



On One Wheel

Volume XV

Number 4

1988/89



OFFICERS
1988 - 89

PRESIDENT
John Foss

VICE-PRESIDENT
Constance Schleck

SECRETARY
Jan Layne

TREASURER
Karen Messamer

MEET DIRECTOR
Seth Granberry

SOCIETY DIRECTORS
Floyd Crandall
James Green
Orland Reynolds

HISTORIAN
Charlotte Fox Rogers

COVER
David Brichford

EDITORIAL STAFF
Carol Brichford
Curt Morgan
Len Salverda

CIRCULATION
Carol Brichford
Karen Messamer
Connie Schleck

WRITERS
see CONTENTS

the Unicycling Society of America, Inc. Aims:

To foster social and athletic interest in and promote the healthy, wholesome sport of unicycling among youth and adults of the country by establishing voluntary standards of performance and sponsoring and overseeing local and national meets.

To disseminate knowledge and information on all phases of the sport to all interested parties throughout the country via a newsletter and information service

PRESIDENTS EMERITUS

Bernard Crandall
Paul Fox
Brett Shockley
Jan Layne
Tom Miller
Glenn Barnier
Jim Bursell
Kenneth Fuchs
Gordon Mitton
Len Salverda
Seth Granberry

CHARTER MEMBERS

Bernard Crandall
Paul Fox
Nancy Fox
Peter Hangach
Patricia Herron
Bill Jenack
Gordon Kruse
Steve McPeak
Fr. James Moran
Dr. Miles S. Rogers
Charlotte Fox Rogers
Andy Rubel
Dr. Claude Shannon
Jim Smith
Dr. Jack Wiley

COVER:

The 1989 NUM ended on a high note with a demonstration by SEM and TERESA ABRAHAMS. The cover photo was taken by David Brichford during this demonstration and illustrates just one of the many acrobatic maneuvers this young couple incorporates in their routine. They perform professionally around the world; and during their leisure time they utilize their many other talents to advance unicycling both in quality and quantity. It is because of their diligence that U.S.A. is now able to offer the Levels Video (see article, this issue)

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Cost for camera-ready
full page.....\$40
half page.....\$25
quarter page...\$15

Rights reserved by USA, Inc.

Send news about yourself or your club; articles about unicyclists, unicycling, or related arts; or previously published material (with written consent for reproduction with credit) to:

Unicycling Society of America, Inc.
ON ONE WHEEL
P.O. Box 40534
Redford, MI 48240

Send all inquiries, membership renewals, merchandise orders, etc. to:

Unicycling Society of America, Inc.
TREASURER
P.O. Box 40534
Redford, MI 48240

Official publication of the Unicycling Society of America, Inc. Membership fee of \$10.00 (\$15.00 - foreign) includes four newsletters. Memberships run from October 1 through September 30.

We are not responsible for articles and pictures unless accompanied by a request for their return and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please include same with any inquiries requiring a reply.

All views expressed in this newsletter are those of the respective authors. They are not necessarily those of members or officers of the Unicycling Society of America, Inc.

Reproduction or use of the material in this newsletter without the express permission of the Unicycling Society of America, Inc. is prohibited.

CONTENTS:

WHO WAS THE FIRST UNICYCLIST?

by Charlotte Fox Rogers (U.S.A. Historian).....3-4

CYCOLOGIST - Editor, CURT MORGAN

Confessions of a Champion 'Spiller' by V. Tarrant

'89 NUM: Goin' Mobile in 'Bama

Zen and the Art of Unicycle Maintenance

1989 NUM in pictures - a collage

From the Police Blotter - A-Mayes-ing Chris

They Don't Call England "Merrye" For Nothing!

Ride Well or Starve! by Ken Woods

Balmer, MD, Hosts Unicycling Jugglers

Spokes Speak

LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS.....13

THE 1989 NUM - an overview.....14

THE UNICYCLISTS' VIDEO BIBLE by Karen Messamer.....15

CALENDAR and CLASSIFIED.....16

BALLOT.....separate page

ORDER and MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM.....outer wrapper

XVI, no. 1 - ON ONE WHEEL - will feature CLUBS!!! WOOD ONE WHEELERS and their class successes, various school clubs, Redford's MINI-MEET, SUPERCYCLES and their rebirth, and YOUR club if you send info and pictures to OOW Editor P.O. Box 40534, Redford, MI 48240

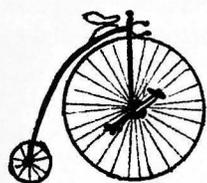
WHO WAS THE FIRST UNICYCLIST?

by Charlotte Fox Rogers ©1989
U.S.A., Inc. Historian

Manuel Ojanguren, who joined the Unicycling Society of America, Inc. in 1987, has written to me from the University of Lausanne in Switzerland to ask whether my knowledge of the history of unicycling includes the name of the first unicyclist.

I used to think it did. In 1965 a member of WONDERWHEELS brought me a tiny newspaper clipping announcing the death in Colorado of Lou Lacher, a vaudeville performer who claimed to have invented the unicycle before 1900. However, as Jack Wiley pointed out in the "On One Wheel" chapter of his 1973 The Unicycle Book, Lacher was only one of several men who considered himself the inventor of the unicycle or the first stage unicyclist. Others mentioned in The Unicycle Book and/or Wiley's 1984 The Complete Book of Unicycling are John Hobby, "a Californian named Ahrens," George M. Hendee, Sebastian Merrill Neuhausen, Nick R. Kauffman, William Dinwiddle, Howard Seely, and "the father of Albert H. Minting." G. Strehly, whose 1903 book, L'Acrobatie et Les Acrobates was brought to my attention by Mr. Ojanguren, thought that the unicycle was invented by an Italian, Alfredo Scuri.

Wiley concluded that several people might have discovered the technique of unicycle riding independently at different times, most likely through accidents in riding the

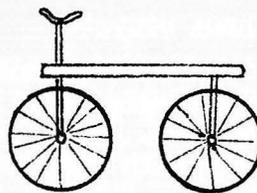


Penny-Farthing, an early machine which bicycle historian David Gordon Wilson asserts was originally and more properly called an Ordinary.

I think you will understand the evolution of the unicycle if I make a little detour to describe the development of the bicycle, summarizing information in books and articles by Wiley, Strehly, Wilson, Philip Sumner,

and Margaret Stuart.

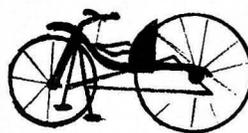
The first two-wheeled vehicle propelled by its rider was probably the Hobby Horse demonstrated in Paris in 1791 by its builder, Count de Sivrac. A Hobby Horse, or Célérifère, had two equal-sized, wooden-spoked, front and back wheels; a heavy, wooden frame which might be trimmed in front with a carved horse's head; and a seat. There were no pedals, and the rider moved the Hobby Horse by pushing the ground with one foot and then the other.



In 1817 Baron von Drais de Souerbrun, an educated and very creative German forest master, built an improved Hobby House which he called a Draisienne. It included a padded seat and an arm rest, handlebars having not yet been invented. It could travel faster than a walking man. Hobby Horses spread to other European countries and America, with a 60-pound lady's model produced in England in 1818. Interest in the clumsy machines had waned by 1839, when a Scottish Engineer named Kirkpatrick Macmillan devised the first Push-Bike.

