



The Cue Sheet

March
2012

The Newsletter of the Elmhurst Bicycle Club
Riding Strong for over 34 Years



Elmhurst Bicycle Club is the
League of American Bicyclists'
2009 Bicycle Club
of the Year for Region 4.

The Spectacular Upper Peninsula

By Mary Lee St. Aubin

You've heard it from the die-hard skiers, the long-time members, and the repeat attendees. But now listen up as a winter sports newcomer attests to the spinning of the fun-o-meter at Sharon and George Hermach's annual club trip to Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

This is an area of the Midwest that refuses to suffer the onslaught of winter but rather revels in its beauty and embraces its outdoor opportunities. Its people are not winter sport elitists; they are genuine, friendly, and welcoming Midwesterners who cherish their history and share the simple treasures of their beautiful location near the shores of Lake Superior.

From the day of arrival to the hour of departure, we were welcomed by the ever-smiling Linda and Morgan who treated us as returning family at their family-owned Indianhead Motel. They answered every question, joined our activities, and shared our appetizers and sweets. They even led an afternoon snowshoe hike at Miner's Park, explaining the historical significance of a 1920's mining disaster and the impact of iron mining on the local economy, which saw Ironwood's population peak at 35,000 and decline to today's size of 5,500.

The area is replete with downhill ski opportunities, cross country ski venues, snowshoe trails, and hiking locales. Even the least athletic among us found a warm place to read or to gather with friends. The presence of animals such as deer, porcupine, and birds, and the beauty of the snow-covered woods reminded us of Robert Frost's words mid-journey: "The woods are lovely dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, miles to go before I sleep."



Jerry with hat from Stormy Kromer hat factory. Its a good look!

What did the average day look like? We rose at leisure, meandered over to the motel lobby for a simple buffet breakfast of oatmeal, homemade muffins, toasted breads, cereals, and surprise fruits and baked goods that members shared. From there we set out on daily adventures, sports of choice, choosing to meet others or going our separate ways. Often we crossed paths at lunch in warming houses where we munched on peanut butter sandwiches and fruit or leftovers from a previous evening's meal. The afternoon saw more sports, or tours of the Stormy Kromer hat factory (you may see us sporting distinctive caps), or shopping, or well-earned naps. At 5:30 we gathered in the lobby for cocktail hour and an unrivaled assortment of shared hors d'oeuvres. The decibel level had us cupping our ears to hear the person next to us as we excitedly shared the ups and downs of the day's adventures. .

Since we took over the entire motel and would overwhelm local restaurants, Sharon (organizer extraordinaire) divided us into early

and late dinner groups and sent us to different restaurants each evening. What a treat! The food was memorable, the hilarity high, and camaraderie top-notch as we shared the special friendships that EBCers quickly come to know and appreciate. Dinners were a special time for winding down and sharing.

After returning to the motel, many reconvened in the lobby for desserts and games. Anyone who thought EBCers were non-competitive should have seen the evening dominoes tournaments, card games, and Bananagrams competitions. Hmmm ... don't give that opponent an edge!!

Then there were the special evenings like a 60's style Rock 'n Roll concert, a pre-arranged tour of the historic Ironwood Theater built in 1928, and a demonstration of the Barton theater organ, one of five such surviving instruments.

What a week it was! We left reluctantly but ready for a rest and a break from too much laughing and too much fun. Will we be back? YES! We now know why Sharon can't contain her enthusiasm when she promotes the trip at EBC meetings, why George can't wait to get back to Ironwood, and why the EBC group continually grows each year. People who go, often return. No wonder this group has increased over the years from 15 to almost 50! It's not a well-kept secret! It's even getting out to us non-winter sports enthusiasts! .



Isaac knows how to have a good time!

HINT: put it on your calendar for next winter! Try it. You'll most likely like it!

Spring Green Wisconsin (Morel Mushroom Festival) May 18-20, 2012 EBC Bicycle Outing by Kären Schwartz

Once again we will be leading a Spring Green, Wisconsin EBC Bicycle Outing. The Spring Green area of Wisconsin features incomparable cycling and sights, along with some of the best roads in the Midwest! Wisconsin roads are low traffic and in great condition. The Spring Green area is along the banks of the Wisconsin River and has interesting sights as well. It has the Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor's Center and houses. Also, it has local artists and their shops. Check out this website for lodging options. www.springgreen.com Camping is another option and Bill and I usually camp this weekend at Wisconsin Riverside Resort. It has great new facilities, including a new restaurant and bar right on the Wisconsin River. We find that the new restaurant in the Wisconsin Riverside Resort is a great place for Friday night dining.



Morel Mushroom, photo by Shannon Clark!

