



CHAINWHEEL CHATTER

Volume 48 Issues 5-6 | Established 1972 | May-June 2020

P.O. Box 22146 Lansing MI 48909-2146
www.biketcb.org
Promoting safe, social bicycling since 1972

Chainwheel Deadline

July Newsletter:	Send items to Sarynna Lopez Meza by the indicated deadline.
June 23	chainwheelchatter@biketcb.org

Stay in touch with us!

Whether you are a beginner, casual or hardcore cyclist, the Tri-County Bicycle Association (TCBA) is here to help!

The TCBA membership offers several perks, including access to the premier version of Ride with GPS (normally \$80/year; this app allows you to download and edit biking routes), as well as earning incentives when riding club miles (bike goodies, clothing, to name a few).

Feel free to join the various class rides we have:

- A+ - 19+ mph
- A - 17 - 19 mph
- B - 14 - 17 mph
- C - 12 - 14 mph
- D - Up to 12 mph
- Z - Over 40 miles at riders' own pace
- M - Mountain bike "single track" rides
- G - Gravel road rides plus speed class (A-Z) of the ride

More information about the various rides and to confirm they are taking place, please look at BikeTCBA.org.

Find us and follow us on social media:

TCBA: <https://www.facebook.com/biketcb>

A note from the editor

These are interesting times we are living in. We are just finishing week 9 of kids having no school in the area, we've been sheltering in place for several weeks now (and still have at least 2 more to go!), and our state has suffered a tremendous loss of life. At this point, we all know someone who has been affected by Covid, and I continue to be thankful that my immediate family has been healthy throughout this time.

Unfortunately for me, with a child at home and the way our family schedule works, I gave up on biking the last weeks. It started with trainer issues, and continued with running challenges that seemed fun -if I may offer some advice: don't sign up for "things that look like fun" at 6 am!-, so I've been running a lot. I won't lie. I thought about going for bike rides here and there but the idea of getting into an accident right now, and the repercussions it would have, weighed heavy on me, but as the sole person who is at home with the child, I just couldn't imagine managing my day with a broken foot or arm. Mind you, I've thankfully never had anything like that biking, but alas, irrationality is a thing right now and I figured running was a bit safer for me to do.

As the weather has gotten nicer, I have seen more of my friends going for rides though, so I hope you all are getting a chance to ride. Even with our sheltering in place and our inability to do group rides, I have to keep reminding myself that at least we are able to go outside. I keep thinking of my friends in Italy and Spain who were homebound, no outdoor exercise, for 2 months. We will get past this!

I hope you and yours are doing well and that you are able to stay in touch with family and friends. Please feel free to use our Facebook page or send us at TCBA an email if you're feeling isolated and want some human virtual interaction. We are a community of bikers; let's use that community spirit to keep us company during this time. Please continue to reach out and send your articles - I appreciate them.

Sarynna López Meza - East Lansing, MI

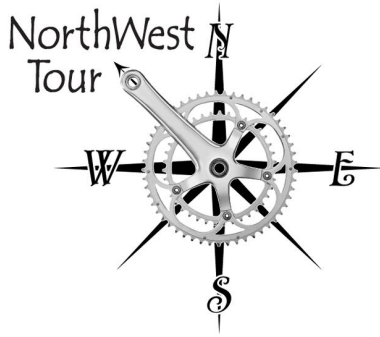
TCBA Membership

	1-Year	2-Year	3-Year	4-Year
Individual	\$15	\$24	\$30	\$36
Family	\$20	\$32	\$40	\$48



Affiliated with the League of American Bicyclists and the League of Michigan Bicyclists

NorthWest Tour Postponed



NorthWest Tour has been postponed to June 9-12, 2021. All registrations and merchandise orders for 2020 will be transferred to the 2021 event unless a refund is specifically requested. Refund requests need to be made by May 29, 2020 at nwtour@biketcba.org and will be subject to the standard cancellation fee of \$25 per person.