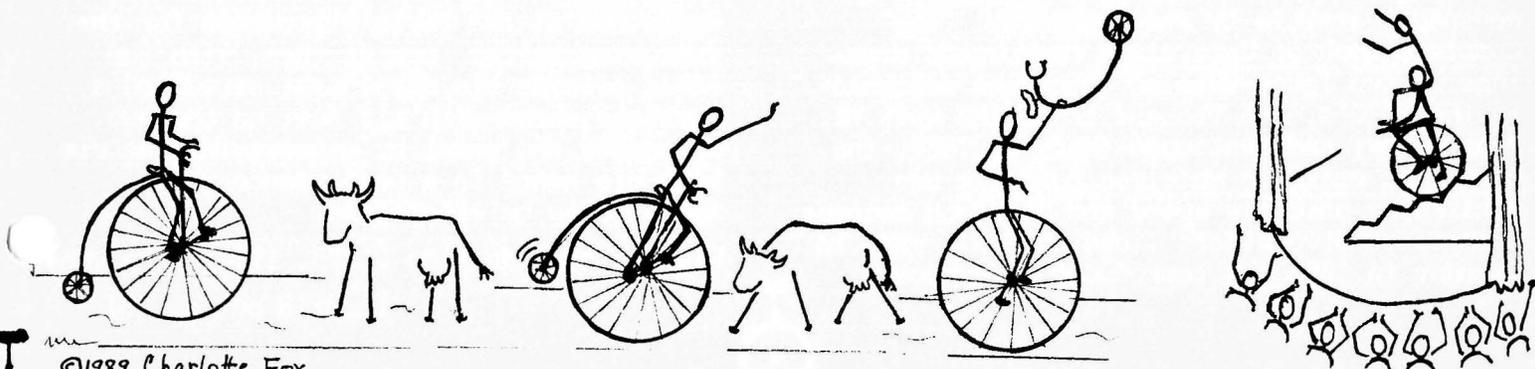


With Macmillan's bike, the rider's feet pushed treadles near the front wheel



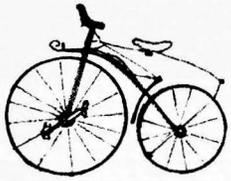
which operated levers and cranks directly connected to the axle of the rear wheel. Macmillan replaced the arm rest with a straight handlebar.

The first person to attach pedals to the front wheel of a bicycle is thought to have been a French mechanic, Pierre Michaux, whose pedal-driven Velocipede had appeared by 1861 and was displayed at the Paris Exposition of 1867. Quantity production of the new bicycle was diverted to Coventry,



©1989 Charlotte Fox

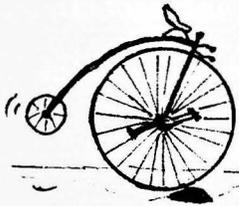
The Evolution of the Unicycle



. . . FIRST UNICYCLIST? cont'd
 England, when France went to war with Germany in 1870.
 <-----Michaux Bicycle

Improvements such as rubber tires, wire spokes, ball bearings, and back wheel brakes were added during the next two decades. The first lightweight, all-metal bicycle with tension-spoked wheels was James Starley's Ariel in 1870.

The Ordinary (or Penny-Farthing, or High-Wheeler) was invented by Monsieur Magée of Paris in 1869 and rapidly became popular with young, athletic men. Its novel design, with a large front wheel and small rear wheel, presented a challenge to the rider and made higher speeds possible. A Bayliss-Thomas Ordinary bicycle of 1879 had a front wheel 55 inches in diameter and a rear wheel 20 inches in diameter, though other sizes were made for riders of various heights. This wheel configuration has become associated in our minds with the concept "early bicycle," though the Ordinary was preceded and followed by models with more evenly sized wheels.



A problem with the Ordinary was that it had a tendency to pitch forward on uneven ground, when a large pebble was run over, when children thrust sticks between the front wheel

spokes, or when interference was caused by cows wandering onto rutted cycle roads. Under those circumstances the rider might be thrown on the ground in front of the bicycle, sustaining severe injuries. If he tried to slow down by applying the hand brake to the large front wheel, however, he tended to do a "wheelie." With the rear wheel lifting off the ground, the rider became, momentarily, a unicyclist.

The year 1870, when the Ordinary was invented, thus appears to be the first likely time for the origin of the unicycle, as stated in a newspaper article by Joe Krupinsky. The Complete Book of Unicycling reproduced drawings of two large-wheeled unicycles designed in the 1870's, one thought to be the work of John Hobby; and mentioned that, by 1888, the League of American Wheelmen Bulletin was publishing unicycle speed and distance records. A photo of five riders lined up for a race in Germany in 1886 was reproduced in a recent

issue of On One Wheel. [Vol. XIV, No. 3] The early unicycles combined the Ordinary's large wheel with a short seat post, a configuration repeated in Wally Watts' vehicles for his long-distance rides a century later; but the 20 inch rear wheel of the Bayliss-Thomas Ordinary is now a standard unicycle size.



The monocycle, in which the rider was seated inside rather than above the wheel, appears to have been invented by the 1860s (see Wiley's books) but never became very popular

though improved models continued to appear for a hundred years.

Krupinsky credited "a Frenchman named Auc Coucett" with the first stage act on one wheel in 1898. This seems too late, however, since Strehly wrote about Alfredo Scuri's performance in 1881, describing him as "the first acrobatic cyclist really worthy of attention." Strehly concluded that even though it looked easy, it required several months for an accomplished bicyclist to become a master of the unicycle. He mentioned a "large number of excellent performers" on the unicycle whom he had observed on the Parisian scene between 1887 and 1903.

Public curiosity demanded more complex entertainment, and troupes of several unicycling men, women, and children were formed. The French Troupe, led by "The Great Harry French," was performing in Paris by 1883. Among his routines were playing a mandolin while riding an ultimate wheel, descending a steep staircase on a rudimentary unicycle with his younger brother on his shoulders, and a "most graceful skating" movement with a wheel attached to each ankle by a strap, like a pair of stilts.



During the same time period, said Strehly, the Americans Leister and Wilmotte were applauded at the Paris Hippodrome for the following trick: one of them, with the other astride his shoulders, straddled a carriage wheel with his feet on the hub. He turned the wheel by maneuvering the rim with his hands in a performance which appeared to be effortless.

Wiley's reproduction (1973, 1984) of a sketch

(cont'd on pg. 13)

Confessions of a Champion 'Spiller'

by Valerie Tarrant
Kerrville, TX

One might wonder what in the world spelling and unicycling could possibly have in common.

From experience, however, I discovered that learning to ride a unicycle takes the same kind of determination as conquering the words needed for a spelling bee. I read of an elementary school teacher who had taught many to ride unicycles and claimed that it built character and determination.

Draconian Law and Order

I already had much determination, as for several years, I had participated in the National Spelling Bee. I didn't think anything could be much more difficult than continuing to study the unending list of impossible and obscure words. However, I was in for a surprise when I broke some draconian rule of my household.

My unicycling started when I was grounded from riding my bicycle, which at the time, was just about my only means of transportation.