The other town that we bike to is Muscoda, Wisconsin. It features a morel mushroom festival on Saturday and Sunday. The town has a family event including the buying and selling of morel mushrooms, arts and crafts for sale, carnival rides, ball games, a flea market and tractor pulls. www.muscoda.com/event-morels-2012.html

This bicycle outing usually has three ride options: faster/hillier, moderate and less hilly and a new (as flat as possible in this area of Wisconsin!) slower option. I should explain that while this is one of the most scenic areas of Wisconsin, it also does have some steep climbs. They are not long like ones in Colorado, but they can be hilly. Bill found some fairly flat ride options last year.

We arrive on Friday and start some shorter rides Friday Afternoon. For those who can't make an early ride, Saturday and Sunday are still great ride options. Last year we also found some new group dining options. Another small Wisconsin town that has probably not been heard of before is Mazomanie, Wisconsin. This small berg has a great restaurant that has been featured on TV - the Old Feed Mill. It is located in an historic old feed mill. The food is great! We will probably eat there on Saturday night. Check it out at: www.mazomaniemills.com

More details about the ride particulars will be out later, but save May 18-20, 2012 for the Spring Green, Wisconsin EBC bike outing!

Kären and Bill Schwartz
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10 Essentials of Safe Backcountry Travel

By George Pastorino

.....lots of e-mails to me asking about the essentials of safe back country travel.

Since I met Pussanee I have been much more careful and prepared when I go into a true wilderness area. Sometimes my back pack is huge, but I am responsible for her life when I ask her to come with me to these places and I want to have a reasonable chance to survive if there is an accident or a storm. I was prepared before we met, but more so now. Still, you must accept the fact that no matter how prepared you are, sometimes Mother Nature is just too strong and you can't win. It's a risk, but you can make it a calculated risk, not a careless one.

There are two questions that I ask myself before heading out into a wilderness area:

- 1) Can I respond positively and calmly to an accident, emergency or severe weather/storm?
- 2) Can we safely spend a night, or more out with the gear we have?

If I can't answer yes to both, I either get the supplies I need, or I don't go. You can't be foolish. When I used to climb mountains, there were careless mountain climbers and old mountain climbers, but no old careless mountain climbers.

Since weather conditions can change quickly, winter adventurers especially need to carry the Ten Essentials; but you can get in serious trouble in summer, especially in the High Mountains. Also, if you don't know how to orient your compass to your map, both are fairly useless. REI teaches very good one day courses in Compass Navigation and I would take 101 and 102 before heading out to a true Wilderness Area.

If you carry a GPS, you still need a compass and map as you can't risk your life on batteries. I am not an expert at all, and have only taken 2 navigation classes; but I am not helpless either. I understand that just because I am lost, it doesn't mean my compass is broken.

Critical to rescue is to tell someone your route and stick to it; this makes a rescue much easier. Also give them a time they can expect to hear from you, after which they can assume you need help and can alert authorities. If you stuck to your route, finding you should be easy. Please watch the movie 127 hours to see this point illustrated in agonizing fashion.

Here is what I carry in places like Porcupine Mountain State Park in winter, The Gunflint Trail in winter and the High Mountains above Crested Butte, Colorado.

1. Navigation (topo maps, altimeter, GPS, compass).
2. Sun and bug protection (sunglasses, bug spray, sunscreen).
3. Insulation (Extra Clothing).
4. Illumination (headlamp, flashlight, batteries).



Pussanee on a remote B.W.C.A. lake - at minus 30 degrees F.!

5. First-Aid Supplies. (I buy an adventure medical kit and add to it).
6. Fire (bombproof lighter, matches in a waterproof container, fire starters).

7. Repair Kit and Tools (Leatherman multitool and duct or electrical tape).
8. Nutrition (jerky, nuts, granola, and dried fruit).
9. Hydration (water, enough to accommodate additional requirements due to temperature, altitude, exertion, and emergency).
10. Emergency Shelter (emergency tent, or small tarp, reflective emergency blanket, hand and body warmers).

I also carry a very loud whistle, cell phone with GPS, and cash. Everyone has a slightly different list.



You need to be able to help yourself out here!

high above Lake Tahoe on the Flume Trail, in November of 2003.

A note about cell phones in winter. I place it deep in my backpack in a small pocket. I also place a hand warmer in the pocket along with the cell phone. This keeps the battery from freezing, which can happen very quickly in cold temperatures. You can also do the same with your GPS.

