



Freewheelin'

March 2004

Information & Sign Up Potluck

**Sunday, March 21
South Leisure Centre
170 Sunset Drive**

**Doors open at 5, Supper at 6
Members provide the food.
Guests enjoy.**

Bikeline Discontinued

For the past ten years, Freewheelers have picked up the phone to get the latest on Club activities. This service will be discontinued and updates about Club events will be posted to the e-group. To join the e-group go the "new stuff" page on our website and follow the links or send and e-mail to marion.perry@sasktel.net. For those few members not having e-mail, a telephone tree will be set up.

Web Page Moving

The Wascana Freewheelers now has its own domain name—wascanafreewheelers.ca. There are two new e-mail addresses: webmaster@wascanafreewheelers.ca and tours-rides@wascanafreewheelers.ca. As soon as the website is up at this address, notification will be sent via the e-group.

PDF Newsletter on Web

Except for the few without computers, this is the only paper issue of Freewheelin'. Notice will be sent by e-mail when a new edition is posted. Make sure we have your e-mail address!

Wascana Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club

P.O. Box 3833, Regina, Saskatchewan,
S4P 3R8

Web site: <http://www.wascanafreewheelers.ca>

E-mail: tours-rides@wascanafreewheelers.ca
or

webmaster@wascanafreewheelers.ca

E-group: wascanawheelers@yahoo.com

21st Annual Teddy Tour

Ride Easter weekend in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, North Dakota. It's an awesome ride in an impressive setting and a Wascana Freewheeler ritual. Camping is part of the adventure, but motel accommodation is available. Learn more at the Information and Sign Up Potluck?

Club Trailer = Wind Rides

Thanks to the hard work of Brian Fergusson, the club trailer is back in operation. Take the opportunity to ride all day with the wind at your back and then hop into the van for a ride home with your bike on the trailer. Find out more—at the Information and Sign Up Potluck.



Club Trailer at GASP, Sept. 2003
(Note: All photos in colour in PDF web edition)



In this issue...

Vuelta Cuba, Santiago to Havana.....	2
Dear Mr. D. Railler.....	6
Membership form.....	7

Vuelta Cuba, Santiago to Havana, January 2004

By Marion Perry

Cuba is the perfect winter cycling destination – warm weather, beautiful scenery, good roads and little traffic. “Vuelta Cuba” is a two-week bike trip that promises accommodation in 3 and 4 star resorts, air conditioned buses, tour guides, drivers, a bike, and bike mechanic/leader and sometime Canada Cup Downhill racer, Danny McQueen, of McQueen’s Island Tours in PEI. On impulse I booked the trip. A few days later, I was in Havana Airport at midnight milling around the conveyor belt waiting for luggage. At 2 a.m. we were on the shuttle bus us to our hotel trying to understand the guide’s explanation of the currency: pesos, convertible pesos and U.S. dollars.

Four hours later, twenty tired cyclists assembled in the hotel for breakfast. Across the street Habaneros lined up for coffee and breakfast served from the open door of a house; others waited for buses, “the camels” – transport trucks with the trailers modified for people with high sections front and back and a lower middle; there is one bus stop for those wishing a seat, and another for those wishing to stand. After breakfast, we were back onto the shuttle bus for a return trip past the wonderful ornate architecture of colonial Havana now decaying with mildew, flaking stucco, and rusting ironwork to the airport. The early morning electric lights reveal each of these buildings is occupied despite boarded-over windows and the disrepair.

After a 75-minute flight, the plane bucks and bounces as we descend to Santiago de Cuba, situated on the south east coast of Cuba next to the Sierra Maestra mountains. The noon hour sun and heat dazzle us as we emerge from the plane. Fourteen Americans and 6 Canadians squint to take in the dormant brown grass, palm trees and bright pink bougainvillea. We wait beside our mound of luggage. Eventually the two buses, guides and Danny arrive, having driven from Havana.