I really wanted something to ride, so I found an old unicycle in the top of the garage and asked my parents if they would let me ride that. Thinking it highly unlikely that I would persist in my attempts to stay on it for more than a few seconds, they agreed, as I am anything but the athlete in the family.

Persistence Pays

Just as my "grounding period" was coming to a close, however, I was able to ride it nearly to the end of our driveway. Soon, with persistence, I had conquered the one-wheeled monster, and even though my bicycle was no longer off-limits, I persevered with my pursuit for unicycling success.

After I learned to ride a uni, I had a renewed self-confidence and felt that if I could tackle a big task like riding a uni, then I could do just about anything I set my mind to (and even finish studying my spelling list to eventually win my regional bee, and attend the finals in Washington, DC!).

In addition, this determination spilled over into much of my schoolwork, and continues to help me as I face other seemingly impossible tasks.

The Cyclogist, newsletter of the International Unicycling Federation. Editor: Curt Morgan, 5109 Vera Cruz Dr., Garland TX 75043 USA. Membership (\$15/yr US, \$25/yr foreign) to: A.E. Hemminger, 16152 Kinloch, Redford MI 48240 USA.

The N.U.M. in Twenty-one Photos! Pgs 4-5!



Cyclogist



Newsletter of the International Unicycling Federation
16152 Kinloch Rd, Redford MI 48240 USA
Fall 1989

'89 NUM: Goin' Mobile in 'Bama

Direct from the Turkish bath that was Mobile during the 1989 National Unicycling Meet in Mobile, Alabama, July 28-30, a few memories for your scrapbook. First, locate the photo collage in this issue. Now, clockwise from the Southern belles:

Connie Chism and Leslie Foster, the Azalea Trail Maids, admit people wonder what they wear under their ante bellum costumes. Perhaps the South will rise again.

Len Salverda interrupts an important phone call to make a fashion statement.

Charlotte Fox Rogers said, "Batter Up!" in an old Wonderwheels costume. The stylized "W" was designed to make sewing easier, she confessed.

Sem's demo photo is actually from Balmer. You are not authorized to view this pix at this time.

Superman took many guises at NUM: was that John Foss's identical twin leaping tall beings?

Carol Bahorich performed a kick-up mount for Sem's cameras. Did Wendy teach you that?

Melody Moselle Morgan, the Cyclogist's daughter: RHIP.

Where there are unis, there is street busker Robin Smallwood's three-ring circus.

Live from Mobile! Herrrrre Teresa! Producer Sem organized the Harlem Globetrotters, played basketball on a unicycle.

Tracy Dietrick, the NUM's youngest competitor, was tutu much, meowed sister Kelly.

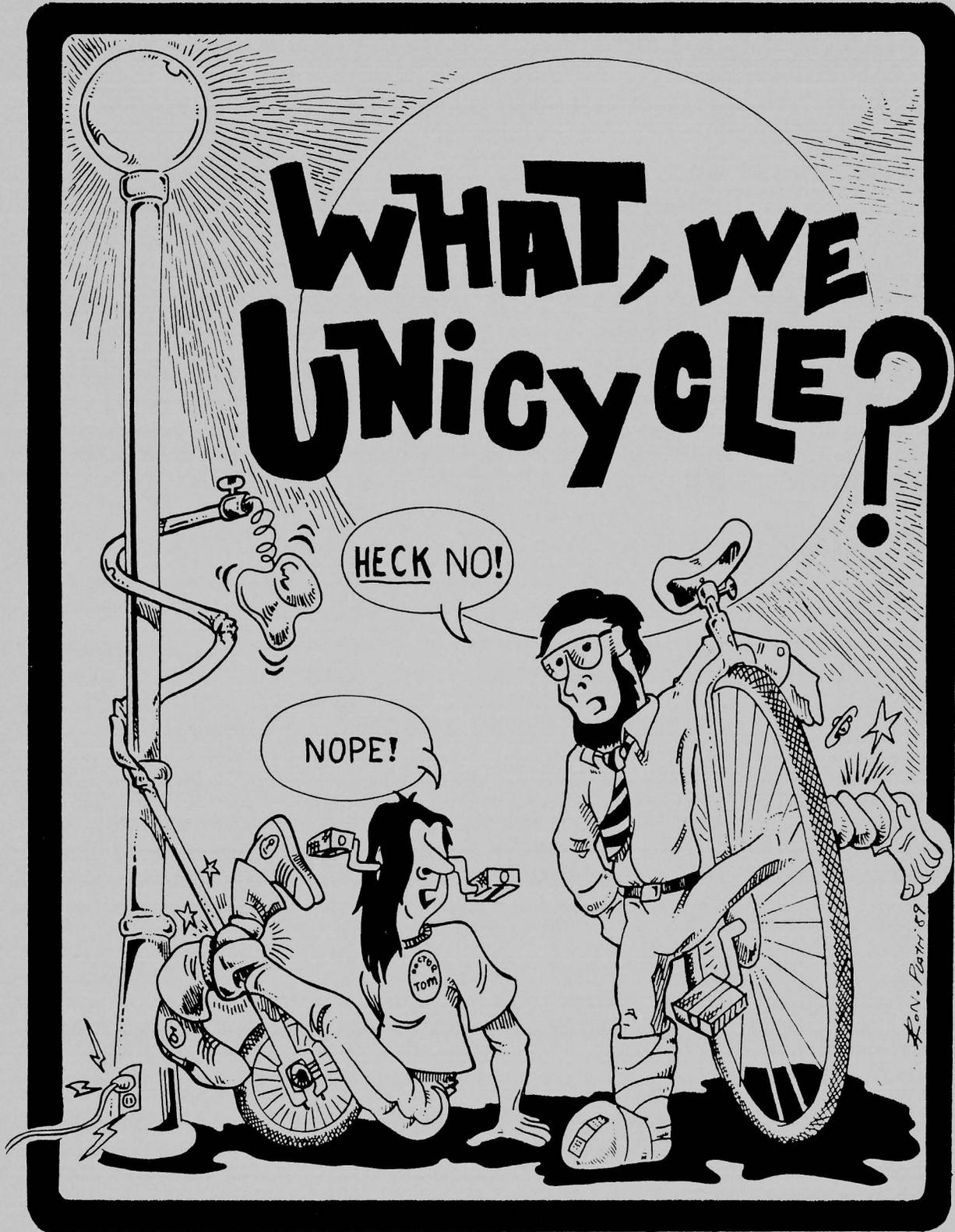
You sit in the seat and put your feet on the pedals, Bill Karbo. Don't you know *anything* about unicycling?

Meet director Seth Granberry was forced to admit: "Honey, I shrunk the unicycle!"

Some guys couldn't believe this Foss-cinating rider could walk a 12" wheel. Believe!

Sprained wrists, a frontal lobotomy and orange pylons are no obstacles for Chicagoland's Rachel Ojala. Don't cross Scarface again, Rachel.

Beautiful from the back, the ultimate on a wheel: I ask you, is Amy Edwards playing fair?



THE CYCOLOGIST is the official newsletter of the International Unicycling Federation. Jack Halpern, Pres., Al Hemminger, Sec.-Treas., Curt Morgan, Editor. Past Editors: John Foss, Dr. Jack Wiley. All material contained herein is protected by U.S. copyright laws and may not be reproduced except by prior written permission.