We hope to see you all in 2021 “to experience sand dunes and sandy beaches, small lakes and Great Lakes, orchards and vineyards, and the northwest charm of resort towns like Empire, Glen Arbor, Suttons Bay, and Traverse City”.

Bike shops open for repair and online sales

It was great news when bicycle shops were allowed to re-open amid the executive order. From what I hear, most shops in town are open for repairs and online sales, though we might have to be patient with them having things in stock. Between the trade wars and the current situation, evidently some bike shops are running low on inventory. Do remember it's always better to call on the phone first, and, especially in the case of repairs, call ahead of time to make sure they can receive your bike, and allow for ample time for curbside drop-off/pick-up!

Helmet Safety (from BikeBits)

Consumer Reports has new bicycle helmet ratings on their website. They give Excellent impact protection ratings to 22 models, with most of the remaining ones scoring Very Good. They recommended 15 models. Of those they scored four at the top of the ratings, including three MIPS models and one without MIPS. They describe MIPS as "a promising technology designed to reduce the risk of concussion." The Morpher Flat Folding Helmet and Woom Kids Helmet failed impact tests. The highest overall scores are for the Giro Register MIPS, Kali Alchemy, Bontrager Circuit MIPS and Bell Stratus MIPS.

Their full review is at https://helmets.org/cu_2020.htm

They also have a new page up on how to eliminate coronavirus in helmets:
<https://helmets.org/clean.htm#covid19>

They tried the recommended bleach solution on two helmets and have photos of the results. Although the helmets were not apparently damaged, their recommendation is just leaving them on a shelf for three days as the best way.

Biking Smarter

As the weather continues getting better and we head outside for rides, let's review some guidelines on bicycling in a smarter way! Special thanks to Dick Janson for sending this. My only comment is that I am one of those riders that unclips with her right foot, and therefore, my right foot is on the ground when I start!

Bikes are easy to ride. Get on. Push pedals. Keep balanced. Watch where you're going. Shift up or Down. Stop. And then there are other things. Hills. Pot holes. Drivers. Wind. Flats. Let's start with some basics. Starting, stopping, and shifting.

Your goal is to get moving quickly, and in a straight line. Some people mount their bike like a horse or a scooter. Let me offer you a better way.

Your left foot is on the ground and your right foot is on the other side of the bike on the pedal. You are straddling your bike ahead of your seat, and the right pedal is up, and a little forward. When you are ready to go, make a quick move to stand on the right pedal and lift your butt onto bike saddle. The bike will start to move quickly, helping you to gain your balance.

Eventually, it will be time to stop. With your right foot on the pedal in its lowest position, shift your weight to that pedal, lift your butt off and ahead of the saddle, apply both brakes, then put your left foot on the ground as soon as you stop.

There are more good reasons for starting with your left foot on the ground and your right foot on the pedal. Have you ever walked down a stairway in the dark, thinking you have just stepped off the last stair, but you're still on it? Your next step is quite startling, isn't it? Most roads are made higher in the center for drainage. If you were to put your right foot on the ground, it may be lower than you expect - and you may fall in a traffic lane.

Less important, but still embarrassing - if your right foot is on the ground, your right leg may be in a position to receive a free "tattoo" from your dirty chain. I don't know how to lubricate a chain without getting lube on the outside. Only the lube that gets to the inside is useful. If you lube your chain, give the lube time to penetrate, then wipe off as much as you can with a rag. Lube on the outside just attracts dirt and promotes wear.

If you stopped at an intersection and will want to go again, you need to move the right pedal back up to a raised position. If you have toe clips or clipless pedals, just raise your right foot toward the front and up - the pedal will come. If you have the older style of pedals, put your right toe under the pedal and lift it up to be slightly forward of the highest position. In either case, you will be moving the pedal in the opposite direction from normal pedaling.

