

# The Cyclist

Newsletter of the Capital City Cyclists

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## New Club Jerseys!

*It's the first major design change for CCC jerseys since 1999*

### President's Paceline

by Mark Koch

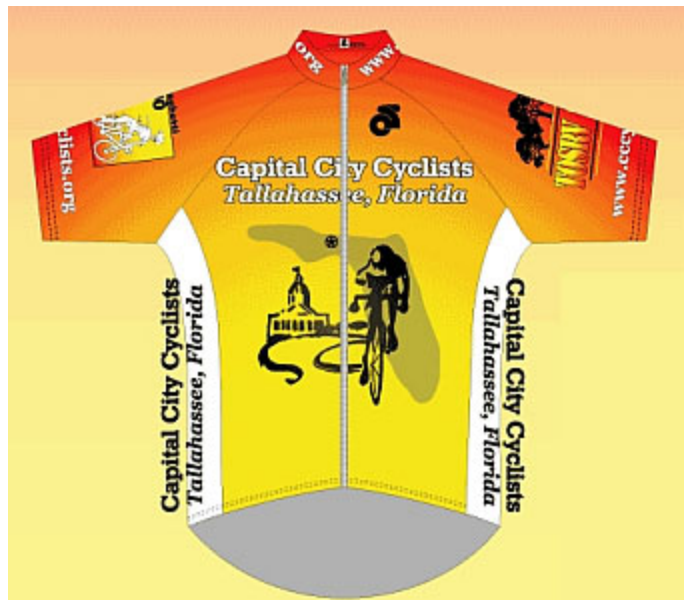


It is my pleasure to introduce the new CCC cycling jersey. Designed by club member Mickey Phillips, this new-look concept retains the traditional club logo, yet adds a more contemporary look. Although still bright for better visibility, the yellow fades to orange, rather than purple. Our two traditional sponsored club rides, TOSRV and the Spaghetti 100, are proudly displayed on both sleeves, and our website is shown there, as well as along the collar. In return for the many years of dedication our area bike shops have given our cyclists, logos from *Great Bike Shop*, *Jo's*, *Higher Ground* and *Sunshine* are displayed on the back pockets. Jersey tops in racer or club fit and matching shorts are available. The manufacturer is Champion Systems. The first order is closed, but a second order will be made if there is enough interest.

Ordering instructions, updates and order form are on the CCC webpage, [www.cccyclists.org](http://www.cccyclists.org).

Do you have comments, suggestions? Please send them to me at [cccpresident2007@yahoo.com](mailto:cccpresident2007@yahoo.com).

*The Capital City Cyclists' club jersey from 1999 (right) was produced when Dave Crawford and Martha Cunningham were co-presidents.*



*The new club jersey is pictured above from the front. The logos of Spaghetti 100 and TOSRV are on the sleeves. The rearview (below) displays the graphics of local bike shops on the pockets.*





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*Editor's Note: opinions expressed in The Cyclist reflect the viewpoint of the writer and not necessarily those of the Capital City Cyclist's executive committee or other members. Columns, articles and photos pertaining to cycling are welcomed and encouraged. Submit yours to dave@cccyclists.org. Please shrink photos to 800 X 600 or less.*



Club member Janine Callahan, right, and her cycle-tourist friends from Jacksonville experience the great riding of Tom Brown Park in front of the Goose Pond Trail entrance to the Gun Loop and Magnolia Trails. The trails are endangered by a major office-building construction project on 42 acres of recreational parkland.



## CCC rewards area bicycle-commuters

by Mark Koch

In recognition of Bike Month, the Capital City Cyclists asked for nominations for a club-sponsored program to acknowledge local riders who use bicycles for transportation. Below are the nominees who will receive bike-commuter recognition awards:

**Judy Lazzarini** has been commuting to work, shopping, parties and just about everywhere she and David Stotts go – “and has been doing this for 15+ years,” says Jane Mann.

**Charles Pahl** also does his commuting by bike. Unfortunately, pedaling home from work last winter he was hit by a car on Weems Rd. and suffered a broken leg. He is, however, back to commuting by bike again.

**Tom Gillis** has been commuting by bicycle since his car was stolen in 1993. He moved to Tallahassee three years later and commutes 6.5 miles to work and back. The environment, he says, is one of the many reasons he bike-commutes.

**Carla McDonald** also earns a commuter award. Carla moved to Tallahassee nearly two years ago and began commuting on her bike. Her car sat idle in her driveway for a few months, so she gave it away and has been bike-commuting ever since. The club member that nominated her points out that no matter the weather, the load, or the mood, Carla does it on a bike—which makes her nominator proud, and sometimes a little jealous.



*Jamie Harris, left, nominated Carla McDonald, right, for a Bike Commuter award.*

**Neil Dimacali**, one of four employees at his place of employment that commute regularly, nominated Marquis Software Development for an award. The company provides bicycle parking, a shower stall that was installed last year (at the request of cyclists), and a relaxed dress code.

**Joe Barnett** was nominated because he is devoted, encouraging, and an inspiration to all who see him out there daily. “He is a terrific supporter of commuting (by bicycle)

in our community,” said his nominator.

**Chris Lacher** has an unusual bike commute of 12 miles. He begins by cycling five miles from his home on Lake Shore Drive to the FSU campus where he puts his bike in a van and caravans with other faculty to Panama City. At the FSU campus in PC, Chris pedals to his office and prepares for teaching a night class. After class he then saddles up and cycles the seven miles, at night, over the Hathaway bridge to Panama City Beach where his home-away-from-home is located.