Zen and the Art of Unicycle Maintenance

The Gnome and The Cycologist Matriculate at the Alfred E. Newman School of Advanced Unicycling

By Tom Miller, Kokomo, IN.

Something I've always been *morbidly* curious about is, breaking bones while unicycling. Recently, the Cycologist, Curt Morgan, and I did some field research on the subject. If your curiosity is as warped as is ours, read on. The squeamish will best turn to something less bloodcurdling. "*World Championship TV Wrasslin' to the Death*" is a viable alternative.

Already I have been taking liberties with the facts (you've noticed?). Curt and I didn't actually elect to do the field research, it was sort of thrust upon us, by accident, you might say.

Curt was first to seek advancement of science. Seems he was tooling down a sidewalk on one of my 40" big wheels. While executing a rather hurried dismount, he planted his foot half-on, half-off the edge of a sidewalk. Earlier, a drunk had joy-ridden his hot-rod down this sidewalk, veered off the concrete, and cut an *enormous* rut in the dirt at the walk's edge.

"%\$#@* &#%," He Said

Back to the Cycologist in distress. With his foot planted half-on the sidewalk, his momentum folded his foot in a 90 degree angle in the rut in a way Ma Nature never anticipated. "Uh, oh. I'm a 10 minute walk from home, my foot's swelling badly, now what?" were his printable words.

We all know Curt can talk the talk. But, incredibly, he also walked the ten-minute walk, even climbing his six foot fence when he found himself locked out of his house. An emergency room intern missed 2 of his 3 fractures, but an orthopedic surgeon reread the X-rays, and slapped a fuchsia-pink fiberglass cast on his swollen appendage the next day.

"How did you do it?" the doc queried, examining the blackened foot of the middle-aged computer programmer.

"Fell off my unicycle," replied Curt, with a slight smile.

"That's some kind of *joke*, right?"

"Well, nooooo. Why do you ask?"

Taking a Ride on the Reading

Not ten days later, up here in Kokomo, I took my 10 footer to a parade. Hey, *everybody* loves a parade, right? It's just those unexpected wrinkles in unfamiliar pavement that make them, ah, so interesting.

"What's that in the road, a *head*?" I asked myself. "Um, railroad tracks. No proooooblem. Nothing the Gnome of Kokomo hasn't handled before with consummate grace."

Only this time, I managed to get my pedal cranks vertical to the ground as I hit the tracks. I couldn't get any leverage to coax the uni over the obstacle. Dunno, maybe it was because I haven't been washing my apples off thoroughly enough.

Anyway, down I came, into the patented Tom Miller roll as I completed re-entry and reached Earth. No good! Jeez, my right heel smarts like, uh, *heel*. In fact, I can't take step number one. Talk about raining on someone's parade, namely, mine!

Return of the Pink Person

As I pen these words, I sit here admiring my fiberglass cast, just like Curt's, only it's white, not pink. Hey, it's not like I'm not a pink person...*I am!* Like they told me down at the emergency room, "Pink casts just don't sell well here in Indiana." Must be residue of the Indiana Klan at work.

I can laugh a bit now, but broken bones will get your immediate attention 'most every time. Some must be "set," i.e., the bones must be moved back to their original position vis-à-vis one another. This is often done by your physician without benefit of pain-killers and, I'm told, can be *real* attention-grabbing.

Then, there's always your long-term prospects: how long will it take to heal? Will I *ever* be the same again? Can I take another fall on my injured appendage and bounce back for more? Let's say that joining the Rice Krispies Unicycling Club (*you know*, "snap, crackle, pop"; jeez, do I have to explain everything?) is some excitement that you *really* want to miss out on, if possible.

Levitate and Radiate

For Curt, being the computer hacker that he is, a broken foot is only a minor inconvenience. He plops his pink cast next to his terminal and it's business as usual, sucking up all the radiation damage his VDT can dish out.

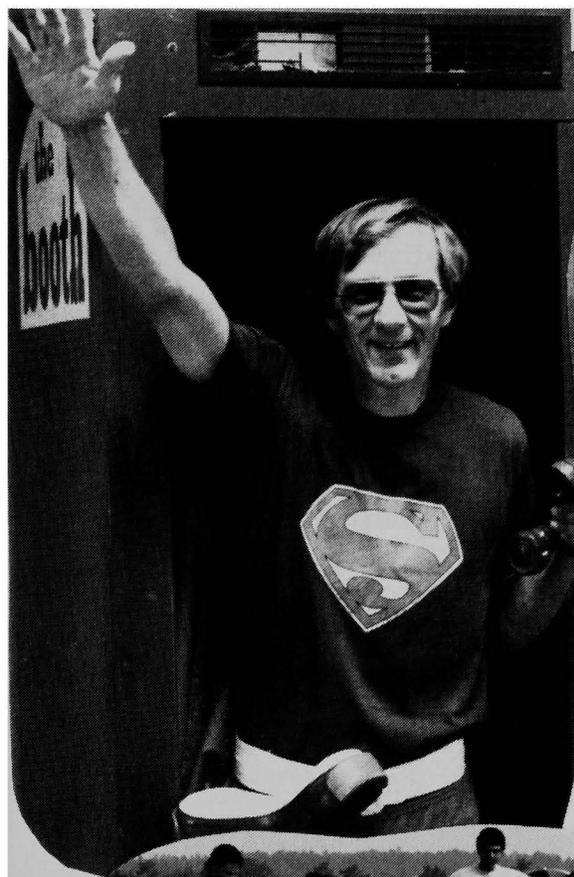
Pour moi, and anyone who stands on his feet making an honest living by the sweat of his brow (to say nothing of his two armpits), a break is a small disaster. No work, no pay, for one. Factor in lapsed health insurance and a wait list of several months by impatient unicyclists (*redundant*, I know), and the ache in my foot is the least of my problems. I take some pride in my role, if not hog butcher to the world, as cycle-builder for the weird. My break hurts me in more ways than one.

