



EBC Bikewriter

August 2005

The Evansville Bicycle Club Newsletter



The Presidents Pacelines

by Mark Oliver



A 158 mile Ride Across Indiana. It's called RAIN and is sponsored by the Bloomington bicycle club. This year more than 1,100 riders started in Terre Haute at 6:00 AM and headed east. Taking US 40 to Plainfield, a trip of about 65 miles, they then detoured around Indianapolis. This is accomplished by more or less going south, then east and then north back to US 40 at Greenfield. By this time, they had ridden 114 miles. From this point on, they stayed on US 40 and rode through many small towns until reaching Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. When they reached the finish line, they had ridden 158 miles and were very close to the Ohio state line. They had literally ridden across the state.

The ride was in July and many in our club rode it from start to finish. In fact, many in our club participate year-after-year. I have ridden the past four RAIN's, but some have ridden many more than that. At the beginning of the year, I had planned to make this my fifth consecutive time riding RAIN. But having ridden so few miles at this point, I decided it would be better to wait till next year. The ride has many rest stops, a lunch stop, and a plethora of convenience stores along the way. However, you need to have your own sag in case you need repairs, you bonk or most importantly you don't want to have to ride back to Terre Haute. I have had either John Bennett and/or my wife Debbie sag for me each time I rode, but this time I was a sag.

Most riders will stop a few times along the route, but a few will ride the entire way without stopping. Jim Niethammer was one of those riders, and I had the privilege of sagging for him. My responsibilities were simple. We used short range FM radios to communicate, and I handed Jim water bottles and food whenever he requested it. I also had spare wheels ready for a quick change if he flatted. Jim's job was a whole lot harder. He stayed with the lead peloton the entire way. Only at the end was there a breakaway of five riders. Jim was in the main peloton about 30 seconds to a minute behind. There were also several riders from Jasper in the peloton.

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Khris Seger and Phil Mundy were a couple of them. Jim finished with a time of 6 hours and 43 minutes!! That's an average of 24 MPH on a 158 mile ride. He was placed at 18th although his pack all got the same time. It was an incredible performance!



Great job Jim! And if that was not enough, after a short rest and with a pouring rain starting, he went back out on his bike and finished his first ever Double Century!! Rusty Yeager also went back out for a Double Century and others that I am not aware of may have also. When you see Jim and all the others from our club that rode RAIN this year, give them a pat on the back for a fantastic ride.



As for me, I thoroughly enjoyed sagging this year. I apologize for leaving anyone out, but other sags from our group included Vicki Ashworth, Norma (Cinda Alexander's mom) and Lori Yeager just to name a few. If you ever get a chance to be a sag, I highly recommend it! But what of my plans next year? I hope to be back on the bike chasing number five!



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kathy Hedrick Paul Hedrick

Jeremy Hedrick Ryan Hedrick

Angie Smith Steven Smith

Greg Wittman



Biking the Erie Canal 2004

By Wayne Fuller

Last year, I realized that I would be taking a weeklong bike tour by myself as my family decided that they wanted to take a year off and go to Gulf Shores, Alabama to visit with family. There are numerous bike tours to choose from. This made it difficult to make a decision as to where I wanted to cycle for a week. I looked at cycling in Michigan, Maine, and New York. Because of the timing, the Erie Canal ride seemed just fine. This ride was put on by the New York Parks and Conservation Association, which changed its name as of the first of June of this year to Parks and Trails New York. In addition to the cycling aspect of the tour, the tour also offered the opportunity to learn a great deal about the Erie Canal as the route followed the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany, New York. The Erie Canal connects New York City with the Great Lakes via the Hudson River. The construction started from July 4, 1817 in Rome, New York. It was completed in October of 1825. Eighty-five locks were constructed in order to overcome a 500-foot rise from Albany to Buffalo. The canal is 360 miles long, 40 feet wide, and 4 feet deep. It cost 7 million dollars to build, which in today's dollars would be 4 billion. It did reduce the cost of shipping goods from Buffalo to New York City. The typical cost was 100 dollars for one ton of goods, which was reduced after the canal was built to 10 dollars per ton. The Erie Canal was dug with primitive tools. Basically it was done by men using shovels. The Erie Canal was known as Clinton's Ditch, named after DeWitt Clinton, who was governor of New York at the time.