*Jennifer Koch presents a Bike Commuter award to Jason Ottinger at the Bastille Day potluck at Piney-Z's pavillion.*

**Jon Ausman** sold his car so he is totally dependent on foot or bike. He has been bike commuting to work at DOT's Transit Office for two years. “Regardless of the temperature,” his wife says, “in January or the rains that fell, Jon cruised into work on one of his Trek 5200s every day. He got a locker at FDOT to store his suits, used the shower room on rainy days and enjoyed riding to the point he started to race in local senior games throughout Florida.” He never complains, rides sensibly and has only had one incident: he got knocked down by a truck once on North Monroe Street, which wrecked the bike. Jon had to jerry-rig it to get home, his wife reports.

**Fran Dwyer** realized that a four mile ride to her work at the hospital would eliminate several of her challenges, such as how to send her children to the orthodontist and to college; and how to stay healthy and relaxed for her stressful job as head nurse of a busy floor. She had to force herself at first because so many considered commuting by bike to be very weird. Fran is retired now, but her errands and shopping are still so much easier by bike. There are no parking problems, and she never has to get in a hot car. “I don't win any races,” she says, “and folks may still think I'm weird but, it's the only way to go!”

**Steve Vancore, Neil Walter, Lori McKnight and Jason Ottinger** were also nominated. Nominees that are in the club will receive gift certificates to New Leaf Market; those nominated by club members but were not themselves in the club will receive free one-year club memberships.

Chris Lacher's Commuter Chronicles:

## Commuting and Riding in Tucson



This past July my wife Kathy and I were in Tucson, Arizona visiting daughter Laurel's bike-commuting family: hubby Mike, daughter Daphne, and another girl WELL on the way. They all say "hi" to you who know them.

Laurel, Mike and Daphne live in the old barrio just south of downtown. Mike bought 1/2 block there at low urban-renewal prices and built some adobe residences where they now call home. The area is well on the way to gentrification - good cafes, pubs and bistros within walking distance - but retains a lot of the barrio flavor. It's a very interesting area to visit.

### Commuting

Mike commutes by bike the approximately five miles to his business, Geosystems Analysis, Inc. I rode with him a couple of times. He hops on the Santa Cruz River Bikeway a few blocks from home and rides north along the river all the way to his offices. He exits the bikeway, crosses a parking lot, and he's there. The only streets he has to share with motorized vehicles are the three-four blocks from home to the bikeway. It is as if our St Marks Trail took you from, say, a residence in Midtown to a business near the airport.

On both of these trips, I saw a lot of wildlife, including the famous road runners. I even passed a road runner once. This has to be harder than passing a Harley, right? What an unbelievable commute!

Mike sometimes bikes Daphne to school, which means a few more blocks on city streets. I rode the school-commute streets, and they are quite calm. Daphne rides in a rear rack-mounted child's seat or in a Burley trailer.

Laurel works out of home and bike commutes to the YMCA for swimming and other workouts, and to stores for shopping. She also takes Daphne by bike to the Y for a swim.

### The Guest Bike

Laurel and Mike have a guest bike in my size. From Mike's riding my spare bike when he visits in Tallahassee, they knew that Mike's spare would fit me. I mentioned something about liking low gears for the hills. They said "oh, it has very low gears, all you should need." A 39x23 was the lowest. Oh well. I'll treat the guest bike to a compact crank on the next trip.

It's a luxury to have a guest bike when you visit. I recommend this practice to everyone. It's a great excuse to get yourself another bike and keep the current one for guests. It's great for you, great for guests, great for the bike shop, all around greatness. Be a good host: buy more bikes!

### Other Rides

There are some excellent rides from downtown Tucson. My favorite is the 30-mile loop that goes through Tucson Mountain Park and Old Tucson and returns by climbing Gates Pass. The pass is like a desert version of Wolf Pen Gap and was a challenge on the 39x23. An additional 10-mile

option goes through Saguaro National Park and past the Arizona Desert Museum. The route consists of quiet roads, interesting hilly terrain and amazing desert scenery. You can make a day of it by stopping at the Desert Museum. Do the all-day trip in spring, fall or winter.

Summer riding starts early in Arizona. They don't do daylight savings time, so it is light at 5:00 am, and of course HOT by 10:00 am. Best rides are 5:00 - 8:00 am. But that works for us - just stay on Tallahassee time, and the ride is 8:00am - 11:00am, as far as your sleep cycle can tell.

### Cisterns

Laurel just had two cisterns installed that catch the roof runoff for use as water for the yard and possibly an outdoor shower. This makes a lot of sense in Arizona, which is coming out of its unusually wet last few decades. At first I didn't get it. Water is water. But the point, she says, is that watering plants using municipal water means using ground water (i.e., well water from the aquifer) for a surface water job. The ground water that goes down the sewer is recycled by pumping back to the aquifer after treatment, but if you pour it on the ground it is essentially transferred to the surface system. Rainwater on the other hand is surface water, so pouring it on the ground is keeping it in the same system. I think I got this right.

### Visiting Christine & Marty

An old friend of Laurel's is back in Tucson as president of Genuine Innovations, makers of various CO2 inflation systems for bicycle tires. I met Marty several years ago, back when he was supporting his competitive cycling doing the product rep thing. Now settled, he and wife Christine remain gifted and dedicated athletes.