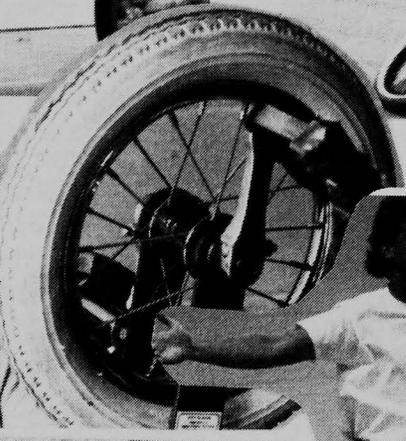
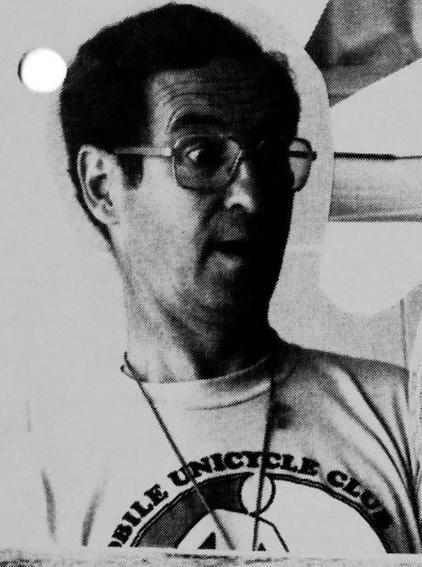
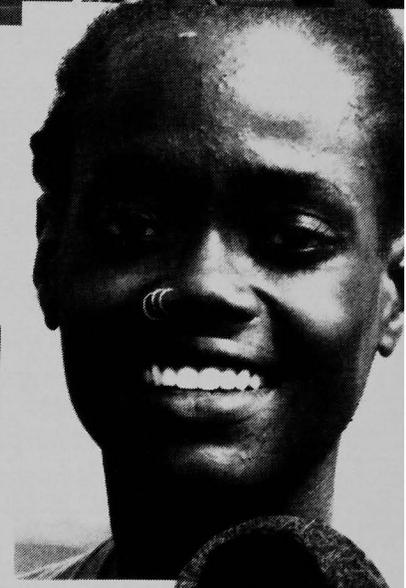
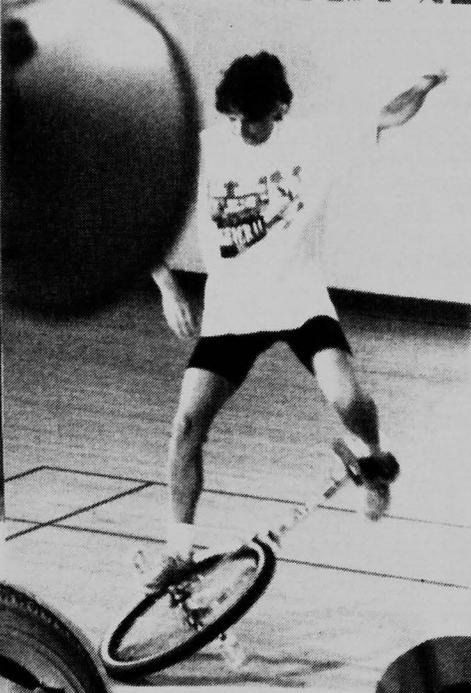
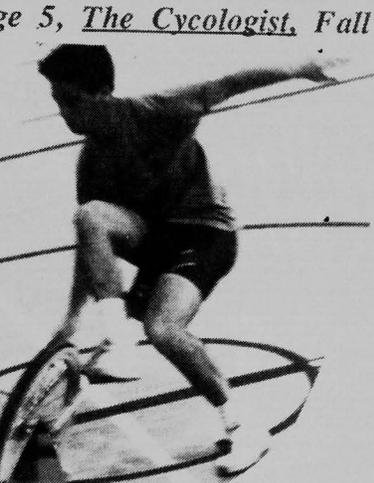
It Had to be Mobile

As I pen this column, the Alabama N.U.M. is quickly approaching. Trading notes with Curt, we realize that, with our casts just off, and our atrophied muscles still staging a come-back, we won't be too terribly active on our wheels.

Yes, I can see the headlines now: "*Im-mobile in Mobile!*"

White "Unicycle Factory" T-shirts with Tom's famous "mad unicyclist" logo in blue are available for \$12 ppd from The Cycologist, 5109 Vera Cruz Drive, Garland, TX 75043. Sizes: Child's medium, lg. ; Adult small, medium and large.





From the Police Blotter

A-Mayes-ing Chris Collars Crooks Rides a Uni, Does His Books

You may recall the striking picture of the London bobby in full police uniform astride a unicycle in **On One Wheel** a year or two ago. That was none other than Christopher Mayes, who wrote us recently with an update on his activities on and off his uni. - Ed.

by Christopher Mayes
Chatham, Kent, UK

I was a keen bicyclist as a boy, and was interested also in unis. I thought they were specially made for circus performers, tho', so I never tried a uni until relatively late in life.

After I joined the force, my supervisor decided to go back to the old way of policing, patrolling on foot and not by car. My area was too large to manage on foot, so at first I used a bicycle. One can ride about quietly, and *in fact* I caught several criminals committing crimes just this way.

Later, we had a supervisor who also fancied bikes, but *hated* to see us men sitting at our desks, filling out paperwork. "How could we complete forms while riding bicycles?" was the question I wished to ask him.

A Suitcase Circus Helps

It was then that I thought, if he wants to treat us like clowns, why not *behave* like one? So I bought a uni from the local bike dealer. All summer I tried to learn, but only had bruises and falls to show for my efforts.

Then, the Reg Bolton "Children's Suitcase Circus" came to town. In short time, with their help, I was able to ride up and down my road, even riding in circles.

A Uni-formed Salute

Now I was ready to approach my superintendant. I *carefully* timed my entrance into the station car park one day, when he had just driven in. I rode up to his car



in my full-dress uniform, filling out some paperwork with my free hands as I did so.

I saluted him and said, "At last I have mastered the cycling and paperwork problem!" He laughed and replied, "With these financial cuts, I will have to halve your cycle allowance!"

Chris sends us a 'snap' of him on his uni - in the buff! (Remember, this is the land that gives you comedian Benny Hill). If it were up to me, it'd be on the cover, f'sure...but you know how touchy Carol and Karen are!

They Don't Call England 'Merrye' For Nothing!

by D. C. Mariner
Christchurch, Dorset, U.K.

In England, unicycling is getting more and more popular. Community groups, performers and jugglers use them as part of their act. Some schools use them as a physical training exercise.

Those interested in only unis are still relatively few in number, but last year a uni hockey tournament was held off Covent Garden, London's place for street performers. Teams came from Bristol, Cardiff, Sheffield, Manchester, Poole and London.

This year, unicycling and much more juggling took place in Bath, which ended with a parade round the town finishing near the Roman Baths that give the town its name.

Shortly, there will be uni races around Hay-on-Wye (in the Wye Valley near the Black Mountains). The river Wye runs down from the Welsh Hills by the ruin of Hay Castle. The races comprise of three laps round Hay Castle, which is owned by Mr. Richard Booth, who presents the trophy.

Hay-on-Wye has a reputation for being an old book-shop centre and is full of second-hand book stalls. Richard Booth has his own shops within the Castle grounds and has a little fun handing out Dukedoms, as he has entitled himself "The Duke of Hay".

Mr. Mariner has operated "D.M.Engineering" in the English West Country for 20 years. He produces the whole range of standard unis from 12 1/4" to 28" in various styles, plus giraffes 5', 6' and 8' high and giraffe unis that can be taken apart and the height varied. Recently, he relocated his shop, entailing the transport of 20 tons of machinery and stock used in the production of unis.

Yesteryear Unicycles

Ride Well or Starve!

by Ken Woods

Minneapolis, MN

Things were tough in the olden days, let me tell you. Bear with me and I'll take you through the years with my partner, Dick Larsen, and me, as we rose from racing cyclists to street buskers to professional unicyclists.

Money was very tight in the 1930's (non-existent, really). But unis caught our eye, and we had three hand-made for us, before we could even ride one.

The 'Good Old Days?'

As we traveled across the country making bicycle race dates, we started doing street busking at night, catching the theatre and after-dinner crowds. Busking was a hell of an education. You quickly found out how to "read" an audience, which kind of "turn" (stunt) would hold a crowd. In the 30's, subsistence came hard, and the evening "corner" money sometimes made the difference between eating, or curling up somewhere for the night hungry.

