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On One Wheel

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On The Cover; RTUC participates in America's Thanksgiving Day Parade in Detroit, Michigan.

On One Wheel

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E-mail address: agrzych at comcast dot net.

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President's Corner

Hello USA Members,

I hope you all have a safe and happy holiday season.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our three new USA Board members: Secretary – Bob Griffin from the Wonders, and Directors – Joe Lind from TCUC and Bonnie Messing from NYUC. I look forward to working with them as well as the returning board members this coming year.

We're still making changes in the USA. We are awaiting votes from YOU to adopt some new phrases in our Constitution so that we can gain 501(3)(c) status; be sure to look for your voting sheet in this OOW. We have increased our insurance to a \$2,000,000 limit. Our teens are meeting regularly to help update many USA-related items. And our committees are hard at work updating the USA Rulebook and IRUS. We'll surely have a busy year, but we're always willing to do more. If there are changes you would like to see made, please drop us a line through the contact page on www.unicyclingusa.org.

Keep on Riding,

Wendy Grzych



Mission Statement of the Unicycling Society of America, Inc.

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.

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Unicycle
Central

unicyclecentral at
hotmail dot com

[http://
unicyclecentral.
com/](http://unicyclecentral.com/)

Unicycle Central Has a Mascot!

(below)

Exchange student Ayna Pirkuliyeva (left) from Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, joined Unicycle Central at practice in December. Ayna is a junior at Mounds View High School. Emilia Holstine helped Ayna try unicycling. Emilia is a Base 6 rider and a certified IRUS skill tester. We're hoping Ayna will bring the sport back to her hometown when her year as an exchange student is over.



(above)
Mara Ranta
holds Amy, Uni-
cycle
Central's new
mascot. Mara
is a Base 2 rider.
Amy is still work-
ing on Base 1.

WOW

By Kevin Tomczyk

My first unicycle was given to me for free in July 2008. It was in horrible shape, sitting, all rusted and with a flat tire collecting dust in someone's garage. I worked as hard as I could with it for a week in hot weather until I could get on with help, ride around the block and fall off without getting too tired. From there my unicycling career began to grow along with my collection of unicycles. I am now riding a Coker on my mile-long paper route and brought back my fair share of ribbons and medals from NAUCC 2009.

My club, WOW Unicycle Club, in Bowling Green, Ohio helped show me many things I couldn't have done on my own. They taught me the correct ways to mount and dismount, ride with one foot, wheel walk, ride with seat in back and front, and 180o unispins. With encouragement from WOW, my sister, Theresa, and my father started unicycling. Theresa and I were able to ride in several parades this past year and at the end of July we went to NAUCC 2009 with more than 10 members from our group. We had a great time and met many great people.

On October 31st, Matt Sindelar came to Bowling Green for an all day workshop. He helped me refine my wheel walk and 180o unispin skills. He was an inspiration to the whole club, teaching us new skills and flat out impressing us with his skills. I am looking forward to starting practice again with the club in January.



Check out Kevins video!
<http://www.unicyclist.org/cont/play.cfm?pi=f418320paperboy>

Wood One
Wheelers

www.wowunicycle.com

1 (419) 424-0447

Hutchinson One Wheelers

Hutchinson
One
Wheelers

ireneandandy at
gmail dot com

1 (612) 968-6498

The Hutchinson One Wheelers have been continuing to practice their artistic, trials, and MUni skills this fall. Now that the weather is cold, we have moved inside to the Cattle Barn on the County Fairgrounds for our weekly Wednesday evening practice. We now have two boards in our barn that have people's pictures if they are Artistic or Trials Level 4+. We have many new unicyclists that are getting better in Trials riding.

Down on the Farm MUni Weekend was on October 24th, and had around 70 people. Unicyclists from the Hutchinson One Wheelers, Twin Cities Unicycle Club, Madison Unicycle Club, Oregon, and North Dakota came to participate. There were a few new events at the fall edition, the first ever Halloween Costume Contest, a few timed trials lines - one you had to jump over or ride around pumpkins, and the first ever DOTFMW Street/Flatland Competition.



(left)
Ben parades
around at
DOTFMW
wearing a
costume.

(right)
The
gang's
all here!
A group
shot from
the Down
on the
Farm Muni
Weekend.