I was impressed with the bike shop Marty has set up, taking the space where a more typical family would keep the second car. They have about 7 bikes, down from 17 they brought in when they moved from California to Arizona. The shop has good working space, pro-level tools and the top-line Park work stand with a massive metal plate base. Marty has mounted this onto a low wooden frame on rollers, so he can easily move the stand to the center of the shop for work but roll it out of the way otherwise. Good idea, and it works. The shop is also well organized, neat, and clean, so projects start right up.

Marty commutes seven or eight miles on city roads every day from his home to work at Genuine Innovations near the Tucson airport. His commuter is a Surly Cross Check with 700-32 tires. We agreed that having off-road-capable tires on a commuter is an under-rated safety feature which allows concentration on traffic and not so much on minor road hazards. Quick-handling and hardy cyclocross bikes are excellent for commuting.

### Wile E. Biker Recommends

If you get a chance, visit Tucson and do some biking. Even pretending to commute is fun. And where else can you ride up a good gap and see a road runner the same day?

## Cycling through the cold and rain of Alsace, France in July

By Kevin Sossong

We thought that we knew what we were doing. We did research, got a few good maps, sent away for oodles of tourist information and checked a bunch of websites. The weather was supposed to be hot and dry. So why did we spend the first two weeks of our trip to the Alsace region of France wearing wool, trying to keep out of the rain, sweating in our rain jackets as we climbed and using hot chocolate as first aid?

Our bike trip sounds romantic. Three weeks cycling 450 miles around Alsace with my wife, Susan, and 8 year old son, Dominick on our “bicycle built for three.” The reality was a bit different. Don’t get me wrong, I love what we do. The challenges that we face as a family make us strong enough to face down even the largest slug oozing it’s way across our tent. But when the weather is uncooperative, the challenges can suck some of the joy from even our upbeat little troupe.

Weather.com kept telling us that we would have a couple days of cold, rainy weather but that 89 degrees and sun would arrive shortly. Historically, this area of France is supposed to be hot and sunny during June and July with vineyards and corn being the predominant crops. Well, it took nearly two weeks of riding in temperatures that rarely got above 60 degrees before the sun finally arrived to broil us on some tough climbs.

We started in Strasbourg, leaving the suitcases at the hotel for our return. We ride a Rodriguez triple with S&S couplings and pull a Burley Solo cargo trailer. Our luggage is substantial, so we need to find a hotel willing to store it until we return. Susan spent many hours at home planning a route that wove together a bunch of recommended day rides with several of the improved canal tow-paths. Our basic route took us north to Wissembourg and south to Ferrette. We stayed out of the highest mountains, so our climbing was limited. Though, to be fair, any climb pulling a loaded trailer behind the triple is a real effort.

Lembach brought us our all-time favorite ruin of Castle Fleckenstein. This is a tall, narrow, 300-meter-long sandstone monolith sticking up from a forested hillside. Part troglodyte dug-out, part man-made castle, it was near perfect. After we walked through all of the various nooks and crannies, Dominick braved the wind-driven rain and hypothermic temperatures to walk the exposed ramparts. His more sensible parents huddled near the top, trying to keep out of the rain and keep each other warm. It is kind of funny how a high point can so closely follow a low point in a trip. The night before, we had to move our tent to higher ground as the regularly spaced downpours overwhelmed the campground’s drainage system.

Undaunted, though a bit wet, we rode south-west toward Saverne. The weather continued to frustrate our attempts

to ride comfortably, especially in the hills. It would be cold and rainy for most of the day, but have occasional 30-minute stretches of blue skies with a hot sun. Was it better to keep the rain jackets on and get drenched with sweat or keep riding and get wet from the rain? Let’s not mention the lactic acid burn whenever we started riding again. Oww! We went over our highest Col on a day like this. The sign at the top said 573 meters, but I didn’t get a picture because of the downpour at the time.



As we rode between Saverne and Barr, we stopped for lunch in a small town to walk through an art festival. This is usually a challenge for me. Sometimes we decide to not leave the bike and I end up having to carefully wheel the 10’-10” long bike plus 3’-4” trailer through crowded, narrow streets. The work of one artist caught our eye with a very precise painting technique that we had never seen before. We decided that we couldn’t leave without two of her works. Fortunately, her canvases are fairly small, so we convinced ourselves that we could keep them safe and dry for the next two weeks. Bubbled and bagged, we managed, though not without daily concern.

Our next great stop was at Montagne des Singes (Mountain of Monkeys), located halfway up Haut Koenigsbourg. This is a fenced preserve for Barbary Macaques where we got to walk around (stay on the path, don’t touch the monkeys) and hand-feed them popcorn. For the most part, they were very polite, gently picking single pieces from our outstretched hands. One large male was a bit rude to Susan, grabbing at her other hand that held her main stash of popcorn. I’m glad that he ran off before I could even think about being chivalrous. Even though he only came up to my knee, he could have easily kicked my butt, without using his canines.

After the monkeys, we got back on the bike and climbed for the next 45 minutes to the 800-meter top of Haut Koenigsbourg. This was a great climb, especially since we had left the trailer at the campground and were riding “light.” We kept our pace steady as people shouted “Bon Courage” when we passed them by. At the top, there is a very large castle that was restored in the early 1900’s

*Continued on page 6*

*Alsace,  
continued*



under Kaiser Wilhelm's guidance. Susan and I enjoyed touring it, but Dominick declared that it was "too restored" and tried to hurry us through. As you can imagine, the Kaiser's ego was apparent in some of the restoration. Especially in a huge eagle motif painted on a barrel vaulted ceiling in the dining hall.