In later years, when we lived comfortably off our stage work, we would return to a street corner, relive old times, see if we still had the touch to hold a crowd around us.

You Light Up My Life

There were a plethora of near-misses, even some disasters. In night clubs, we'd work on the stage along with the band, giving us the area of a postage stamp. The real hazard was lack of headroom. Doing a giraffe "bit" riding in a crouched bent over squeeze was really weird.

Scooting about during one of these humpbacked episodes, I took out a chandelier with my head. Things went blurry, and I went through some god-awful gyrations, but I didn't go down. We received a terrific hand, but after it was all over, the manager came in and demanded, "Just who in hell is going to pay for this damned fixture?"

Artwork by "ALVIN"

Our best break was our association with the legendary Mel Hall, far and away the Grand Master of every nuance the unicycle is capable of.

We were just breaking into the game and were enthralled with Mel's seemingly effortless ability and innovative acrobatics. He helped us immensely, smoothing out our rough edges, showing us what had crowd appeal, and what to avoid. Such a generous, warm-hearted person gave of his expertise to a couple of amateurish greenhorns like Dick and me.

Did someone say Mel Hall? Where is the living legend today anyway? In Texas, we hear! See the Winter Cycologist for an exclusive on Mel!

We Have A Winner!

The *Cycologist* Spring 89 issue EAR MIT puzzle (Tim Rae, backwards) winner was Ann Onnymous, of Austin, TX. Ann confesses to an interest in unicycles, but gets around mostly on a parallel 2-wheeler (wheelchair to you).

Balmer, MD, Hosts Unicycling Jugglers

by Audrey Bernecker

Dallas, TX

Jugglers and their upscale counterparts - unicyclists! - joined forces in Baltimore, MD, for a week ending July 23rd, at the International Jugglers Association Convention.

The one-wheeler's focal point was a workshop hosted by Sem and Teresa Abrahams, of Redford, MI, Holland, Surinam, and the Free World. Teresa grabbed juggling clubs long enough to be featured in a photo in the *New York Times*' coverage of the event.

John 'B.C.' Foss, Steven and Carol Mills of Calif. (OOW cover pix, Spring '89), Okies Kevin Holman, Karen and Paul Pharriss, and Lone Star Staters Jimmy Perini, Logan Daffron, and Wanda and Kevin Wenzel, ably represented uni interests in the face of thousands of identified flying objects.

(Photo of Sem doing a dem' at Baltimore, page 4).



Ken Woods' reminiscences will continue in future issues. Meanwhile, we need your input on articles in preparation: "Riding Backwards," and "Unicycling Safely in the Streets." Also, "Junior Uni-Verse", from your kids. Send to: *The Cycologist*, 5109 Vera Cruz Drive, Garland TX 75043 USA. (214)-270-9332. Thanks for your continued support!

Spokespeak

Page 8, The Cyclogist, Fall 89

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I live near Lake George and the Vermont border in upstate N.Y. I have always enjoyed biking, but learned to ride a uni late in life. It was in the twilight of my 38th year that I spent about 4 hours of intensive practice, mastered the wheel, and went right out on the road.

I later sold that initial 20" Japanese learning wheel, bought a Semcycle (*very* comfortable) and later a 6' giraffe, having learned on an old 6-footer that was part of the props of the theatrical show, Barnum, which our school had in storage.

I also ride a "penney farthing" and a big wheel, though I do not own one; it belongs to my brother, Vic, who owns Algie's Place of Bikes in North Wildwood, N.J.

I started riding bikes to work in Philadelphia 19 years ago and haven't stopped: I haven't driven to work in 19 years!

No *real* injuries. Did come down off my giraffe once on the right foot; one toe became swollen and was sore for *several* weeks. Might have been broken but never really knew. Not much to do for a broken toe *anyway*.

My region is *beautiful* to ride. It is both flat and has major mountains and gently rolling farmland and river valley. I ride a nine-mile paved bike path from Glens Falls to Lake George; it's one of the finest I've ever seen. Actually, I prefer the country roads where one can go for *hours* without seeing a car.

Tony Krivitski
Glens Falls, N.Y.

Dave Brichford suggested that Mackinac Island, in upper Michigan, would be an ideal place to ride unis. Why? Other than a few fire trucks and other emergency vehicles, cars are not permitted there. A letter of inquiry to "Sarah" at the Chamber of Commerce in Mackinac elicited this reply:

Dear Mr. Curtis (sic!)

There are no unicycles for rent on the Island, as unicycles are felt to present a hazard that could possibly cause run away (*sic*) horses.

I'm sure the risk would be at an absolute (*sic*) minimum (*sic*) with a skilled group of riders such as yours, but this is City policy.

We regret any inconvenience.

Presumably, their horses don't get upset by bad spellers! - Ed.

To the Editor:

I usually ride my uni to and from work (at the Institut de Mathematiques, Faculte des Sciences, Universite de Lausanne).

A theoretical study of unicycling might be interesting. Something similar has been done by Klein and Sommerfeld for the common bicycle, in their monumental work on the gyroscope (four volumes!). I shall keep in touch with you and let you know whatever I find on this subject.

Manuel Ojanguren

Lausanne, Switzerland

Please put us on your mailing list for your first volume, Manuel! - Ed.

To the Editor:

I operate the only unicycle-circus in the world. We do everything on one wheel that everyone else does on two legs, and a little more. We do several carnivals, festivals and such each summer, do street-busking on the famous "walking street" in Copenhagen, sing, dance, clown, juggle,

and, of course, do tricks on unis.

Our show is a family show.

My favorite place for unicycling is when a group of us ride down the 'walking street' fast, in between many pedestrians, without touching, falling or otherwise irritating anybody. It is a kind of thrill, to move like an *angel* between all the slow walking folks.

Here's a true story from Israel (we have just returned from performing there). A young businessman had imported 10 unicycles, and later complained to me, "There is *something* wrong with them." We asked, why? He replied, "Because, I tried to ride one of them, but it is *impossible*, so there must be something wrong with the unicycles!"

Jean Ascher

Copenhagen, Denmark

Watch for a story on Jean's unique circus in an upcoming issue! - Ed.

To The Editor:

I read most of the OOW last night and enjoyed several items.... As our resident grammarians and inspective spellers poured over your editing..., they noticed a missing apostrophe...in addition to the "heaven" misspelling...

What's the deal on halftones (photographs) in OOW? Are they using a quick copy printer with paper plates? (The)...poor (photo) quality distracts from the whole publication, in my view. I'm sure you will spare no criticism in straightening them all out.

- A Concerned Reader

Moi? Criticize the overworked and underpaid OOW editors? Belly up for a large helping of reality!

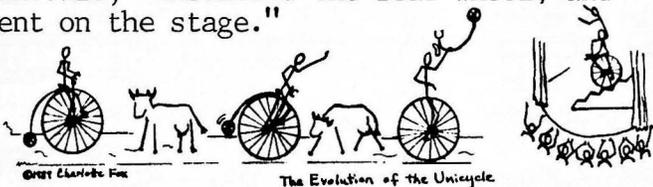
Please pardon the dropped punctuation! Sorry about the misspelling! It would be best, however, if you didn't enter into any extended correspondence with the Mackinac Island Chamber of Commerce.