When doing this tour, logistics is everything. The tour director sends everyone a pamphlet, which is a wealth of information to help you set up the trip. This is not a circle tour in which you end at the same place that you begin. It is not an out-and-back tour. It is a tour that starts in one place and ends at another. Early on, I decided that I would drive rather than fly and take my bicycle with me rather than ship it. I drove to Buffalo, New York and left my bicycle off at Campus Wheel Works. This was the bike shop used to ship your bike to if you are shipping, and to assemble your bike if it needed to be assembled. The staff at the bike shop was very friendly and helpful. I dropped my bicycle off and then proceeded to drive to Albany. The next morning I parked my truck at the Amtrak Station and got a NASCAR taxi ride from the station to the airport, where I picked up a rental car, and proceeded to drive back to Buffalo. There I dropped my luggage off at the motel, which was within two miles of the tour start. I dropped off my rental car and walked for several blocks to the bicycle shop where I picked up my bicycle. From there I rode back to the motel. There was a bike path that could be used for part of this ride. The interesting part of the ride was the ride up, over, and down a bridge crossing a major highway. Both the entrance and exit to this bridge were in a shape of a curly fry and so riding around in circles upwards and downwards was quite interesting. I got back to the motel where I met some people who were also on the tour. Apparently, there was a large contingent of individuals from Kansas City riding in this particular tour. The managers at the motel were very helpful. I was able to arrange for a limousine to drop my luggage off at the tour start path the next day. During this aspect of my journey, I had difficulty finding our Tour de France results, so I had to use the newspaper in order to find out tour results every morning. Day one was a warm-up. You had your choice of doing the Niagara Falls Bike Ride or the Buffalo City Ride. I choose the Niagara Falls Bike Ride which entails crossing the Peace Bridge into Canada. For those of you who don't know, a passport or birth certificate is required. A driver's license is not considered proof of identification. Approximately 40 of us went on this ride. In order to cross the Peace Bridge, another "curly-fried" entrance ride was required. This particular entrance was more difficult than the previous two "curly-fried" entrances and exits.

Once into Canada, we proceeded along a wonderful bike trail up to Niagara Falls. We got to take pictures of the Falls and have our pictures taken. We had lunch in a restaurant, which had a storage facility for our bi-

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cycles. The return trip was relatively easy with the most difficult part getting back into one's own country. Of course back in Buffalo, I managed to gain bonus miles by getting lost. Without bonus miles, the ride was 50 miles.

Once back at the campsite, I discovered my luggage had not been delivered. I was late getting back and so I was unsure as to whether an effort had been made to deliver my luggage. I talked to the Tour Director and was allowed to take a Sag vehicle to the motel. The limousine apparently had brought my luggage, but since there was no one to pay the driver, the luggage was not delivered. I was able to get my luggage and return back to the Tent City. That evening there was a wine and cheese reception and a pre-tour meeting. In walking around Tent City, I determined that there were a number of recumbents. Although I never did get an accurate count, I suspect that there were over 20 recumbent bicyclists. There are also several tandems, two of which were recumbent tandems. This made me feel right at home since I was riding my Tour Easy. Of course there were numerous mountain bikes and quite a number of road bikes. A large part of the ride was going to be ridden on a crushed limestone trail.

At the orientation meeting, we were told that there were going to be 449 riders. The riders came from 35 states and 3 continents. The oldest rider was 82 years of age and the youngest rider was 4 years of age. The majority of us were doing the full tour with some doing just the first two days of the tour, and then later on, others doing the last two days of the tour. The following day would start our journey to Albany.

The first day took us approximately 48 miles to Medina. We started out going north and then turned east. The trail in this area was made up of roads and paved trails the majority of the way. Toward the end of the ride it turned to crushed limestone. In Tonawanda, one could see the original width of the canal and how it was laid out. The lunch stop was in Rockport. Here one of the two original sets of 5-step locks was built in 1825 and stands alongside a modern working double canal lock. One could choose to take a boat ride through the locks if one so desired. The locks were built here to partially overcome a 70-foot difference in elevation as the canal crossed the Niagara escarpment. We eventually made it to Medina. This is home of the Medina Railroad Museum which displays and exhibits model trains. Dinner was somewhat of a disappointment as many of the bicyclists felt that we were on food rations. The same was true the next morning at breakfast. The one redeeming value about this stop was the use of an indoor pool for two hours. It was decidedly refreshing, and I know I spent an hour swimming.