The Casa Grande Hotel is right on the main square of Santiago de Cuba. Our room has 18 ft

ceilings, terrazzo floors, closet doors and furniture made of dark wood inlaid with light wood, and shuttered doors opening onto a balcony. We leave our bags and drive to Baconao beach where we swim while Danny matches bikes to riders and outfits everyone with a handlebar bag or rack trunk, water bottle and a helmet. Following a short test ride, we return to the hotel’s rooftop garden for a supper buffet and to enjoy the view of the harbour, the cathedral and the square. Eventually we disperse, downstairs to the bar where a band plays, or to explore the square and the town.

Tuesday, Jan. 13th, the first day of cycling.

Across traffic lanes, around traffic circles, I follow the guide while also trying to keep my eyes on the pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, horses, trucks and cars and to hold my breath in the early morning city smog (The Cubans mix kerosene with their gas.). Finally it’s up a hill and out of town. A couple of trucks approach from behind as I climb, but they slow until it is safe to pass. Motorized vehicles generally do not feel they own the road in Cuba.

Once out of town there is little traffic except for motorcycles, horse drawn carts and the occa-



sional dump truck bus, loaded with people. Goats wander onto the road as they graze. Children in school uniforms walk to school; a man ploughs with oxen; men use machetes to cut grass or wood to make charcoal. We pass monuments naming the lost heroes of the revolution, and then a series of “attractions” perhaps built for the Cubans. There is the “Valley of 1000 Years Ago” with huge cement models of mastodons, prehistoric deer and dinosaurs, a cactus

garden, and then a huge parrot made of different coloured pebbles in a park next to the road, a road side cliff grotto full of statues, a fantasy land with a huge faded clown and fairy tale characters – all closed. After the ride, we're bussed back to the hotel for the supper buffet and the opportunity to attend a Cuban baseball game.



Wednesday, Jan. 14, Santiago to Chivirico.

About 50 km out of Santiago we started cycling. It was overcast all day and rained lightly for about the first 10 minutes of the ride. This is a beautiful ride along the coastal highway - the Caribbean is on one side, the mountains on the other. At Chivirico we turn to climb to Los Galianos Resort high above the ocean - it's 290 steps to the beach and the grade up the last 500 metres to the resort feels to be about 50%.

In Cuba there seem to be people along every km of the route even when you can't see them. It can be disconcerting as they signal to one another by whistling or you look for a secluded bush. All along the route goats, cows, tired horses, some with wooden saddles padded with straw, wander and graze.



Thursday, Jan. 15, Chivirico to Marea del Portillo, 103 km

Enjoyed the scenery – the sea, the mountains and the rural Cuban houses with roofs thatched with royal palm. After a dip at a small sandy beach, I examined my tires and wheels thoroughly. We had been warned of thorns in the



grass, and some of the others had already had flats. I found no thorns, but a tear in the tire casing and a loose spoke, so after 60 km, I decided to sag until repairs were completed. Lunch was a picnic where we were joined by skinny piglets and dogs who welcomed our leftovers. There was some concern today at cyclists not seeing van for two hours and running out of water. Most have only one bottle except for those of us who brought our "camelbaks". Accommodation – Hotel Farallon 4* – packed sand beach, nice swimming pool.

Friday, Jan. 16, Marea del Portillo, Pilon, Campechuela, Manzanillo, bus to Bayamo

After cycling the 12 km of rolling terrain to Pilon, we visited the home, now a museum, of Celia Sánchez Manduley, heroine of the revolution and close friend of Fidel. Out of Pilon, we cycled past 25 km of sugar cane fields, irrigated gardens and crops. After lunch, minor headwinds kept me cool as I passed a few flooded rice fields, and then sugar cane fields that continued most of the afternoon. Harvest of the sugar cane by combines, tractors and oxen was in progress, and workers resting in the shade of the cane made catcalls as we passed. On the road there were oxen pulling a cart with metal wheels, horse carts and lots of sugar cane trucks.