You wouldn't mind saying more about the items you did enjoy, would you?

. . . FIRST UNICYCLIST? cont'd

from Clarence P. Hornung's Wheels Across America substantiates Strehly's portrayal of well-developed early trick riding. It shows bicycles, unicycles, and a monocycle which were ridden in a Festival of Cyclists in London's Crystal Palace in 1890 (date given by Hornung). The assortment of wheel sizes and shapes, and particularly the spike-rimmed ultimate wheel, would be a challenge to present-day non-professional unicyclists.

My answer to the question, "Who was the first unicyclist?" would seem to be, "No one knows, but he was probably riding an Ordinary in about 1870, saw a cow coming toward him, hit his brakes, did a front wheel "wheelie," discarded the rear wheel, and went on the stage."



1. "Gerhard Delkeskamp sent this picture...." On One Wheel, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1988), p. 15.
2. Hornung, Clarence P. Wheels Across America. South Brunswick and New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1959, pp. 220-267
3. Krupinski, Joe, of Newsday. "Unicycles Wheel Into Sports Category." The Blade (Toledo, OH). June 26, 1983, Sec. E, p. 4.
4. Strehly, G. L'Acrobatie et Les Acrobates. Paris: Librairie S. Zlatin, 1903; Madame S. Zlatin, 1977.
5. Stuart, Margaret. "Those Magnificent Men on Their Cycling Machines." Los Angeles Times, West magazine, Oct. 31, 1971, p. 12.
6. Sumner, Philip. Early Bicycles. London: Hugh Evelyn Limited, 1966.
7. Wiley, Jack. The Unicycle Book. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1973, pp. 17-30.
8. Wiley, Jack. The Complete Book of Unicycling. Stockton, CA: Solipaz Publishing Company, 1984 pp. 145-159.
9. Wilson, David Gordon. "A Short History of Human-Powered Vehicles." American Scientist, Vol. 74, No. 4 (July-Aug. 1986), pp. 350-357.

LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

GORDON KRUSE, who served the Society as the first elected Sec.-Treas., renewed his membership recently. We hear from Gordon periodically throughout the year, however. For, even though it has been over 13 years since Gordon held office, he still receives requests for information about the U.S.A., Inc. since his address appeared in source material in the mid-70's. The opening of the U.S.A. post office box in 1979 has made it possible to have an address that does not change with the officers.

How many early U.S.A. members remember SALLY WHITE? The routines that she choreographed for her Club for some of the first NUMs were classics. Your Editor remembers Sally gliding over the floor in Marion, OH, in a long, full hoop skirt as she rode a 6' giraffe. Sally is now SALLY WACKOWSKI and she lives in Vernal, UT. On the "comments" section of a recent renewal form she wrote:

"... (I) organized and ran the WHIRL WHEELS and PENN STATE UNICYCLE CLUBS from 1974 through 1980. Performed professionally in a mall one summer."

He has requested information on "kid's unicycles." (ed. note: Two of the books on the U.S.A. ORDER FORM provide information for this. Jack Wiley's HOW TO BUILD UNICYCLES AND ARTISTIC BICYCLES includes

directions for building smaller unicycles in several ways. The least expensive is by using a child's cast-off tricycle. If building is not your forte, Jack's THE WHOLE UNICYCLE CATALOG includes a list of custom builders and mail order sources.)

TONY KRIVITSKI (Glens Falls, NY) enjoys riding and repairing bicycles. He owns 15! His interest in unicycles was a natural outgrowth of bicycling.

U.S.A. welcomes the ANDERSON Family, Hwy. 81 N Dwight, ND 58075. Father, DWIGHT, rides a unicycle as do 4 of the 5 Anderson children: BRENDA, RICK, BARBIE, and TAMI. MELANIE, age 8, will be joining the rest of her family very soon. As for Mom (JANIE), she is a candidate for "adult learner tips." (WOOD ONE WHEELERS from Bowling Green, OH have had great success in teaching the younger rider. They are now planning their first class for adults. Eighteen parents and grandparents are signed up to learn to ride. Perhaps from their experience an article will be written for OOW.)

From Tiger, GA, WARREN BLYE writes that he is: *"still conducting a UNO program at Clayton Elementary School (GA). Over 200 boys and girls have learned to ride so far."*

(Pictures from another school unicycle club in Claremont, NC will appear in the next OOW)

THE 1989 NUM - an overview

Over 130 riders (along with parents and other relatives) traveled almost as far south in Alabama as you can go to attend a National Unicycle Meet hosted by a Club with little experience in doing such a thing. "A good time was had by all."

Meet Director, SETH GRANBERRY, and his staff are to be commended for a job well done. Even a club with more NUM experience is hard-pressed to provide all of the personnel necessary to run a fast-paced weekend of varied unicycling events. Seth realized this and requested help from others outside of his Club to organize major areas of this meet. Help came from across the country and worked cooperatively throughout the weekend.

The 1989 NUM saw several "firsts":

1) The 1600 and 800 meter races were run Friday evening. This provided time on Saturday for such fun events as the 100m "uni-juggle" and the UMX (unicycle motor-cross).

2) Filming of the ten unicycle riding levels took place with riders from across the country demonstrating the proper technique for correctly completing each level. (This video tape is now available through U.S.A., Inc. Read "The Unicyclists' Video Bible" this issue.)

3) Knee pads and gloves were mandatory for all but the slow races. Practically all of the riders found this to be desirable for their safety. In fact, some even added bicycle helmets for races and used the knee pads when competing in artistic riding.

The components that have made many past NUM's eventful, stimulating, and memorable were present in 1989. Added was a large amount of "Southern Hospitality."



OVER-ALL HIGH POINT WINNERS

1989 NATIONAL UNICYCLE MEET - MOBILE, AL

(Although awards were made for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for the first time this year, only 1st-place winners are listed here.)

- 8 & - ABBY CERNKOVICH (7) WOW (OH)
KYLE PRINGLE (7) Pringle's (FL)
- 9 & 10 AMY EDWARDS (10) Chariton (IA)
TYLER RUBLE (10) Chariton (IA)
- 11 & 12 GINGER PRINGLE (12) Pringle's (FL)
JAY GILLIGAN (12) Smiling Faces (OH)
- 13 & 14 RACHEL OJALA (14) Academy Wheels (IL)
DALE GRANBERRY (14) Mobile (AL)
- 15 & 16 BECKY EDWARDS (15) Chariton (IA)
JAVIER RUIZ (15) Rio Piedras (PR)
- 17 & 18 PAM DAUGHERTY (18) Mobile (AL)
DUSTIN KELM (17) MN Unicycle Team (MN)
- 19 - 24 CAROL BAHORICH (22) Redford (MI)
GLEN GRANBERRY (19) Mobile (AL)
- 25 & + ROBIN SMALLWOOD (30) Wh. of Fortune (DC)
JOHN FOSS (27) Long Island Uni. (NY)
- 30 - 44 PAM SIMONS - Mobile (AL)
BILL GILBERTSON - Twin Cities (MN)
- 45 & + SALLY GRANBERRY - Mobile (AL)
GEORGE PRINGLE - Pringle's (FL)



<---JOSUE BARRETO and DUSTIN KELM in the Open Class Ind. Artistic Riding competition



Saturday's activities began with the traditional parade of riders led by Meet Dir. SETH GRANBERRY and his son DALE flanking the University of South Alabama mascot

THE UNICYCLISTS' VIDEO BIBLE

by KAREN MESSAMER

(Vol. XIV, No. 2 [1988] presented, for the first time, ten Unicycling Levels of Achievement. It was soon apparent to U.S.A. Treas., Karen Messamer, that additional guidance was necessary for the unicycle rider in order to make these levels attainable and she spear-headed the idea of a video tape. Following is her article on the results of her idea.)