Further south in Hunawirh, we visited a breeding preserve dedicated to the reintroduction of the white stork to the region. To pay the bills, they also had a "spectacle" that showed how cormorants, otters, penguins and sea lions fish for their dinner. It was fascinating watching the animals hunt down the live fish that were thrown into a huge pool. All of the animals were quick, but the sea lion was like lightning. There were laughs all around as an eel kept escaping from the cormorant's throat when it went for an "extra" fish. I don't think that live fish would go over at Sea World, but the actual hunt and kill were the real education.

Our southern-most point was another castle ruin in Ferrette. We locked the bike and hiked up a very steep path to reach the ruin. Fortunately, the weather had finally turned from hypothermic to hot and sunny. Unfortunately, Dominick declared that the ruin was "too ruined." There is just no pleasing some people. The panoramic view from the top was worth the hike and, frankly, almost anything would have been worth doing on a hot, sunny day.

We were still in the hills as we climbed our way 42 miles north to Mulhouse. This day really wiped us out with us bonking about 5 miles out. Mulhouse is a gorgeous little city, complete with several tram lines for public transportation. We took a day off to tour the Musee du Chemin de Fer (the largest train museum in Europe). It was started by three rich guys with a love for trains and now includes around one hundred locomotives and rail cars, all in pristine condition. Who knew that Bugatti designed things other than fast cars and motorcycles? Dominick was finally able to slip into his Speedo at the campground's pool. He lasted about two minutes in the unheated water. He swears that he bumped into icebergs while swimming in the deep end! Oh, we also saw the perfect trailer being pulled by two Germans on a tandem. Every design detail was just right, including the wheels that pop off in about 2 seconds. It can be found at [radicaldesign.nl](http://radicaldesign.nl). Sadly, it is about 20% too small for us.

Oh, one thing about Alsace that I should mention. Yes, this is France, but the German influence is in everything that we experienced. Most of the town names are more German than French, the historic timber and stucco architecture has strong German influence, and the language

is a mixture of both. Even the food isn't pure "French." All but two croissants were much heavier versions of the light and flakey croissants that we have eaten on previous trips. Most of them even included a light sugar glaze on top. Here the German influence was clearly not an improvement. The selection of sausages, however, was excellent.

Continuing north into Colmar, our tourist antennae really started blinking. The town was mostly spared from destruction during WWII, so charming city views are as common as baguettes in a boulangerie. Our main goal was to visit the Bartholdi Museum. This guy was no "one-hit-wonder" with his Statue of Liberty. The depth and quality of his work was incredible and included many examples of his painting skills. They had several glass cases that showed the many study models he created as he developed and refined each of his commissions. The room devoted to the Statue of Liberty many study models and included a life-size cast of an ear, which was almost as tall as Susan.

As our time was winding down, we decided to do the 60 flat miles between Colmar and Strasbourg in one day. This was mostly Dominick's idea. About half of the route is along improved canal tow paths and he wanted us to "fly" along at top speed. And fly we did. We actually raised our average speed by half a mile per hour in a single day. In fact, we were feeling so good that we detoured to Geispolsheim to visit the Musee les Secrets du Chocolat.

After leaving with a better understanding of the wheres and hows of making chocolate (including a chocolatier making a hollow kitten), and with some really tasty souvenirs, we rode through Strasbourg to our final night in a campground.

Strasbourg is a lovely city. We stayed in the "old" section, which meant that a lot of stuff was in walking distance, although we did take the trams a bunch. After cleaning and re-packing the bike (about three hours of fun), we had a day and a half to enjoy the city. The Musee D'Art Moderne was our last bit of organized culture. Some of the work was great, especially the Impressionist paintings, but our overall impression was "What else is there?"

Souvenir shopping was our final goal for our further investigation of the city. Susan bought several dresses, Dominick found some stylish sunglasses, and I have a new fountain pen. We also found a little cheese shop on a narrow street that sold the richest chocolate mousse that I have ever tasted. It was so good, we went back for seconds. I don't think we need to return to Alsace, but part of our reaction must be colored by the weather that we endured. Perhaps next year you will find warm, sunny days and cool, star-lit nights for your tour. Who knows what our new reality of Climate Change will bring?

If you are interested in any further particulars, feel free to e-mail me at [Sossong@architecturebydesign.com](mailto:Sossong@architecturebydesign.com).

## Part 4 Fiction

### Sketch



V. Losiped

Frannie Flippit stood in the empty house and saw potential. She would have to knock out some walls to open the place up a bit, install an island, tile the countertops, and add crown molding. She could easily talk this house down to the one-fifty range. Throw twenty into it, and resell it for two-thirty. She was on her way into the yard when she noticed a kid in the road on a bike.

He was sitting on it normally, but he was rolling backwards and weaving back and forth down a hill, head bent around to see where he was going. He kept it going like this all the way down the street, then popped the front end around so that he was facing correctly, then hooked a right at the stop sign.

Don't see that everyday, Frannie thought. She wondered if a neighbor like that could add to the value of the house but dismissed it as a negative. Not in Killlearn Estates anyway.

She thought a moment, grabbed her cell, and dialed a cycling friend. "Mooney? Fran—Hey, what'd you say that kid looked like?"

Mooney had her curious. She got into her truck and drove up Tralee. What would she say if she saw him? It didn't matter—she turned right on Shamrock and the kid went the other way.