Biking Smarter ... Continued

I missed a step on purpose, just to simplify the instructions. It only applies if you have a multi-speed bike. Once you know you are going to stop, return your shifters to a set of gears that make starting easy. Find out what those are for you, and complete shifting to them before you stop. If you stop when you are in a higher gear, starting will be slow and balancing will be difficult.

Every bicycle made with gears only has ONE hard gear combination. All the rest are easy. Really! If you are in a gear that is hard, just shift down. If you don't, the problem isn't the bike - it's YOU! The hard gear? It's your granny gear - the one that on level ground makes your cranks imitate a windmill. But when you get on a steep hill, and put it to work, and it is hard work, your only choices are to work hard or to get off and push (or rest). So, if you're not in your granny gear, but you are struggling, use the gears you paid for, and shift down.

You may have heard a clunking noise as a bike shifts. If it happens to you on your bike, you can do something about it if you understand why it happens. You can skip the next paragraph if you have a 3-speed bike.

Shifting is the process of sliding the chain off the teeth of one gear and onto the teeth of another. Shifting won't happen at all if you are not pedaling. If you are pedaling hard, there is a lot of friction between the chain and the teeth, making it hard for them to separate. When they do, it's a lot like cracking your knuckles. So, as you are shifting, ease up on the pressure and your shift will quietly happen twice as fast.

When tying your shoes, you should knot each on the side away from the bike, particularly the one on the chain side. This will reduce the chance that a shoelace will get caught between the chain and chainring.

As a rule of thumb (my thumb), drivers will give you as much space on your left as you take on your right - why should you need any more? If you want more space, move to the left!

About that @\$% driver: If you gave him a penny for his thoughts, you should expect change.

Dehydration thickens your blood. That makes it harder for your brain to get fed. Your thinking becomes confused. Your response time gets longer. Drink plenty of water, even when you think you don't need it. (And maybe offer some to that @\$% driver.)

This article is provided for those who don't yet know everything about riding a bicycle. I may be of no help to YOU. I remember a guy named John. Every rider has his eccentricity (except me, of course!), and John's was that he did not shift gears. I would have taken the opportunity to teach him how, but I had enough trouble just keeping up with him.

Biking Smarter ... Continued

You will have more fun on your bike when the process becomes second nature. You start with things you know, things you don't know, and things you think you know that are not true. You have expectations and fears, but knowing what others already know can help. I offer you some examples:

Look where you want to go. This seems obvious, but if you stare at an obstacle in the road, you are more likely to hit it.

It is safer to ride with your muscles relaxed. If you need to make a quick correction, you don't have to relax first, and that makes your reaction quicker. It also saves your energy. Unlock your elbows to reduce pain in your shoulders and palms. Turn your shock-transmitting arms into shock absorbers.

Most of the time, you should be pedaling in a gear that lets you carry on a normal conversation. If you are shy, just talk to yourself.

Learn what you are capable of in terms of speed. On whatever you consider to be a long trip, if you ride at least 10% slower, the end of your ride will be more pleasant. If you are training for a race, it is fine to ride with those who are a bit faster. Recreationally, you'll have a better experience riding with those who go your speed or slower, and stick with them.

A long ride will seem both easier and shorter when you ride and chat with someone else, as long as chatting is less important than being aware of your riding environment.

If the next hill looks scary, don't look at the top. Look only far enough ahead to avoid obstacles. Be in a gear that feels more like you are on level ground. You'll know you're near the top when your pedaling gets easier.

If you want to take a break part way up a long hill, pull into a driveway. When you leave, use the driveway to get a running start before continuing back up the road. You'll have a better view of the traffic you're joining, too.

Driveways can be a challenge to enter or leave. There is often a long crack along its length, but notice on each end there may be a bit of a ramp to make it easier to make it through that transition without catching your tire on an unfriendly edge of concrete.

If you get off your bicycle because you can't make it up the hill, and you decide to walk, you must cross to the other side of the road. You are now a pedestrian and must walk facing traffic. This has the advantage of putting your bicycle between you and oncoming traffic. You will also be able to evaluate whether each oncoming vehicle is a friend or foe.