Most of us stopped cycling at Campechuela, the keen riders at Manzanillo, then we continued by

bus through cane fields and Cuban prairie to Bayamo. At Bayamo our hotel was on the Parque Céspedes where little children dressed in finery rode in goat carts around the square. That evening, music, cha cha lessons, and Bayamo cocktails (mixed fruit juices and rum) awaited us at a courtyard club. Dinner was at a paladar – a private restaurant, usually in someone's house – in this case in a courtyard covered in thatch. Paladar food is usually better than hotel food and the experience can be interesting – at times I thought there was a dog moving on the thatch above us.



Saturday, Jan. 16, Bayamo, Jiguani, Cruce de les Baños, El Saltón. There was a change of route today. Rather than cycle west through a flat corridor of sugar cane to Las Tunas, we cycled back east through open flat agricultural land, irrigated crops, and orange trees. A Cuban peeled oranges for us and refused money offered. This was outstanding generosity. The average Cuban teacher makes \$15 USD a month, labourers, \$8, and doctors about \$21. Some things in Cuba can only be had for USD, and those working outside tourism or without relatives abroad have little access to USD.

El Saltón "The Waterfall" is a mountain resort. Most riders opted for the bus somewhere before the summit. Despite running out of water, Paul, Michel and Tom rode all the way on the designated route – a steep climb. At the top the waterfall and the pool at its foot were refreshingly cool after a hot ride. When everyone was assembled for a "lunch" of roast suckling pig, beans with rice, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, bananas, mashed beans and garlic, chocolate pudding and good coffee, we realized Hassan was missing. Eventually he arrived looking absolutely wiped; he had followed the sign and taken the more challenging road. Luckily he had a camelbak as well as a bottle

and did not run out of water. From El Sultan we drove to Camaguey arriving at 9 p.m., after a scary 6-hour high speed drive along a highway lined with unlighted cyclists and pedestrians.

Sunday, Jan 18, Rest Day, Van Transfer Camaguey to Santa Clara. Camaguey was designed to confuse pirate invaders. Five or 6 streets may converge in one intersection. We toured in bicycle cabs. One of the stops was a market where Cubans sell their excess produce – tomatoes, cucumbers, pineapples, oranges onions, yucca, chickens, eggs, and pork. (On the bike-cab ride, we passed another bike-cab carrying a freshly killed pig.)

After the tour there was a long drive through the plains of Cuba to Santa Clara. People were on the roadside selling goods. Men were holding large cheeses on boards above their heads like waiters. The bus stopped to buy a cheese and then some guava paste and we were introduced to a favourite Cuban snack – 2 slices of mild, salty cheese around a slice of sweet guava paste.

At Santa Clara we toured the town square where our guides showed us the neo-classical library and other beautiful buildings. One building seems out of place - a cement high-rise from the early '50s. Here Batista's last battle versus the guerrillas took place – the bullet holes are still in the building. It was a lovely warm night, Cubans were listening to music on the square and dancing salsa.

Monday, Jan. 19, Santa Clara to Caibarién

We set out from Santa Clara through several intersections and roundabouts to the highway. Going up hill, I passed a man carrying another man on the rack of a bike with its rear wheel wobbling, so out-of-true that it should collapse any time. Most bicycles in Cuba are multi-purpose Chinese clunkers, repaired with ingenuity. During the trip I saw: a man riding with the springs for a double bed on his rear carrier, one hand on the handlebars, one on the bedsprings; a man riding down a steep hill with only his feet on the ground or in the spokes for brakes; riders holding uncovered iced cakes in the air with one hand; numerous families with dad pedalling, a 3 to 8 year-old on a wooden seat behind the stem, mom clutching another child on the rack.

At Caibarién we loaded the buses for a 35 km drive over a causeway to Cayo Los Brujas where

the water is incredibly clear, and the sugar white sand beach dazzling.