Sid Shownov saw the same rider forty-five minutes later at the BMX track at Tom Brown Park. The kid had just popped up out of nowhere on the starting gate with hair that Sid had first mistook for a whacked-out skidlid.

Happy to have an audience, Sid pedaled down the hill at full tilt. He lifted over the step-jump, powered low over the tabletop, and flew into the gravel turn at Single-A Pro speeds that few in Tallahassee could match. He cleared the triple and pedaled out of the landing; then hit the small tabletop, spun an aerial 360 and landed it clean.

Sid cut left before the next berm and coasted back up the face of the starting gate. How do you like me now? he thought and looked at the kid accordingly.

But the newcomer gave no nod or comment on Sid's cycling prowess. Instead, the kid rolled down the starting hill and coasted along each straightaway. Sid was about to dismiss him as a nobody, but then dropped his jaw in shock: the kid pulled his front wheel up out of the last turn, and kept it up over all six roller-jumps all the way to the finish line without dropping it once.

"Sick!" said Sid, and from a rider accustomed to receiving sick, giving out a sick himself was saying a lot.

Did he race? Was he new in town? What? These were the multiple thoughts that sailed through Sid—whose only skill was spotlighted while pedaling a bike...

But Sketch wasn't returning for another lap. He was on his way to Weems, in fact. He hooked a left before the railroad tracks, pedaled towards the National Guard, got on the Fern trail, and then zipped under the Capital Circle overpass, where ten minutes later a male Boxer named Sergeant was looking for squirrels.

The dog had been inside all day drooling at the windows. Squirrels were in the limbs and on the fence eating nuts and thrusting their bushy tails to and fro. They taunted him endlessly as he paced from one window to the next.

Walks like these were his only chance. He saw so many while inside, yet none now that he was not. It was a desperate situation, one that he couldn't figure out. He looked from tree to tree, frustrated to the point of panic. So when he saw Sketch ride along on a bike he gave chase without hesitation.

As luck would have it, eight year-old Karen didn't have the weight to match. The Boxer easily broke free, which sent the little girl frantically back to the house.

It had been her mom's idea. She just wanted both out from under her feet. Now she came barreling out of the house with her hands on her head, slowly grasping yet another problem that crept into her already hectic life. She sent the child into the house and called for the dog. He'd get hit on Park for sure one of these days.

She heard barking and followed it into a nearby open gate. And there he was, on his hind legs, furiously trying to get over the back fence. A hot pink bike was lying nearby on its side, its front wheel still spinning.

"Bad!" she screamed and grabbed his leash. "Bad!" she screamed again louder, and that got him to cower—but a smile still remained on his face.

All of which made Sketch have to walk to campus. Everyone had to be out of their dorms by noon, he had read in the FSView, and he had to check three dorms before he found, at Dodd Hall, what he was looking for: A college student leaning a mountain bike against a Dumpster. A nearby Honda Civic was packed, which meant to Sketch that the bike had lost out.

On his way back home he stashed the new bike near the Fern trail and retrieved the abandoned bike at the fence. He was so happy with himself that he didn't notice the dog scratching at the window when he passed; nor Sid crashing on the last straightaway at the track. No, Sketch was completely in another world, happy and content all the way through Killlearn and onto Centerville where the honk of a horn scared him out of his skin. Only a crazy lady in a truck could top that and one did. "Could you pull over a sec?" she asked, and Sketch did just that—he bunny-hopped over the ditch and pedaled into the woods lickedy-split.

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V. Losiped

## A Cyber-cycling Romance

I checked my email one morning at work, and I immediately wished that I hadn't. Nothing from Mrs2Ms. No email in two days straight.

I was an Air Force Intelligence officer, she thought, somehow finding the time to pass back lengthy replies about my secret trips, about my lonely stays in foreign lands. I risked telling her some truthful things, such as how I was jilted by a former wife. But, my relationship with Mrs2Ms became one-sided, like telling her how hard it was to be divorced, to have my confidence crushed, to being reduced to sending emails to a woman I'd never physically met.

She was recently divorced too, in fact. To amuse me she sent me provocative pictures. Tons of them of a fake her on some fake beach. I printed out a few and taped them to my computer at home, right next to the false pictures I had sent of me: one in Russia as an exchange student; another on my motorcycle, helmeted and flying a dozen feet above the ground.

For her, she said, it was enough to have the companionship. When we chatted from home, she always asked which channels I had on and told me she'd watch the same. She'd listen to the same CDs. She asked me my routines and even guessed some before I could type a reply. Things were great between us, and I can honestly say I was content. We grew more serious, promising just after the first month not to email others behind each other's backs. It wasn't marriage—I had failed at that—but it had its pluses. I mean, if we were having a disagreement, I could just log off. Stuff like that.

But then she kept asking for more, asking to meet. I had lied about so much that I couldn't. It was too soon after my divorce. I made delays by telling her that I was not in the country. I invited her out on an Instant Message date instead. We sipped wine, nibbled on cheese, and chatted all night—she from “Philadelphia,” me from “Kuwait”.

But she'd ask me for more pictures, even hinted that I should send some that were real. I did a quick search on some military recruiting sites, right clicked, saved some images onto my hard drive, and sent them to her as my own. It backfired—one showed my blue eyes, but I had already told her mine were brown. After that she openly questioned everything that I sent, breaking chat etiquette.