Biking Smarter ... Continued

After pedaling up a difficult hill, you should keep your legs moving a bit. That will help work out the lactic acid that built up in your legs. Lactic acid makes your legs feel tired; if you get too much, you'll want to quit.

A line painted on the side of the road can be thought by drivers to be a bike lane. That's true only if they are at least 30" wide, and marked with bicycle symbols or signs. All the rest are there to let drivers see the edge of the road in foggy weather. Let the drivers know you don't consider a fog line to be anything else by crossing it frequently. As you do this, look back by turning your head or using a mirror.

The first 5 minutes after rain starts are the most dangerous. Accumulated oil hasn't been washed off the road, and the oil/water combination is quite slippery. A good hard rain after a dry period is the bicyclist's friend, especially if you aren't caught in it.

Sometimes you just want to go faster, but it's all you can do to maintain your current speed. You can do it, but it takes three steps. First, shift to a LOWER gear. That will increase your pedal rotation and make it easier to pedal. Next, pump harder, until it seems it's making no more difference, then shift back up. You'll be going faster in that former gear, and doing it more easily.

Remember that the pedal goes down more easily in the lower gear. Just before you shift up, add some momentum with a couple extra hard strokes, and add another just after you arrive in the higher gear. That may make the higher gear just as comfortable as the one you just left.

If you are out of breath, concentrate on your exhale - the inhale will take care of itself. By having a deeper exhale, you will inhale more fresh air. Exceptions: near barn yards, roadkill, diesel-powered vehicles or just after your tandem captain had a big bean burrito.

About that @#\$\$% driver: He's in a hurry. It takes him all night to watch 60 minutes.

If it looks like you are going to do an unscheduled separation from your bike, think tuck-and-roll rather than using arms or legs to stop yourself. Abrasions heal better than broken bones.

The more you learn about how to adjust and repair your bike, the less dependent you are on riding with someone who does. Having the right tools and parts are helpful, even if you need help with them.

Some of the first DALMAC riders discovered that on longer rides they were more likely to perspire, and that their saddle became more uncomfortable as the ride progressed. The ones wearing bluejeans were in more pain.

Biking Smarter ... Continued

What was happening was that the thick seams were cutting off their circulation and absorbing their sweat, and the wet seams were chafing their skin. The same happened with the thick seams in their underwear.

Because of this problem, bicycling shorts were invented. They were made with thin material, flat seams, and had a chamois inside to absorb moisture, so underwear became unnecessary. If you are having similar problems, buying a pair or two of bike shorts, or not wearing underwear with your bike shorts, should be a big help.

Beyond that, pain can be relieved by choosing a saddle with a narrower nose and perhaps with less padding, by riding more to make your bottom more used to the experience or by applying a product called Bag Balm to the sore area (before, during or after riding - but dismount first). Bag Balm comes in a green tin and can be found in the pharmacy area.

You can get a mental pain when your tire goes flat. To make the repair easier, line up its logo on the tire with the valve stem. Then, when you have removed the tube and tire from the wheel, you can look either for a hole in the tube (easier) or debris in the tire, then align the valve in the tube with the logo on the tire to find the other puncture location. Remove any debris from the tire and patch (or replace) the tube. Failure to remove any debris from the tire will only prolong your pain.

As the last part of installing a tube and tire on a rim, you must add air, but how much? Frequently, a recommended pressure, or a range of pressures, will be printed or embossed on the side of the tire. If you get your tire installed on the rim evenly, all the way around, and on both sides, it can take more pressure than most can pump by hand - double the recommended amount.

With a lower pressure you may feel less bumps, but you will have to pedal harder. Too low and hitting a big pothole will get you a snake-bite flat, where the tube can get pinched between the tire and the rim, evidenced by two holes, close together, on the inside of the tube. With a higher pressure your pedaling will be easier, but you will feel more bumps.