Sounds excessive? When everything goes according to plan, it is. But when an unexpected storm hits and you can't see, or when someone breaks a leg, it really is the bare minimum to give you a shot at survival. My friend Ken and I got slammed with a blizzard while mountain biking very

Ken got wet and cold and I used the extra clothes and hand and body warmers to get him dry and warm. I had the tarp and space blanket, but we got lucky and found a concrete outhouse even though we were 4 miles from the nearest road. We stayed in there several hours until the wind died down, even ate lunch in there. Sounds disgusting, but with 40mph winds and a whiteout outside.....it was a life saver. The forecast called for a zero percent chance of snow and was 100% wrong.

Had we not found the outhouse, I **think** we could have survived with the tarp, space blanket and hand and body warmers; I am 100% certain we would not have survived without them. Here are some pics from that trip: [Lake Tahoe in the Snow](#) These pics were taken before the winds got high. I can't believe I let Ken take a pic of me eating in an outhouse :)

Thanks and be safe,

George

Plotting the Arc of My Cycling Career by Bruce Lloyd

For the first time since I was a kid, I began riding a bicycle when I lost my drivers license in 1982. I lived 20 plus miles from my place of work, so on Sunday evenings I would ride a borrowed Schwinn Continental to a friend's house. I would sleep on his couch during the week. From there I would ride to and from work, about 2 miles each way. On Friday nights I would ride back home again. Those twenty something mile rides on the weekends seemed epic. In time I got my license back and bought myself a nice Trek touring bike. It was common for me to do a 12 mile training ride 3 or 4 times a week. I wasn't very good, but mercifully, I was too dumb to know it. I struggled because of permanent disabilities left over from a motorcycle accident years before. I also was in crummy physical condition, smoked cigarettes, and drank like a fish. So I had that going for me.

My first peak came a few years later. I gave up the alcohol and cigarettes. I battled knee issues, but through dogged persistence, I made myself into a respectable cyclist, and I rode the Blackhawk Metric Century (62 miles) in Rockford Illinois in 4 hours. There

were more surgeries to correct structural imbalances in the damaged leg, and I played a lot of tennis for a while, until leg issues forced me to stop. It seemed like cycling was the only sport that would have me. I bought another bicycle and resumed riding. My training lacked consistency. Rarely could I build on what I'd done before because I was often injured. I had to start over, again and again. I was always making a comeback. It started coming together for me a few years ago. I achieved the kind of fitness I had long dreamed about. I was loving it. Last spring I started experiencing knee pain again, and had to shut it down. I resumed training later in the year, and planned to train throughout the winter, either outdoors or on the trainer. I was at the point where riding 50 plus miles was routine again. Flashes of the old form were returning. Then I fell and broke my hip. Somehow, inexplicably, during the 5 weeks I lived on the couch convalescing, a problematic but previously manageable arthritic condition became unmanageable, at least within the context of a serious riding program, so I am shutting it down for the last time.

There will be no more comebacks. I just put my training log on the shelf. I am going to miss the friendships, the camaraderie, and the times we might have had. I'm going to miss being lost in the practiced rhythm of physical exertion, or working with others as our smooth flowing pace line eats up mile after mile of pavement. I'm going to miss drinking a hot chocolate at the rest stop on a cold day, or rolling a cold beverage against my forehead on a hot one. I'm going to miss the delicious buzz I get at the end of a tough ride, eating 5,000 calories a day, and feeling like I'm in the top 2% of the population in terms of cardiovascular fitness.

This I believe: When my pursuits and activities are in line with what I am destined to do in this lifetime, life will have a flow, like paddling a canoe downstream. Bicycling has been many things - frustrating and exhilarating, painful and glorious, demanding and rewarding. For me though, there was never a flow. It says a lot about the sport that I was willing to struggle so much to remain a part of it, but alas, it was not meant to be.

(Editor's note: Perhaps the newsletter needs a letter to the editor section for an article such as this. Or perhaps such a section would be useful for responses to an article such as this. On a personal note, "Bruce, Say it ain't so.")

My wife's suggestion for an editor's note is: "Stay Tuned for the April issue when the topic will be 'Slowing Down or Cutting Out.'")

Meeting Minutes (A February Meeting was not held.
The next meeting will be held on March 8th.)

Please submit articles and/or photos for the newsletter to Chuck Dean (cdean69033_aol.com). The deadline is the 20th of the month.

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Interested in joining EBC? [Membership Application](http://www.elmhurstbicycling.org/about/membership.asp)
(<http://www.elmhurstbicycling.org/about/membership.asp>)

March, 2012 • • • Club Rides

'Ride Schedule.' The most current ride schedule can be found on our website at
<http://www.elmhurstbicycling.org/rides/currentRide.aspx>.

'Future Rides' (typically beyond the end of next month, if any exist) can be found on our website at
<http://www.elmhurstbicycling.org/rides/futureRide.aspx>.

The 'Ride Schedule Archive' can be found on our website at <http://www.elmhurstbicycling.org/events/archive.asp>.

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