All unicyclists will welcome this much-demanded video which demonstrates each skill contained in the ten Achievement Levels that are sanctioned by the International Unicycling Federation and the Unicycling Society of America, Inc. For the first time unicycling enthusiasts have access to the "how" of learning the advanced skills. Prior to this video production skill descriptions were available only in writing, which for many was difficult to interpret and hard to envision. No longer is this the case! By watching the video you will have a fellow U.S.A., Inc. member personally demonstrating each skill in a given level along with giving his/her personal "tips" on how to learn the skills.

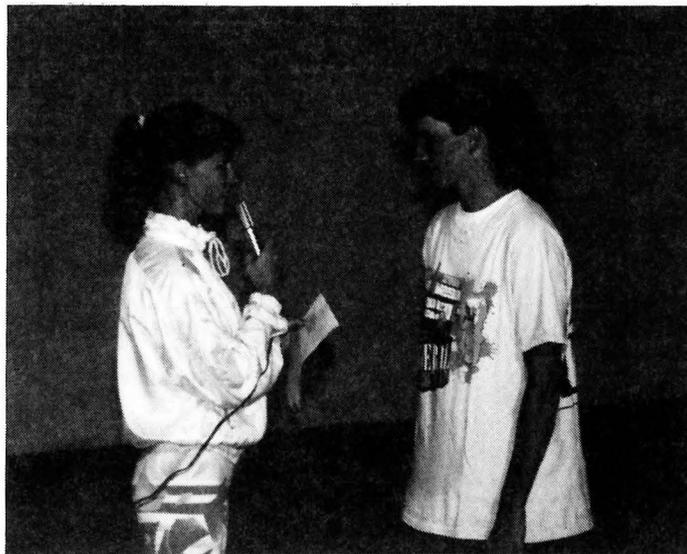
The U.S.A., Inc. is truly indebted to SEM and TERESA ABRAHAMS for undertaking this project. It involved countless hours spent taping, narrating and editing! Not to mention the donation of equipment required to launch the project and the cooperation of family members who were "conned" into donating their time and equipment, as well. These included Teresa's Dad, AL HEMMINGER, and Sem's brothers ARISTADE and YURI ABRAHAMS.

This video is an invaluable teaching tool to be used by individuals and clubs in helping to improve unicycling skills by short-cutting the learning process and to further advance the sport of unicycling.

Many THANKS!! go out to the people who demonstrated the skill levels at the 1989 National Unicycle Meet in Mobile, AL, which served as the stage for the taping of the video. The general consensus of the skill level demonstrators can be summed up by Robin Smallwood's reply after she was summoned to help with the video production, "I have been helped and inspired by many unicyclists. I would love to help with the project. Thank you for asking!"

Achievement Level demonstrators were:

- Level 1: TRACY DIETRICK, age 5,
Bowling Green, OH
- Level 2: TALIA RUBLE, age 7,
Chariton, IA
- Level 3: ERIN CERNKOVICH, age 11,
Bowling Green, OH
- Level 4: ORLAND REYNOLDS, age 67,
Marquette, MI &
JAMES TAYLOR, age 16,
Detroit, MI
- Level 5: ROBIN SMALLWOOD, age 30,
Washington D.C.
- Level 6: CAROL BAHORICH, age 22,
Garden City, MI
- Level 7: BILL KARBO, age 24,
New Brighton, MN
- Level 8: GLEN GRANBERRY, age 19,
Mobile, AL &
CHRISTIAN HAREL, Canada
- Level 9: JOHN FOSS, age 27,
Long Island, NY &
ERNESTO RUIZ, age 16,
Carolina, Puerto Rico
- Level 10: JOSUE BARRETO, age 17,
Alturas Rio Grande, PR



TERESA ABRAHAMS interviews CAROL BAHORICH for helpful tips in learning to ride Level 6.

Proceeds from the sale of the levels video will be used to pursue other U.S.A., Inc. projects which will promote unicycling. If you have a suggestion for this, write to: U.S.A., Inc., P.O. Box 40532, Redford, MI 48240

To order the 40-minute IUF Skill Levels tape, use the blue order form with this issue. Put "Video Tape" on the line and include a check for \$22.50 (\$20.00 for cost of tape and \$2.50 packaging and handling.)

CALENDAR:

FALL BACK TO AKRON (Ohio) JUGGLING CONVENTION * October 7 * Walsh Jesuit High School - contact: Russ O'Brien (216) 678-3170

1990 NATIONAL UNICYCLE MEET * July 27, 28 & 29 * to be hosted by WOOD ONE WHEELERS, Bowling Green, Ohio

1990 UNICON (International Unicycling Federation Convention) * Hull, Quebec, CANADA (site of the Annual International Bicycle Festival)

SEMICYCLE™

• SHOWS • WORKSHOPS • EQUIPMENT SALES

SEMICYCLES

20", 24", 26", 6" CHAIN DRIVEN

SQUEEZ-ITS

MANY COLORS, IN 60 MM (4 OZ) AND 72 MM (5 OZ) SIZES

XL UNICYCLES

An all new line of affordable SEMICYCLE-designed unicycles featuring the best of conventional unicycle technology. A chrome plated wide lug tubular frame with play-free bearing clamps. 36 spokes and cotterless cranks are standard on all 20 and 24 inch models. These inexpensive unicycles come equipped with the same popular seat that rides atop our renowned SEMICYCLES. XL's high quality / low price concept backed with SEMICYCLE's reputable service make the XL unicycle the best deal of any unicycle anywhere.

Our XL unicycle line includes a chrome plated standard model available in 16", 20" and 24" wheel sizes and painted 4' and 5' chain driven models.

Write or call for our latest catalog and dealers near you.

SEM ABRAHAMS ENGINEERING

BOX 1675
3600 BR MAARSSSEN
HOLLAND
03465-70563

SEMICYCLE

TERESA & SEM
P. O. BOX 40353
REDFORD, MI 48240
U.S.A.
PH. & FAX: 313-537-8175



University of South Alabama

1989 NUM Souvenir T-Shirt

Red Jerzees (50% Cotton-50% Polyester)
Printed front and back (4 color front)
Sizes: Youth Ig-Adult Sm, Me, Ig, X Ig, 2X Ig
To order: Send \$9.50 plus \$2.00 (mailing)

to: Mobile Unicycle Club
3204 Desire Street
Mobile, AL 36606

Allow six weeks for delivery



July 28 - 30, 1989

Mobile, Alabama