We became estranged, but we still went through the motions of our routine chats. A huge time lag began to develop between us—what I sent, and what she sent back. I wondered if she was giving up, or if she had found another chat partner—someone else exclusive. I began to suspect this until I had myself convinced. She had another one-on-one chat window up alongside the one she had of us! She probably had multiple windows open at once! I

wanted to ask but was afraid to know. It was getting harder to concentrate on anything else. I couldn't sleep. I started to pace. As a test, I sent rapid questions in succession, but she neglected to address them all. She gave replies to some questions that I didn't even send! I right-clicked and left-clicked on everything possible. Nothing would chase away my suspicions. Finally, I asked her flat out. She said that even if she was, she had every right. She gave me one last chance for me to quit the cyber stuff and become her real-life man. Instead of a decision, I didn't reply. I wanted to but couldn't!

Finally, I sent an email to Mrs2Ms reversing blame. I told her one day without word was neglect; two was a break-up. I asked her to never email me again.

I knew that the best way to get over someone was to meet someone else, so I returned to some chatrooms of my pre-Mrs2Ms haunts. My heart wasn't into it, and I gave up. I had a new Boxer puppy I named Cooper at home, so I left work early, and used him as the excuse.  
\* \* \*

I have to commute to work on my bike. It's large and has shocks; it's muddy and takes up most of my free space near my desk.

When I arrived at my door, my neighbor was just getting out of her car, so I slipped inside as fast as I could. She had moved into the complex about seven months ago, was a redhead, and was short and round like me. I wasn't sure, but I thought I had once seen her limp.

I moved the blinds aside and watched her go to her door. When I first noticed her move in I thought I was in luck—surely I could hook up with my neighbor. But as the days passed we just kept missing each other. We seemed to have the same hours, but I had to take the bike to work, so I left earlier. By the time I got home, she'd already be there, parked in a different spot. As it turned out, we only spoke once. It became a botched attempt at conversation while both of us were taking out the trash. Feeling debonair, I had swung my bag around and around and let it fly. I missed the dumpster by a mile, and was so embarrassed that I shot straight back inside and slammed the door. Then I heard two bags hit the metal bottom. She had tossed in both hers and mine.

Maybe it was time to give the real-world stuff another try? I could use humor, I decided, the same kind of stuff I learned to use online. I went with that thought for awhile until by evening I had myself pacing, brain storming ideas, and pumping myself up. By midnight I had myself convinced that there was no way that she could turn down such a handsome bastard such as me.

The first thing in the morning I marched over and taped a little note to her knob. “Hey neighbor!” it said. “I'd take you to dinner if you tell me your name.” Later that day that same note was on mine. “Sheryl,” it said, “I just saved you twenty bucks.”

I pushed my bike inside and let it drop to the floor. I  
*continued on next page*

stood right there, reading that little note over and over, until I manage to blame the whole thing on my ex-wife.

The next morning I taped another note.

“Let’s see a movie and I’ll tell you mine.”

After work there was no reply. Was she even home? I cupped my ear to the adjacent wall of our apartments and listened for movement. She was playing her answering machine, but it sounded like the caller hung up. I heard her go to her fridge, heard her set something down. Minutes later the familiar chimes of Microsoft played out, then a modem dialed and hooked up. She was online!

\* \* \*

Those who frequent the Net as often as I have learned to do since my divorce usually have numerous email accounts and chat room screen names. When Mrs2Ms picked me up, I had only my original—a legit one that had anyone clicked in the right places it would have revealed my true name and address. My neighbor always had her bike on her car rack, I had noticed, so I created the screen name TalliCyclist2007 and a profile that advertised that I was a grad student at nearby Florida State. I knew my neighbors address, of course, and I had her name from misplaced junk mail I had tossed aside. I plugged the right info into right searches, hoping she’d have at least a Hotmail or Yahoo! account.

I was in luck! I found her screen name and entered it into my chat program’s buddy list. Blondie\_19 lit up.

I found Cooper and put him in my lap. I needed a clever pickup line and then I typed it out:

TalliCyclist2007: I have never kissed a blond girl before.

Blondie\_19: Do I know you?

TalliCyclist2007: No. Would you like to?

Blondie\_19: You have something against blonds or something? All those jokes aren’t really, true!

I told her that my blond hair and blue eyes that I didn’t have always seemed to attract dark haired ladies. Truth was, I had only one real woman in my past—my ex wife. My neighbor wasn’t blonde either, so I didn’t feel bad telling her this.

Blondie\_19: btw I live Tallahassee too. I cycle too

TalliCyclist2007: Really?

Blondie\_19: yes. What kind of bike do you have? Do you go road or off-road?

TalliCyclist2007: Road. Magna.

Blondie\_19: Don’t they sell those at Walmart? Do you have any pictures of yourself?

Relieved to get off the topic of bikes, I sent her a blurry picture I always used when I met people online. I wanted to start the relationship without creating myself into a facial and physiological corner. That way, if she said she preferred tall men, I was free to cater to that. There was a long pause—too long, actually. Finally, she sent me a picture of a model in lingerie. I have to admit, her doing this felt like a sucker punch. Up until this point I had thought she was

neat. I liked living as someone else on line, but I was tiring of being lied to myself.

Still, we fell into the same routine as all the others I had met online, and within a few days I felt I had her telling me some truthful stuff. She was an only child trying to live up to all her parents’ standards. Two years ago she had been date-raped. A dog jumped into her “paceline” one Sunday morning. She and three friends went down, and she’s been limping ever since. She was divorced. She dyed her hair and hated it.