Very few runners expect to cover ten feet with each step, or to maintain a pace of 160 steps a minute. Yet, put them on a bicycle and they can do it sitting down, and so can you.

The most efficient animal on earth in terms of weight transported over distance for energy expended is a human on a bicycle. The most efficient machine on earth in terms of weight transported over distance for energy expanded is a human on a bicycle.

Biking Smarter ... Continued

Bicycles are very efficient. For every 100 calories you burn, you can go three miles. Give a car the same number of calories and it couldn't get 100 yards.

Feeling low or depressed or anxious or bored are never good reasons to avoid a bike ride. On the contrary, riding can be the best cure! Endorphins are natural opiates that are produced by the brain. Exercise, as well as pain, eating, music, sex, and laughter, are some of the triggers to produce endorphins. These natural opiates are as powerful as morphine.

Some pains are cured by an equipment change:

Hand or wrist pain can be eliminated by raising the nose of your saddle. Shoulder pain calls for higher handlebars, a shorter stem, or a recumbent. Knee pain can be from a wrong seat height. If your pain is in the front of your knee, raise your seat 1/4"; in the back of your knee - lower it 1/4".

If only one knee hurts, and you are wearing clipless pedals, look at the bottom of your shoe. You may have picked up something sticky in your cleat, like gum or tar. That can eliminate the 'float' you would normally have, and teach you appreciation for it, once you get it back. If your feet are cramping, or going to sleep, loosen the shoe fasteners (laces or Velcro), drink more water or eat some Tums.

Other pains can be blamed on your behavior:

"Pins and needles" in your forearms are from locking your elbows. Got pain on the side of your knees - stop riding bull-legged. If your thigh hurts, use easier gears, pedal faster, and shift down sooner for hills.

During the HOT summer, I found the best riding was in the evening and into the night. You can see headlights of vehicles before they come over the hill or around the curve. And there are fewer of them on many roads after dark. And the sights and sounds are different. And, as less daylight is SAVED, riding in the dark may be the only time for some of you to get in some weekday riding.

To do this, you need lighting, front and back. On the front, I have a generator-powered headlight, but it fails at speeds below 5 mph. This makes climbing some hills and approaching busy intersections a bit more exciting than necessary. I also have a backup light on my helmet (no, not for backing up).

About that @\$% driver: He may not have ulcers, but he is surely a carrier.

Based on my experience, I believe you can make a red light turn green by unclipping.

Classifieds

This section of the Chainwheel Chatter is published as a Service for TCBA members only, to advertise cycling equipment free of charge. To place an ad, send an email to chainwheelchatter@biketcba.org. Ads will appear for 2 editions, unless otherwise notified.

For Sale: Electra Classic Cruiser Tandem. 10 years old but hardly used. Aluminum frame. Chromoly fork. 3 speeds. 26" wheels. Black frame. Great bike for cruising around the neighborhood. \$600. or B/O. Contact Cathy at 773-835-0009 or mouserp@comcast.net (5/17/20)

For Sale: Cannondale tandem size 17.5/14.5 26-inch wheels drum brake added. Wife rode Dalmac twice and granddaughter rode in 2000. Been in garage since. \$500. or B/O Contact Roger Andrews 231-920-5589 mandrewslc@gmail.com (4/1/20)

For Sale: Vintage Schwinn Voyageur touring bike. 21 1/2 inch frame, 27 inch wheels. Mid 80s. Been professionally painted and updated. \$200. or B/O. Contact Roger Andrews 231-920-5589 mandrewslc@gmail.com (4/1/20)

For Sale: Rans V-Rex recumbent, model year 2003. Features include: extra set of lightweight wheels, Ultegra front and rear derailleurs, Rans seat bag and rack, and two seat pads. Excellent condition and well maintained. Asking \$300. Contact David at 517-339-9809 or david.peake.arch@gmail.com. East Lansing area (3/1/20)

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Your respect is requested when using any of the numbers on this page.
Phone calls during family time and at late hours can be intrusive.

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