Sioux Falls Unicycle Club

Being a small unicycle club, the Sioux Falls group has definitely felt the absence of the Siemens family who moved to Boulder in August. The Siemens' boys always came to practice eager and enthusiastic. Riding in the fall homecoming parades just wasn't the same without the smiles of Johnathan, Benjamin, and Joseph.

Looking forward to an upcoming performance at a basketball doubleheader, the Sioux Falls Club is busy learning and "perfecting" a club routine and polishing their 2009 NAUCC routines. The riders are excited to have an opportunity to introduce a whole new audience to the wonderful world of freestyle unicycling.

*Sioux Falls
unicycle club*

*mclaughlin28 at sioux
falls dot midco dot net*

Memphis Unicycle Club

The Memphis Unicycle Club has been really busy the past couple of months. Besides our usual weekly Saturday morning rides we have been riding to support some local fund raising activities.

On October 10 we did a unicycle demonstration as part of a circus skills workshop at a local Montessori school. Woodrow Savage was the star of our show which included big hops, riding stairs and riding along a wall that dropped several feet into the school's vegetable garden. The backdrop for our demonstration was the Memphis skyline and the Wolf River Harbor.



On October 17 we rode at the Girls Incorporated 5K Race & Fun Run/Walk. October 31 was a crisp cool autumn day as we rode 10 miles through the Wolf River Natural Area on 29 and 36 inch wheels. On November 7, we participated in the Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk through downtown Memphis and along the bluffs of the mighty Mississippi River.

A typical Saturday ride for MUC includes the 6 miles of trails at Herb Parsons Lake east of Memphis.

Memphis Unicycle Club had a dozen riders participating in two area Christmas parades during December. Our group included 6-year-old Sarah Garner who has recently made great progress in learning to ride her 12-inch unicycle.

*Memphis
unicycle club*

[http://www.
memphisunicycle
club.org/](http://www.memphisunicycleclub.org/)

Redford Township Unicycle Club



In November, the club held their traditional meeting at Dragonmead. At the meeting, they don't only go over statistics, but socialize as well. Everyone brings a dish to pass and has a great time, like always!

Pictured above is the Redford Township Unicycle Club in the Royal Oak Holiday Magic Parade. This is one of the many parades that they've done this holiday season. They were even featured in America's Thanksgiving Day Parade nationally, again. Check out the link!

**<http://www.clickondetroit.com/video/21737701/index.html>
(You can see RTUC beginning at about 24:30)**

If you visit rtuc.org, you can see all of the other videos, photos, and articles about the club.

Besides parades, the club has been busy in other ways. They have rung bells for the Salvation Army, like they have for many years. They've also been preparing for the beginners class. They're all hoping for a massive turn out, like they've gotten in the past few years.

After the holidays, the club will begin their routines for nationals. They can't wait for practices to resume!



Close up on RTUC! Cameras at the Royal Oak Parade film the club.

Redford
Township
unicycle club

wgrzych at
comcast dot net

35553 Springvale
Farmington Hills,
MI 48331

rtuc.org

Twin
Cities
Unicycle Club

P.O. Box 21487
Minneapolis, MN
55421

tumblee at
comcast dot net

tcuc.org

TCUC News

In October, many TCUCers joined the Hutchinson One Wheelers and unicyclists from Wisconsin, the Dakotas and Oregon at the Cotter/Genelin farm for Down-On-The-Farm-Muni-Weekend. A good time was had by all. DOTFMW inherited the NAUCC 2009 Trials/Street construction materials, so the Trials/Muni lines were more awesomer than ever. Andy and Irene were ably assisted in the construction of the devious and death-defying lines by The Master of Disaster himself, Mad Max Dingemans.

To see a DOTFMW chronicle made by TCUC lads Gavin & Ian Prentice and Alex Zeller follow the link:

<http://tinyurl.com/y9846eo>

No farm animals were harmed in the making of this video.