I found myself looking forward to going home, but only because she’d be in hers, logged on and waiting for me. I asked her what channels she watched, the music she liked. When we chatted I played the same. She invited me to come along on bike club rides with her friends—one called Chaires, and another called Cabos—and I agreed to them, but then managed to wiggle out and never showing up. She stopped asking, and within a month we had advanced to chatting about day-to-day trivial things that both of us seemed totally interested in.

I began to notice the sounds she made from her apartment when before I hadn’t. Which room she was in, a glass being set down, a drawer closing with a smack. I figured out that the weird noise she made on the weekends was her bike pump. When we weren’t online, hearing her movements was a comfort. When I shaved I could hear her blow-drying her hair, facing herself and me. Every night we’d brush our teeth, then go to sleep.

I was the perfect cyber husband.

She the best cyber wife.

Then one evening while we were chatting I heard glass break. She must have dropped a cup.

Oh, Shoot! She typed.

Don’t cut yourself, I sent back.

I sat, waiting and waiting, but there was no reply. Ten minutes must have passed—still there was no reply, nor any sounds at all. Then I read my last line that I’d sent. I covered my face with my hands, and read the line over and over. I tried to right click, left click, to unsend. But, surely, the damage was done. I had left my front door cracked open, and I heard hers open and shut. I dropped to the floor, crawled under the desk, and pulled the plug. I was still down there by the time the knock at the door came. I was balled up pretty tight when she said, “Does Magna even make road bikes? I was on to you from the start.” I heard the door open all the way. Suddenly, I became conscious of the dishes stacked on the counters and in the sink, the CDs all over the floor, the magazines all over the place. I didn’t own a vacuum cleaner or garbage can, and I had plastic grocery bags stuffed with trash tied to every counter drawer in the kitchen. She was the only other person ever to come into my apartment except me, I realized. “Oooh, aren’t you cute.” She must have found the dog.

I could smell her perfume, hear her without really hearing. Displacing air, I guessed. “It’s funny,” she said.

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“When you first moved in...you were a real mess. You looked lost...like, like you didn’t know how to do stuff. I knew that look.” Her legs came into view, and I wondered what she would think, after all the lies, finding me hiding like a coward under a desk of all places, in an apartment as disgusting as this. My heart beat so fast and hard that I could feel it in my feet and on the tips of my ears. She stopped right in front of the desk, pivoted around backwards, then forwards, then stopped facing me again. Cooper came out of nowhere, boxed at her feet. He then noticed me and yelped. She had on Crocs, I will always remember. Part of me wondered how her feet stayed within them, until she moved my desk chair aside, bent lower and stared into my face. I had never been so ashamed in my life! This is what I had been reduced to; what a divorce can lead to, everything obtained and achieved in little over a quarter of a century, bent double and packed under second-hand furniture, and betrayed by the only creature in the world that up to that moment I thought was aligned only with me.

“Don’t cry,” she whispered. “It’s part my fault.” She sat down and tucked the dog up against her check. We stayed there for a while, sometimes staring at each other, sometimes not. She set the puppy down and he scampered away, probably to find another place to poop.

Her face, I noticed, was rounder than I had thought. Her hair fuller. She had been such a large part of my life to that point that realizing this was a shock. Is this what it feels like to be Punk’d?

“After you moved in I tried to get to know you, but you just moped around in your own funk. But I didn’t blame you—not then.” She studied walls, the layout of my apartment from that vantage point. “I didn’t want to...to grieve anymore, either.” She wiped her face with the back of her hand and reached out for me. I hesitated, but allowed it, and she pulled me out of my hiding spot and into a hug. “I should have just told you that I knew you were my neighbor. I was just so surprised, because I did it to you, too. And I was still too mad at you, I guess.”

She was much more bosomy than I was used to, and it all just felt so foreign, so wrong. I pulled myself away, and I must have bumped my bike because it fell over and we both jumped. Even the dog barked.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“You’ve been such a great comfort,” she said between laughs, “and I really thank you for that.”

I tried again: “Mad at me for what?”

“Mad at you for what you did to me when I was Mrs2Ms.”

I must admit it took a tick or two for this to digest. For her to be both Blondie\_19 and Mrs2Ms meant that I had been communicating with her for over four months. Had she searched me out using my name and address? Just like I did to her? I tried to compare the first two months with the second two months and nothing stood out. Nothing different; nothing the same. I was always in such a hurry to get to my computer, and now, looking back at it, I can’t say why and

for what. Nothing substantial, at any rate.

This whole business revolted me and I had had enough. Not against her, but at what my life had become.

I righted the bike, helped her up, and pointed towards the open door.

“You got’a be kidding me, right?” I couldn’t get her to leave fast enough, and I refrained from slamming the door. I methodically dismantled the computer, cable by cable, then the mouse. I bagged the cords and slid the CPU and under my bed. Then I pushed the monitor into the corner.

I’d have to move as well, of course.

\* \* \*

But, as it turned out, I didn’t. Instead, I avoided her. A week went by, then a month. The open space on my desk took awhile to get used to, and I bought a garbage can and tossed in it a lot of stuff. I took Cooper for walks down to San Luis Mission Park, but I had to carry him back. For him it was...What? With those little legs a thousand times further for him than for me. He was close to being potty trained, but for some reason he kept peeing on the bed during the night. Even though I knew better, huddling up together was all that I now had.

