Mountain was another innovative custom builder in attendance. The Moot's bike includes provision for using several sizes of wheels, with moveable pivots for the cantilever brakes.

Speed and Research of Bend, Oregon, brought their bike, the Outback, which features a gusseted head tube and some interesting geometry, 70 degree

(Continued on page 18)

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Crested Butte to Aspen Tour

Any account of this year's Crested Butte to Aspen Bicycle Tour must make note of the very nearly tragic bus accident that occurred while the riders were returning to Crested Butte after the event. The chartered bus went off the road and down a steep bank; fortunately, no one was killed and injuries were relatively minor considering the possible consequences. Most of those involved expressed their intentions of returning for next year's ride, although most also stated that they might return to Crested Butte on their bicycles...

The whole adventure began on Saturday, September 25, with a gathering scheduled for 10am but running on Fat Tire Time in front of Bicycles Etc. in Crested Butte. Sign-ups for the Tour numbered in excess of 130, but inclement weather served to reduce the ranks to about 100 of the harder and less well-educated

applicants. Gray skies, cold rain, and snow on the visible peaks can spell high adventure though, and when the cosmic moment arrived, the mob charged off into the primordial ooze.

Through the day the weather lifted slightly, and the sun made a few brief appearances. The road surface was extremely poor, to the relief of all, and the creeks full to the brim, which is generally about an inch above the tops of one's boots. In typical tour fashion, the entourage took its time and was spread over several miles of road. One group took a shortcut that turned out to be extinct, adding only half an hour to the ride.

The campsite had been moved from the location on previous tours, and spread over both sides of the road, which had been thoroughly homogenized by four-wheel-drives and motorcycles. The area took on the appearance

of the main street of old Dodge City after riders had each crossed a few times. Many had soaked their feet, and these campers entertained their associates by setting a number of socks ablaze around the campfire.

A cold rain mixed with snow sent everyone scurrying for their tents, but it let up shortly, just in time for dinner, which was served under a tarp next to the campfire. Afterwards several musical instruments were produced, and an impromptu jam session lasted for hours, as the sound of close harmony mingled with the fragrant stench of burning Nikes and Pumas to produce an atmosphere that could not be escaped.

In the morning the campers were greeted by the sight of frost on everything, and all mud frozen solid. The sky was clear however, and the day promised to be warmer than the day

before. After breakfast gear was packed for transport back to Butte, and riders struggled up the road to Pearl Pass, possibly the toughest three and a half miles on any bicycle tour in the world. It takes several hours to negotiate this distance, due to the steep climb, bad road, and lack of available oxygen, a refreshing change of pace from gliding effortlessly down a smoothly paved ribbon of... but we digress.

There were no support vehicles on the Tour this year, because the road over the pass was impassable to anything but motorcycles, hikers, and of course, bicyclists. After each rider had spent the required self-congratulatory time at the pinnacle, the zenith, the apex (in other words, the top), he or she turned his or her front wheel toward Aspen and started the world's worst downhill. This seven mile section of road is beyond description, but suffice to say that all who ride it pronounce it the worst ever without question. Huge rocks, a steep descent, and deep puddles are all coupled together; Tom Ritchey's comment applies here: "The only thing that makes it fun is the fact that you can do it all."

After half an hour on the bucking machine, riders were rewarded by the sight of a paved road covering the last ten or twelve downhill miles into Aspen. Most bikes could be heard from afar as dry chains announced their imminent arrival. The Jerome Hotel bar is the traditional destination of the Tour, and from this locus riders spread throughout the town, sampling the local food and reeling in shock from the prices.

The partying went on until well after dark, when the ill-fated buses arrived to return the riders to the Butte.

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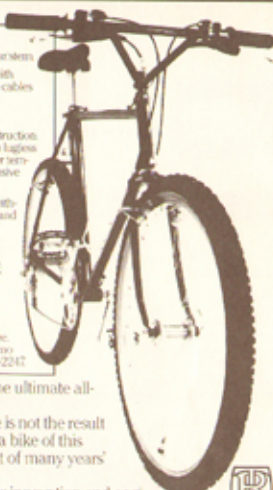
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continued
LAS VEGAS BIKE SHOW

head and 67 degree seat. The Cook Brothers from Santa Ana, a big name in BMX, showed a new off-road frameset and a hub designed for serious abuse.

There were imports from Japan that will retail for somewhat lower prices than the American bikes. Specialized and SR have been on the market for awhile, and other companies tended to be showing as yet unavailable prototype production machines; this category included Fuji, Miyata, Puch, Takara, and

Centurion.

Schwinn and Ross had new "prototype," "one-off," "we don't know the price yet" (expensive looking) bikes. The Ross entry included a custom frame from Jim Redcay as well as a production bicycle that goes for considerably less money.

American Cycle Systems has a new version of a graphite-composition rim that can be flexed to extremes and always snaps back to round again.

Interbike served notice that the bicycle industry takes the Fat Tire Movement very seriously. Momentum is picking up for the big wheels, so look out skinny tires!

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