In November, the TCUC Fall Banquest was convened at Christ the King Church in New Brighton, MN. At the banquet, we pause to reflect on the events of the previous year. Some of the 2009 TCUC highlights were:

- TCUC performed in 23 parades in 2009
- TCUC conducted 94 classes across 5 different locations around the Twin Cities and Western Wisconsin
- We had 120 Club practices, and numerous muni/trail & long distance rides
- 30 members passed level 1, 19 passed level 2, 10 passed level 3, 6 passed level 4, 3 passed level 5, 2 passed level 6, 3 passed level 7, 1 passed level 9, 1 passed level 10!
- The TCUC Showgroup performed at 6 locations around the Twin Cities, including The MN RollerGirls Roller Derby & The Governor's Fishing Opener
- Many TCUCers put in long hours hosting a successful NAUCC 2009!
- Our Most Improved Unicyclist, passing the most levels, was Tanya O'Brien
- The Hardest Working Family, passing the most levels passed by a family, was the Koehler Family (Steve, Mary, Grant, Ben, Liam, Greta)
- Special awards for Hardest Workers (Danielle Chevalier, Liam Koehler), Motivators (Connie Cotter, Max Dingemans), Organizer (Mel Zeller), Most Patient (Karl Wigert) and the Odometer Award (O'Brien Family) were also given out at the banquet.
- The coveted Best Face Grind was unanimously awarded to Brent (Oh No!) Lee.

USA Members:

All USA members, **18 years and over**, have the opportunity to vote on the changes. The amendments will pass when 1/20 of the current voting members' ballots are returned by the deadline and at least 2/3 of the votes are in favor of the proposed changes. Print your name clearly, sign and date the ballot. Votes must be received by January 20th 2009. Clubs, teams or groups can collect ballots and mail them together.

Thank You,

Tammy Crook
Vice President

Article II, Section 3 (new section)

This corporation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes of promoting the sport of amateur unicycling within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now enacted or hereafter amended, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that also qualify as Section 501(c)(3) exempt organizations.

Article II, Section 4 (new section)

At all times the following shall operate as conditions restricting the operations and activities of the corporation:

1. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to any member of the corporation not qualifying as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as now enacted or hereafter amended, nor to any Director or officer of the corporation, nor to any other private persons, excepting solely such reasonable compensation that the corporation shall pay for services actually rendered to the corporation, or allowed by the corporation as a reasonable allowance for authorized expenditures incurred on behalf of the corporation.

2. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall constitute the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, or any initiative or referendum before the public, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including by publication or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

3. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as now enacted or hereafter amended.

4. The corporation shall not lend any of its assets to any officer or director or guarantee to any person the payment of a loan by an officer or director of this corporation.

Article VIII, Section 2 (rewritten)

Upon dissolution, the Executive Board shall distribute the USA's assets in the following priority:

1. Payment of all obligations, claims, and expenses, then

2. Distribution to one or more exempt purposes having aims consistent with the USA and within the meaning of the section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Ballots are due by January 20th, 2010.

I vote to add the amendments to the USA Constitution to show USA as having 501(c)(3) status.

Yes

No

Name _____

(Please print clearly)

Signature _____

Return to:

Tammy Crook
15208 451st Ave SE
North Bend, WA

International Ranking of Unicycling Skills - IRUS

The Skills Development Committee is looking for volunteers to serve on panels to help us finalize several of the new International Ranking of Unicycling Skills (IRUS) divisions.

If you can help, please contact Carol McLean, Skills Committee Chair, at unicyclecentral@hotmail.com.

We need volunteers for any or all of the following review panels:

- * Artistic Intermediate
- * Artistic Advanced
- * Artistic Expert
- * Juggling Intermediate
- * Pairs Intermediate
- * Tall Intermediate
- * Technical Intermediate
- * U-Wheel Intermediate

Volunteers will review the current drafts of the skill tests, try them out, and provide feedback. Are the skills too easy or too hard? Are any skills missing?

At NAUCC 2009, we also talked about adding another new division to cover some of the new skills that riders are focusing on in the outdoor competitions. If you can help draft that set of skills, let us know. Remember that each set begins where the base levels leave off, so there's no need to "reinvent the wheel" each time. Riders begin each division after they have the basics down (riding, turning, idling, and so on).

Volunteers can begin by reading the IRUS handbook.

We also need more certified skill testers. To test in the IRUS program, you must sign up to become a skill tester.

Contact Carol if you'd like more information or if you need the current version of the IRUS handbook.

IRUS Program Helps Develop Pairs Skills

The new Pairs levels in the International Ranking of Unicycling Skill (IRUS) program are designed to help club leaders teach newer riders some of the basics of riding with a partner. So far, the levels are working well, and we welcome more input in developing these levels further. Please send your suggestions to Carol McLean, Skills Development Committee Chair, at unicyclecentral@hotmail.com. To become a certified IRUS skill tester for the Pairs levels and other levels in the IRUS program, please contact Carol.