Tuesday, Jan 20, Santa Clara to Trinidad

Che Guevara is the secular saint of Cuba. Pictures and statues of him are everywhere and Santa Clara is the site of the Che Guevara monument. We started out the day visiting the monument and museum/shrine where his remains and those of 17 other Cubans who died with him in Bolivia are interred. A very solemn place – no talking, no bags, no cameras.

From the monument we cycled out of town, and began to climb into the Escambray Mountains. Lunch was at the top of very steep climb. Paul, who races bikes in Europe, made it all the way up the mountain and was rewarded with the ride down the hairpin turns into Trinidad.

There was more confusion today. Four cyclists were missing at lunch. Doug took a wrong turn; got lost and dehydrated. When the van found him he was at a pharmacy asking for coke i.e. coca cola. Asking louder in English brought Doug no coke as Cuban pharmacies consist of a counter with shelves of drugs behind. Armando (one of the guides), Tom and Hassan rode an extra 18 km taking an alternate route. The van with the luggage went back to find the missing, so there was no luggage when we arrived

at



our hotel in Trinidad. Undaunted we went for a dip in the pool, in bras and cycling shorts.

Trinidad is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The cobblestones in the old streets are made from the stones used as ballast in boats that came from Mexico in the 16th century.. There are lovely restored buildings, many restaurants, art shops, paladars, casas particulares (Cuban B&Bs), straw hat shops, beggars, and street vendors. It's a tourist centre.

Wed, Jan. 21, Trinidad

Only a 15 km ride today to a Tower where there was a "lace market," a long row of vendors selling embroidered goods. In the parking lot, we were swarmed by illegal vendors selling reversible dolls and necklaces. The police arrived and they vanished. At the visitors' centre we were given sugar



cane juice (extracted by rolling the canes through hand cranked rollers similar to a wringer washer). With lime it's refreshing and not overly sweet. After we had made our purchases, we cycled 5 km over rough gravel to visit the Cuban home of the friend of one of the cyclists. Back in Trinidad we had huge shrimp for lunch at a paladar. After lunch we went to the beach – nice but not as spectacular as others.

Thursday, Jan. 22, Trinidad to Cienfuegos, 65 km

We cycled out of Trinidad at 8 a.m. along rolling terrain beside the sea to a botanical garden where we were given a tour. Then we drove to Palacio de Valle, a fabulous Moorish Palace originally built in Cienfuegos by a sugar baron. During the Batista regime it was a casino. Today there are no casinos in Cuba; it's a restaurant where we had lunch. We checked into the Hotel Jaguar opposite the Palacio and then toured. Cienfuegos appears better maintained and more prosperous than other cities we have visited. Apparently in the 1940s and 1950s a lot of mob money poured into this place

Dinner was at a Club in Batista's former very opulent house.

Friday, Jan. 23 Cienfuegos to Havana

We left Cienfuegos by van to Yaguaramas, and then cycled 50 km of flat terrain to Playa Giron, home of the Bay of Pigs Museum. Another 8 km bike ride

and we were at Caleta Buena for lunch and an afternoon of snorkelling. The trip from here to Havana was mostly on the autopista, the major highway through Cuba – six lanes – one devoted to tractors, horse drawn vehicles and bicycles.

Saturday, Jan. 24, Havana

Toured Havana by bicycle in the morning. Traffic and group riding skills were required as we rode along the Malecon, to Revolution Square, the Havana Forest and more. Bicycles are not allowed in the tunnel under the harbour, and must take either bicycle buses or the bicycle ferry. In the past, the ferry has been hijacked twice by Cubans attempting to get to Florida. There is strict security – luggage searches – before boarding. My swiss army knife and someone else's scissors were confiscated, but the bus was sent to retrieve them. Our ride ended at a paladar in the Miramar district.