Then one Saturday afternoon there came a bang at my door. I had been jumping up and down on my bed and laughing at the puppy miss-timing his bites at my toes.

My neighbor was at the door. She was wearing bike clothes that I remember thinking I’d never wear, though now I own three similar outfits myself. I noticed that her car was half out of the parking spot. The engine was running, and her Specialized was on the rack.

“Get your bike,” was all that she said.

\* \* \*

She took me to Tom Brown Park and showed me the trails. Magnolia, Fern, and Cadillac. I worried that she’d bring up what I had done, but talking was impossible. Fortunately, it was because I couldn’t keep up. She rode right over logs, crossed over small bridges, and zigzagged down the single track trails and lost me a half a dozen times. I’d come around the corner and there’d she’d be, on her bike and leaning against a tree, looking back at me and shaking her head as if to say, Loose weight, buddy. You’re a disgrace to yourself! But then she said this: “It’s not you, it’s the bike.”

It was the first time that I had ever really thought of cycling as more than just a way to get somewhere—as an adult at least. This trail-riding stuff was new to me, and I had problems NOT hitting trees in the sharp turns. Or I’d be too far up the hill until I remembered to shift to an easier gear. When I rode to work I tended to get there without realizing the ride, but with this Rambo stuff you really had to be in the moment. The only thing you could really think about was the line you had better take to get around the sand and over the ruts, or to overcome whichever valley, sputter, or drops that snuck up. And for me, focusing on these, rather than my own, was what I really needed most.

v.losiped@yahoo.com

## *Road Ride Schedule*

A=Race(>21) B=Fast(18-21) C=Medium(15-18) D=Slow(12-14) EZ=Easy Rider(<12) YOYO=You're On Your Own

**The Chaires and Cabo's rides are not official Club rides; are not sagged, swept nor managed; and are strictly ride at your own risk and responsibility. Maps for most rides can be found on the Club's website [www.cccyclists.org](http://www.cccyclists.org)**

RECURRING RIDES	MILES/ LEVEL	CONTACT/ PHONE	START	COMMENTS
Every Friday 6:00 PM	Recreational, family ride	YOYO	St. Marks Trailhead	Friday night social ride - Ride as far as you like, everyone welcome!
Every Sat 7:30 AM	20/31/45 A B C	YOYO	Chaires Elementary School (4774 Chaires Cross Road)	Chaires-Waukeenah-Wacissa Loop
Every Sun 7:30 AM	20/38/51 A B C	YOYO. Info: Peter Stone 942-9095	Cabo's Grill parking lot, corner of Apalachee Pwky & Magnolia	Cabo's Breakfast Ride B & C riders bring partner.
DATE/TIME	MILES/ LEVEL	LEADER/ PHONE	START	COMMENTS
Sun Aug 26 7:30 AM	27 C D	Jim Mann 422-0302	Chaires Elementary School 4774 Chaires Cross Road	Chaires-Waukeenah-Wacissa Loop
	41 B C	YOYO with map provided		
Sun Sep 2 8:00 AM	TBD ALL	Nancy Wright 422-2756	Bruegger's Bagels, Carriage Gate Shopping Center. Use center of lot for parking to avoid interference with bagel customers. 3425 Thomasville Road	Bruegger's (with relaxed option) - Short ride a relaxed pace. Group stays together and decides on distance.
	36 B C	YOYO with map provided		
Sun Sep 9 8:00 AM	21 C D	Tom Strazulla 539-9598	Calvary, GA. North on Hwy 27 thru Havana to Hwy 111 turn right, then 3 miles to flashing light. Turn left.	Calvary to Climax with option for a shorter route
	34 B C	YOYO with map provided		
Sun Sep 16 8:00 AM	26 C D	Dave Crawford & Martha Cunningham 386-1805	Tom Brown Park - turn at BMX sign, park about half way down main road in the grass on the left 745 Easterwood Drive	Tour d'Chaires
	37 B C	YOYO with map provided		

**Save the Trails!**

**Once they are gone,**

**They are gone forever.**



For information on out of town rides, visit the Florida Bicycle Touring Calendar online at <http://www.floridabicycle.org/fbtc/>

## What's Inside

- 1 President's Paceline/New Club jerseys
- 2 Executive Board/Bike Shops
- 3 Commuter Awards Presentation
- 4 Commuting and Riding in Tucson
- 5-6 Touring in Alsace by Triple Tandem
- 7 Sketch - Part 4 - fiction
- 8-10 Blondie\_19 - fiction
- 11 Road Ride Schedule

## Local Upcoming Events

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| September 15-16 | MTB Races in Tom Brown Park sponsored by Goneriding and Higher Ground |
| September 22-23 | MTB Races in Tom Brown Park sponsored by FSU Cycling                  |
| September 24-28 | Commuter Choices Week?  |



Capital City Cyclists  
P. O. Box 4222  
Tallahassee, FL 32315-4222

[www.cccyclists.org](http://www.cccyclists.org)

PLEASE FORWARD



*Capital City Cyclists is a member organization of the League of American Bicyclists, Adventure Cycling, the International Mountain Bicycling Association, and the Florida Bicycle Association.*

### Is your address current?

If you see a yellow label up above, we don't have your current address. You can update your address by logging onto the members area on the club's website [www.cccyclists.org](http://www.cccyclists.org).

Contact the Membership Director at [marvinr@cccyclists.org](mailto:marvinr@cccyclists.org) for further assistance.