IRUS Pairs Intermediate

Prerequisite: Base 6

All skill testing guidelines apply. See the Unicycling Handbook for complete testing guidelines.

Class 7-1

1. Freemount, no contact, both using the same standard mount.
2. Freemount, with contact, both using the same standard mount.
3. Ride in a box chase position, 7 revolutions, break to the right, ride 7 revolutions, dismount.
4. Ride in a box chase position, 7 revolutions, break to the left, ride 7 revolutions, dismount.
5. Single-hand twirl to the right, 3 times.
6. Single-hand twirl to the left, 3 times.

Class 7-2

1. Freemount, no contact, both using the same Intermediate mount.
2. Freemount, with contact, both using the same Intermediate mount. (Freemount may be the same one as used in Class 7-2 Skill 1.)
3. Single-hand twirl to the right, 3 times, reach over, reverse direction, and single-hand twirl to the left, 3 times, ride out, dismount.
4. Closed crossover, 4 times, dismount.
5. Idle with contact, 10 times.

Class 7-3

1. Freemount, no contact, both using the same Intermediate mount.
2. Freemount, no contact, both using the same second Intermediate mount.
3. Freemount, with contact, both using the same Intermediate mount. (Freemount may be the same as that used in Class 7-3 Skill 1.)
4. Freemount, with contact, both using the same second Intermediate mount. (Freemount may be the same as that used in Class 7-3 Skill 2.)
5. Ride in a high chase position, 7 revolutions, alternate positions, 7 revolutions, dismount.
6. Ride seat-in-front against body or stomach on seat, 7 revolutions.
7. Ride backward with contact, 3 revolutions.
8. Idle one-footed, 5 times.

Nine Intermediate Mounts:

Back

Jump

Moving

Seat extended in front

Stomach-on-seat

Side

Side reverse

Standard to one-foot idle

Spin 180 degrees

Hand/Arm Positions:

Single-hand grasp: Single r/l hand grasp, riders face forward.

Closed double-hand: Riders face each other, one riding forward while the other rides backward with hands joined r/l and l/r.

Definitions:

Closed crossover: Riders are side-by-side facing front. Riders join hands (r/r and l/l) with right arms above left and with the leader on the right side of the follower. To crossover, partners raise arms while riding, the leader guides the partner to cross in front, and they smoothly switch sides (rider on right side becomes the rider on the left side) without dropping hand grasp.

Single-hand twirl: Riders approach one another from opposite directions; as they meet, they join their right hands (or their left hands), and ride smoothly in a circle, both traveling clockwise or both traveling counterclockwise. Each rider's other arm may be extended straight out to the side, placed on hip, or in another position that is in sync with the partner.

Chase: Riding position where one rider is directly in front of the other.

High chase: Hands are joined (r/r and l/l). The rider in front holds his/her hands up (palms facing forward) at shoulder height. The other rider reaches over the partner's shoulders to grasp both of the partner's hands.

Box chase: Rider in front extends both arms down and to the back to grab the hands of the rider in back (r/r and l/l). From this position, riders drop right hands, rider in front turns sharply to the left, rides behind partner, and rejoins hands.

Wrap turn: Partners face each other with hands joined r/l and l/r. While riding, with one partner going forward and one backward, the leader draws the right arm up and across the front of the follower, causing the follower to rotate and reverse riding direction. Arms are wrapped, so the pair is riding very close to each other. Unwrap is reversing this motion to regain the original position.

Spin out turn: From wrap position, the leader lets go of the l/r hand grasp, and gently pulls the follower's other arm, causing the follower to spin out and pivot turn, still holding the leader's right hand.

- All freemounts and dismounts must be done in unison, unless stated otherwise.
Ride into and out of all skills, unless stated otherwise.

- Pairs should be of about equal ability. Both riders in a pair may test at the same time, or just one rider may test (if the other rider is already of that skill class). For example, a rider may test for Class 7-2 with a rider who has already passed Class 7-2. However a rider who is testing for Class 7-2 may not have a pairs partner for testing who is Class 7-3 or higher.

- Both riders either pass or don't pass as a team, if both riders are testing.

- "With contact" means partners must be touching or have some contact with each other, such as hand to hand, hand to shoulder, back to back.

- Skills that do not specify "with contact" or "no contact" may be done either with contact or without, riders' choice. One-footed skills may be done with either foot; pairs do not have to use the same foot.