Our afternoon tour began at the ancient cemetery where Christopher Columbus was once buried. Following the cemetery, we went on a guided three-hour walking tour of Vieja Habana with the guides. Our final dinner was to be at the best restaurant in Old Havana. However, when we arrived, the buses could not get near, so we approached on foot. Police and security cordoned off all the streets and lanes within a block of the restaurant. The potentate of the Greek Orthodox Church was in town and eating at the finest restaurant in old Havana – we had been bumped. . Finally the tour company made contact with the restaurant manager who came out and made arrangements for to eat in another restaurant. It seems that all the restaurants in old Havana are run by the same European company who return a percentage of the profits to the fund to restore old Havana.



Sunday, Jan. 25 Back to the Cold.

Dear Mr. D. Railer,

I try to convince my friends / relatives / coworkers to come out for a ride but they often mention that they feel it is a risky enterprise. How can I convince them that this is not so and that cycling can be very beneficial to them?

Perplexed in Pangman

Dear Perplexed,

Here's some fuel to support what you already know - our passion for cycling does not put us at risk and will actually lengthen and enhance our lives. An on-going rider survey is being conducted by Adventure Cycling (the old Bikecentennial), a non-profit tour group out of Montana. So far about 5000 cyclists from around the world have responded. Most of them are about 40, ride between 1900 and 4000 km a year and have been riding for over 25 years. Most ride touring or racing bikes, own a mountain bike and ride "for the simple enjoyment or pleasure of riding" or for the many health and fitness benefits. They ride at an average speed of 24 kph, use lights, mirrors and helmets and ride mostly on road shoulders or bike paths.

Most "enjoy the challenge of hills" and consider poor weather to be "an easily handled nuisance". They report cycling's beneficial effect on their strength, endurance, general health and mood to be significant. When reporting on the cause, frequency and severity of any cycling injuries, most (86%) report no injuries at all with the majority of those reporting an injury rating it "very minor". Most accidents , whether or not they resulted in an injury, occurred during the afternoon while riding on a gravel surface and involved a "skid or loss of control" while travelling straight ahead. Most just "fell down" resulting in either no injury (other than to their pride!) or minor scrapes or bruises. Of the 14% who reported an accident last year, only one-tenth of one percent of those had a serious injury.

So..... relax..... enjoy! Learn the rules, wear the gear and ride with experienced cyclists. Change the life of a friend! Invite them on a ride! Watch for details of this year's "Bring a Buddy Ride" and try to find one or two possible new members this year.

Dan Railer



Saskatchewan
Cycling
Association

2205 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Sask S4P 0S4
(306) 780-9299 fax: (306) 525-4009
E-Mail: cycling@accesscomm.ca
Home Page: www.saskcycling.ca

2004 MEMBERSHIP/LICENSE APPLICATION FORM

For January 1 to December 31, 2004

Last Name: _____ First: _____ Birth date: _____
(DD/MM/YY)

Sex (M/F):__ Address: _____ City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone-H: _____ Phone-W: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail _____

Instructions: All members must complete Part A & Part B (join a cycling club) of this form & sign the waiver. Members requesting a racing license should also complete Part C and purchase a Racing Membership.

All Members Receive: -A discount card for participating bike stores -A subscription to the Prairie Pedaler newsletter. -SCA/Club event medical and liability insurance coverage while cycling in Canada

A) 2 Options are available for SCA General Membership: Non Racing Membership and Racing Membership. (if multiple family members are using this form and one or more is taking out a racing license, one racing general membership must be purchased, all other family members can be added under the Family Membership Fees)

Check off one:

Non Racing General Membership Fee: \$25.00

Racing General Membership Fee: \$32.00

Family Membership Fees: Add \$8 per family member -can be racing or non racing membership (Includes family members

living in the same household. Household will receive one copy of the SCA newsletter)

Additional Family Members: (name & birth date) _____

A) Total\$ _____

B) *Club Fee: Circle any club(s) you are joining (you must join a club if there is one near your location (Note: Clubs at a distance from Regina have eliminated from the list. Check the SCA website for the complete list.):*