The next morning, we cycled some 53 miles to Pittsford. Just after leaving Medina, we found the only place where a road passes underneath the canal and is actually listed in Ripley's Believe it or Not. You can stand underneath the Erie Canal and have canal water drip on you if you so choose, but from the looks of the water, a shower here might not be desirable. Somewhat further on is the town of Albion. In this community, one can see cobblestone masonry in many of the buildings. Continuing along the crushed limestone path, several lift bridges were noted along the route. In Spencerport, we stopped for lunch. The town's recreation department offered sandwiches, drinks, and chips for a reasonable price. We continued on through the southern part of Rockchester. The trail became paved, but was in poor condition due to tree roots. There is approximately three miles of bad trail in this section. Reportedly, it is to be repaved next year. Also during this section of the trail, there were three very busy road-crossings in which one had to get off the bicycle and to walk, if not run, across four lanes of traffic. There was a 7.5-mile option touring along the Genesee River Way Trail to the Upper Falls. Tours were planned. It was my intention to ride this loop, but due to poor markings, I missed the turn off for this additional tour and continued on. By the time I found out that

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I had missed the cut-off for the tour along the Genesee River, I was already five miles past the cut-off. It started to rain and then quite heavily. We spent the night camping at the Nazareth College in Pittsford. Fortunately for us the rain did stop. A couple that I met on the trail and myself found a local tavern where we proceeded to go to watch the Tour de France. Dinner was certainly an improvement over the previous evening. However, we had filled ourselves with free pizza and wings at the watering hole.

The next day after a good breakfast, we started what was supposed to be a 66-mile journey to Seneca Falls. This was the first day of the tour in which hills were included. However, the climbs were not very difficult and for those of us who bike in southern Indiana, the hills would seem rather average. However, the mileage turned out to be approximately 61 miles because of a detour. Just a short distance from the start of this day's ride is the Terry Precision Cycling Store. If one so chose, they could visit the store, which was opened early for any bicyclists who desired to go to the store. This was a day in which much of the riding was not done a paved trail, but rather on country roads. There was much to see and do. While on the trail, more lift bridges were seen. It is my understanding there are 16 remaining lift bridges. These bridges were constructed after the original canal bridges, known as "low bridges", which were just a few feet above the water, became outdated. The last "lift bridge" was found in Fairport. This bridge is somewhat unusual in that it slopes because the opposite canal banks are at different elevations.

We continued on to Palmyra. Palmyra is famous as the birthplace of the Mormon Church. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church, was born in Palmyra. There are numerous things to see and do in Palmyra, most of it having to do with the Mormon Church. Later in the day, we found a great diner where the food was very good and provided us with an excellent lunch. We continued on our ride, going through the town of Waterloo. It was here that I had my first encounter finding out that moving from the road to the bike lane created a lot of difficulties. The bike lane part of the road had a lip and was slightly elevated. I almost went down when crossing over from the road to the bike lane, but managed to get my foot down instead of the bicycle. However, later that day I found out that two other people had gone down on this particular stretch of highway.

We got to Seneca Falls and pitched camp. Seneca Falls is known as the birthplace of the Women's Suffrage Movement. The first Women's Rights Convention was held here in 1848. Seneca Falls also has the National Women's Hall of Fame, which honors and celebrates the achievements of American Women. This also has the Memorial Day Museum and the Seneca Museum of Waterways and Industry.

That night was a wine and cheese reception in the park. Dinner was on your own. The couple and myself found ourselves in another tavern where again we managed to get the television turned to the Outdoor Life Network in order to watch bicycle racing. Later on, we found a sandwich shop, which had very good food. A shuttle service was operated from Tent City to downtown Seneca Falls. Breakfast was good and provided a good start the next morning. This day's journey was one of 42 miles of which much was on crushed limestone trail. This day would find us riding through Camillus which was the halfway point on the original Erie Canal and also is home of a 300-acre park that was built and is maintained largely through efforts of volunteers. This park includes 7 miles of restored tour path and navigable canal as well as a reproduction of a lock tenders shanty and the Simms Store Museum a replica of an 1860's canal side store. Additionally there is the 9-mile creek aqueduct, which was one of 32 aqueducts constructed as part of the first enlargement of the Erie Canal to carry it over rivers, ravines, and roads. The original masonry of the 9-mile creek aqueduct still is in place and there are plans underway to restore this structure. When completed, it will be the only navigable aqueduct of the original 32.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

EBC Bikewriter

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The Evansville Bicycle Club, Inc.

New Membership and Renewal Application 2005

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Individual \$12

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\$1/child

Release of Liability

Evansville Bicycle Club, Inc. is organized for sole purpose of providing it's members with notification of central meeting points and times. Members freely elect to ride together as a group, following a route of choice. In signing this form for myself and/or my family members I understand and agree to absolve EBC, Inc. and it's organizers or sponsors for all blame for any injury misadventure, harm loss or inconvenience suffered as a result of participation in any ride or activity associated with or sponsored by the EBC, Inc. I further understand that I, as an individual am responsible to abide by all traffic laws and regulations governing bicycling and take full responsibility for my actions.

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