- Skills must be performed with required form (for example, arms extended on a twirl) for the attempt to be successful.

The Wheel Just Keeps On Turning

by Gretta Van Bree



I knew that when I retired after 35 years at the Detroit Medical Center, I would need to have some activities planned to fill my time---training at the gym, perhaps piano lessons, or learning to speak Spanish. I never considered learning to ride a unicycle until my friend, Mary Wittenberg, urged me to sign up for 8 one-hour lessons given by the Redford Township Unicycle Club. Mary and her two children are all good riders, and I had not noticed any of them in casts during the past year, so I went for it!

The thing about a unicycle is that there is only one point on which to balance, and that point is a wheel. The wheel's sole purpose in life is to turn---around and around. As I soon found out, you can fall left or right, forward or backwards. In my opinion, the best direction is forward, because both your feet are likely to hit the ground. The other three directions are not so much fun since they can yield injured wrists, elbows, shins, and backsides.

So I put in my time, nursed my injuries, and slowly but surely began to see progress. I went from wobbling atop the unicycle seat and clutching at the wall (or the poor person who was trying to assist me) to riding unassisted the length of the

gym and actually turning a corner! Of course, I have to be turning right to pull that off---left turns don't work yet.

I was told that the best age to learn unicycle riding is about eight years old. Very young children don't have proper muscle development yet, and older folks (like me) have too much fear. The kids who took classes with me are riding quite well, while I am into May already and just starting to "get it". I doubt that I will ever be jumping rope, juggling, or flying over ramps like others in the club, but I think I will be able to ride pretty well before much longer. I have joined the club, and bought my own unicycle---both positive signs for my future as a unicyclist!

Fourteen Weeks Without a Ride

By Grace Alexander

I am sixteen years old and I have been unicycling with the Redford Township Unicycle Club (RTUC) for nine years and each year I fall more and more in love with riding. I usually ride twice a week at practice and up to ten miles a day on top of that. This sport gives me a chance to get away from everything for a while, relieve stress, and organize my thoughts. Unicycling has helped teach me to be an individual and put my opinions ahead of everyone else's. Individuality is an important part of life and unicycling helps me keep it in check.

I never really thought about how important riding is to keeping my sanity until just recently. It was early September and I was just a block away from my house, returning from a ride on my coker and I dismounted to stop and talk to someone. I put my left foot down first and twisted my ankle. A cracking sound had me worried. I sat in the street for a good ten minutes asking myself if I could get back up. The people I was going to talk to asked me if I was okay. I didn't answer. They told me to just walk it off and that I would be just fine. I wasn't convinced; I got my phone out of my pocket and called my mom to ask her to come get me. I told her where I was and she seemed confused that I needed to be picked up a block away from home. When she came to get me I was still sitting in the street kind of worried. She got out of the car and loaded my unicycle in the back. Then she asked me if I needed to go to the hospital, unsure how to answer I told her I should try and get in the car before we decide. I stood up and reluctantly hobbled a few steps to the car. Once I was in I reached down, pulled up my pantleg, looked at the size of my ankle, and decided to go to the emergency room. I arrived there and waited for a good half an hour in the waiting room only to get called into another one for a longer wait. I finally saw a nurse who gives me a fancy bracelet and took me to another waiting room, where I waited for an x-ray. When they finally called name I went and laid on the table in the x-ray room. The x-ray technician pulled up my pant leg, looked at my ankle and said, "Yeah that doesn't look normal." After I took the x-rays I was taken to yet again, another waiting room, where I waited to see a doctor who reviewed my x-rays. After a long agonizing two hour wait, three doctors walked into the room. The one doctor kneeled down and told me that the end of my fibula near my ankle was broken and my tibia had a small fracture. Two of the doctors left the room and the third doctor put a brace on my leg, fitted me for a pair of crutches and told me to go to an orthopedic surgeon.

Two excruciating days with a brace on my leg and I finally went to see a surgeon, he took x-rays, and told me that I would be in a non-weight bearing cast and my leg would take six weeks at the most to heal. I came back after six weeks, which I thought would be the end of this madness and they put me in a walking boot for four more weeks! When I came back, four weeks later, they took the boot off and let me walk on my own. I asked when the next time I could ride would be and they said to come back in four weeks and see if its okay to ride.