	Single Rate	Family Rate
AdventureHers (Regina)	\$5.00	\$7.00
Horizon 100 (Regina)	\$10.00	+\$5.00/person
Lumsden Bike Club	\$ 5.00	
Moose Jaw Bike Club	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00
OffRoad Syndicate (Regina)	\$10.00	\$10.00
Prairie Randonneurs	\$10.00	
Regina Cycle Club	\$ 7.00	\$10.00
SAIAC (south/central Sask)	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00
South Sask Mountain Bike Club (Regina)	\$10.00	\$10.00
Wascana Freewheelers (Regina)	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00

B) Total\$ _____

Total from A) & B) \$ _____

Circle your age category	Under 13: Born 1992 or later (12 or under)	Under 15: Born 1990-1991 (ages 14 & 13)	Under 17: Born 1988-1989 (ages 16 & 15)	Jjunior : Born 1986-1987 (ages 18 & 17)	Senior : Born 1975-1985 (ages 29-19)	Master : Born 1974 or earlier (ages 30 plus)
Fee	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$21.00

C) Combined Road, Mountain Bike & BMX License Fee (must purchase one racing general membership per household):

Licensed members also receive: -Access to Provincially sanctioned races. -A subscription to the Spinner newsletter,. -Access to subsidized training camps -Access to coaching & officials development,. -Access to subsidized out of province races -A 2004 subscription to Pedal magazine (value of \$21.00)

Inter Club Points Cup: if you have joined more than one club indicate the name of the club you wish your points to go to _____.

Photo on the license is optional. If your license does not have a photo, you may show picture ID at each competition (Photo ID is required at a Canada Cup Race).

C) Total\$ _____

- Payment by VISA: _____ Expiry Date ___/___/___

TOTAL PAYABLE : A) SCA Fee(s) + B) Club Fee(s) + C) License Fee(s)+ *\$2.00 fee if using Visa \$ _____

Please answer the following:

_ yes _no Do we have permission to publish your name, phone # and e-mail address on our webpage and newsletter
 _ yes _no Do we have permission to publish your photo on our webpage and newsletter if it is taken at a SCA event

Waiver -

ASSUMPTION OF RISK FOR BICYCLE RACING, TOURING & TRAINING & AGREEMENT NOT TO SUE
 IF YOU SIGN THIS FORM IT MEANS THAT, SHOULD YOU BE INJURED OR KILLED FOR WHATEVER REASON WHILE RIDING A BICYCLE YOU CANNOT SUE THE SASKATCHEWAN CYCLING ASSOCIATION INC., ITS OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, AFFILIATED CLUBS OR ASSOCIATED CLUBS. THIS COVERS NOT ONLY YOUR FIRST RACE, TOUR OR TRAINING RIDE BUT ALL RACES, TOURS AND TRAINING RIDES YOU TAKE PART IN, IN THE FUTURE.

IN CONSIDERATION OF YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THIS MEMBERSHIP, I HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. I understand that there are increased risks associated with riding a bicycle and I hereby voluntarily assume all physical and legal risks associated with riding a bicycle including the risk of death, injury, loss or damage however caused.

2. I agree not to sue THE SASKATCHEWAN CYCLING ASSOCIATION INC., its member organizations, or its Officers, Directors, volunteers, coaches or employees in respect of my death, injury, loss or damage to person or property associated with my racing, touring or training on a bicycle however caused.

3. I agree to the above not only for the first race, tour or training ride but for every other race, tour or training ride I take part in with THE SASKATCHEWAN CYCLING ASSOCIATION INC., its member clubs, volunteers, sponsors, coaches or employees.

I, the undersigned, have read this form carefully and fully understand it and agree to all the above terms and conditions on behalf of myself, my heirs and executors.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

or (Signature of Parent or Guardian If Releaser is under 18 years old)

Additional family members:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

or (Signature of Parent or Guardian If Releaser is under 18 years old)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

or (Signature of Parent or Guardian If Releaser is under 18 years old)