It has been thirteen weeks since I broke my ankle and I should be able to ride before Christmas, if nothing goes wrong. The injury recovery time was more than twice as much as the maximum time the doctor originally expected. This agonizing experience has helped me to realize how important the sport of unicycling really is to me. I can't wait to ride and see if I'm still as good as I was, hopefully I won't have to relearn any tricks. Unicycling is a great sport that really pushes me to do my best. I love to unicycle and I'm not going to let something like a little mistake stop me from doing what I love.

Failed Century Attempt

By David Stone

I set out this past Sunday to ride my 2nd full Century. I made it 80% of the way.

I rode my only complete Century in 2002. Then in 2008, I had 89 miles under my belt when I had to stop due to a really bad case of saddle soreness. Basically my cheeks looked like Kris Kringle's. I was determined not to let that happen again.

This ride starts at 6 am at the northern end of New York City's Central Park, but I took off earlier than that in order to avoid the rush -- thousands of bikers! -- And mainly to give myself a better chance of finishing by 6 pm, when the ride comes to an official end.

AVOIDING DIAPER RASH

I donned two pairs of padded cycle shorts and slathered on enough chamois butter for three people. I reapplied the butter throughout the day, and as a result, I suffered no friction pain during or after the ride. I did end up with some numbness in the seat area, but that had completely dissipated a few hours after the ride.

AVOIDING SUNBURN

It was a lovely sunny day -- too lovely, in fact, which is how I found myself terribly dehydrated midway thru -- so I was glad that I'd remembered sun block. I applied some when the sun finally showed up at about 7:30 am and then again a few hours later. I am not sure how much sunlight can filter thru the slats of my helmet, but I didn't want to end up looking like a zebra-head.

30 MILES in 3 HOURS

Considering that I was riding a geared 29" unicycle, that's not a quick pace, but including breaks, and given how little training and general riding I'd done in the previous 12 months, I was happy with how things started for me. My breaks totaled about 40 minutes by mile 30, but while I was on the unicycle, I had been maintaining a 13.1-mph pace, which is quite fast given the frequent slow-downs and stops along this ride. I mainly stayed in high gear this time since last year's ride produced a catastrophic fall when the unicycle didn't shift gears properly, pretty much ending my ride (along with the raw bum cheeks).

I figured that I had 9 hours to complete the next 70 miles, an easy enough task. I'd felt good riding the 13 miles from my mom's apartment building (near Central Park and across the street from the Natural History Museum in Manhattan) to rest stop #1 (Prospect Park, Brooklyn). I felt pretty good riding from there to rest stop #2, 17 miles later. Unfortunately, the ride organizers had shortened the space between stops #2 and #3 without adding an addition stop between #3 and #4. This meant that riders had a 30-mile gap before the next big stop (Kissena Park, Queens). And after another hour of riding, I didn't think I'd ever make it that far.

WINDED and DEHYDRATED

It didn't help that we had a strong breeze blowing in our faces for most of the Queens segment of the ride. The bikers complained about it, too, but they acknowledged that I

probably had it worse because my sitting position (on a unicycle) makes me much less aerodynamic than they are. There were plenty of times where, because of the wind and my exhaustion, I rode in low gear at about 6-8 miles an hour.

At some point I finally realized that my muscles were screaming for more water and more electrolytes, but at the time I just felt like I had lost all of my energy. When it dawned on me that I was dehydrated, I started drinking a lot more from my backpack hydration system, nearly emptying its recently-replenished 70-oz bladder. This meant that from that point on, I frequently had to stop in order to empty my own (less-than-70 oz) bladder, and since the organizers had forgotten to include even one portable toilet between rest stops, I invented quite a few of my own. Sorry, Queens.

I stopped frequently between mile 40 and mile 50, and pretty soon I had most of the gas back in my proverbial tank. During my recovery period of about two hours, I wasn't able to maintain more than 12 mph and at some points had to put the uni into low gear, but after about two hours, I was back to about 80% strength, able to keep up with some of the slower-paced bikers for long stretches.

LOST

At this point, it actually helped that I got lost. I had been riding with a pack of about 20 bikers. Whenever we came to a busy intersection, I managed to weave thru the traffic before the rest of my pack; I've been good at reading traffic ever since I began serious uni commuting 10 years ago. The peloton would pass me between stop lights, and then I'd catch up to them, zig and zag thru the cars, and get ahead once more. At about mile 50, I was feeling strong, and as I approached the group waiting for the light, I jokingly announced, "I'm making my move!" as I crossed against the light once again. By the time I looked back, I realized that I'd missed a turn (probably at that light). I was either going to have to find my way back to the course (impossible, since I didn't have a map), return to the spot where I'd gone off course (perhaps adding an additional mile to my ride), or ride straight to Kissena Park (rest stop #3), which I discovered was just two miles away. I opted to shorten this part of my ride, and I arrived at the 60-mile rest stop after riding just 53 miles. It was about 11:30 am.

I was more than halfway thru the 100-mile mark in under half the time, but I began to admit to other riders that it was very unlikely that I'd complete the full Century, especially given the hilly parts still to come. To my chagrin, I managed only 27 more miles in the remaining 4.5 hours.

FINAL REST STOP and the SILLY BRIDGE

After Kissena Park, I set out for the Astoria Park rest stop about 20 miles away. I was feeling better thanks to all the water and electrolytes I was consuming, but I still needed to take breaks just to get some blood flow back into my groin. Because of the long pauses I'd had to take earlier on, I arrived at the final stop -- mile 81 or so for everyone else, mile 74 for me -- too late to have a good shot at finishing 100 miles by 6 pm. I chatted with two guys who were riding a tandem (same ratio of rider to wheel as me, I pointed out, but apparently they still had an easier time), and eventually we all headed off.

This last little stretch (of about 5 miles) involves a bridge that has an incomplete biking section which forces riders to carry their cycles up and down several series of steps. I have no idea why the ride organizers continue to use this bridge on the route, but it was the final nail

coffin for my Century chances since it slowed us all down as, like little ants carrying grasshoppers to the anthill, we all made our way across the span. Last year the delay happened to be worse -- there were more of us trying to cross at the time -- but this year it still took over 10 minutes to get across about a mile of space. I arrived at the finish line, having ridden 78 miles, at 5 pm. I briefly considered pedaling around the park at least once more, to add 5 miles to my trip, but I decided to call it a day and head back to my car, 2+ miles away. It wasn't 100 miles, but I was happy with the ride, especially considering my lack of preparation, the heavy wind for about 20 miles, and my ability to fight back after that dehydration.

AFTERMATH

I took a strong hot shower (my mom's apartment building has firehouse-power water pipes thanks to old plumbing) and remembered that same experience last year when I could barely tolerate even the coolest mild drip on my ruby-red cheeks. Soon I was driving back to New Paltz, feeling fine. Later that night, I awoke with a weird pain in my wonky left knee, but it went away by the following morning. I have only one muscle that's even slightly sore: my left bicep (!) from holding the extension on my uni. For the first time after a ride over 80 miles, I was able to ride a unicycle the next day.



David's guni resting against the entrance to Coney Island's famous Cyclone roller coaster.

California Mountain Unicycle Weekend 2009

By John Foss

The 14th annual California Mountain Unicycle Weekend (MUni Weekend) took place September 25-27, 2009 in the Lake Tahoe area of Northern California. About 40 riders from as far away as Wisconsin rode trails at the Northstar ski resort, the famous Downieville Downhill, and a trail called Hole in the Ground at the Donner Summit. A Trials competition was assembled and run by Cody Williams and Jarin Erikson.

This is the world's original MUni Weekend or all-MUni event. This year we kept it simple with the focus on non-competitive rides on spectacular terrain. The Downieville Downhill is a classic ride as it's long (15 miles + depending on route) and descends 4000' from the start, at the Sierra Buttes, to the end of the trail in the small town of Downieville.

Let's let the photos speak for themselves. All photos by John Foss. They are listed in chronological order with "0925" being Northstar, "0926" at Downieville and "0927" the Hole in the Ground trail. Find these photos at:

<http://unicycling.com/09muniweekend/>

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MUni Weekend founder and host John Foss, near the top of the Hole In The Ground Trail (left)

Group shot in Downieville, with two of our loaded vans (right)



Unicycling Photos

(right) Matt Sindelar participates in DOT-FMW.



(below) Grace Alexander's broken leg-see Fourteen Weeks Without a Ride article for more information.



(right) At DOTFMW, Travis shows of his hopping skills by hopping over pumpkins.



At the TCUC banquet, (above) Brent receives his "Best Face Grind" award and (right) Paul play the piano for everyone.





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