

October 2009

Spokes

The Newsletter of the Edmonton Bicycle and Touring Club

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It's Official ... it's Fall

Are you feeling the blues as the summer cycling season draws to a close? Don't fret because that just means it's time to start planning events for the winter. Come to our **Winter Planning Meeting** where we'll plan weekly ski events, ski trips, plans for the Birkie, and any other fun winter event we can think of. We always need new ideas so please join us. There's a long fun and exciting winter ahead!

Date: October 18

Time: 1:30 pm

Location: Edmonton International Hostel—10647 81 Avenue.

Co-ordinator: Sid Bennet at sid@coachsid.com



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We welcome your comments and suggestions - especially if you have an idea for a trip or outing you think your fellow club members might enjoy!

Newsletter Enquiries and Submissions

The deadline for the newsletter is the 22nd of each month. Enquiries and articles can be e-mailed to guru1@shaw.ca. Articles **must** be submitted in Word format and any pictures may be scanned and e-mailed.

Moving?

If you're moving, please send your name, old address, new address and new phone number(s) to the Membership Co-ordinator at the mailing address above. This information will ensure that you receive your newsletters.

E-mail?

The EBTC maintains an e-mail directory of members. Occasionally, e-mail or other items received by EBTC considered to be of interest to the membership are forwarded via e-mail. If you wish to be added to this electronic mailing list to receive updates, please send your request via email to info@bikeclub.ca

To save costs and valuable executive time, all club members receive e-mail notification when **Spokes** is posted on the club website and are expected to access it online. Members who cannot access the Internet readily can get **Spokes** in hard copy by sending in a written request to the EBTC post office box noted below. Remember that it costs \$2.00 for each copy we print and put in the mail.

Publisher Information & Policies

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Fees for non-members to advertise in *Spokes* is \$25 for a quarter page, \$50 for a half page and \$100 for a full page.

Opinions expressed in **Spokes** are those of the contributor and are not necessarily shared by the Edmonton Bicycle & Touring Club. The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity, brevity and content and is the sole judge of suitability for all articles and advertisements.

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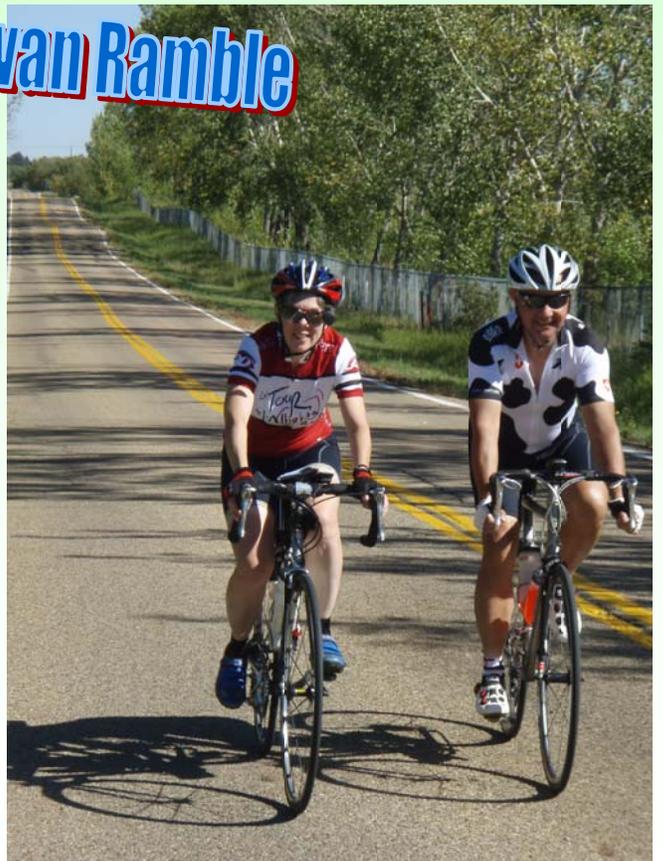


Rides in September...

Lindbrook Loop



Fort Saskatchewan Ramble



Waxing Anyone???

Do you have Cross Country skis gathering dust in your basement or garage? Well it's time that you pulled them out, dusted them off, and waxed them up for some fun this winter. Ooooh waxing . . . yah - been there tried that!

Do the mysterious ways of waxing leave you bewildered? Do visions of wizards and voodoo witch doctors chanting incantations over their smoking boards give you chills.

Well, shudder no more! The EBTC has a waxing wizard, and he is here to help. Keep an eye on the EBTC website and in the pages of Spokes for upcoming ski wax clinics hosted by, none other than, Mr. Mike Stern! Yes indeed, Mike can coax great kick and long luxurious glide out of a pair of barrel staves. Have a look at his skiing curriculum vitae and I'm sure that you will agree - he's got game!

Then when the snow flies, you too can join your fellow EBTC members at the Wednesday Slide and Glides. And make room in your weekends for at least one ski trip to one of the local nordic centres. We might even get in a trip to the Canmore Nordic Centre or another out-of-town bit of nordic nirvana.

If you would like more information, please e-mail Scott at skeast@runningroom.com



CROSS-COUNTRY SKI BIOGRAPHY

I would describe myself as an avid cross-country skier (Yvonne, my wife would say I'm close to fanatical). I took up cross-country skiing 20 years ago when we moved here from southern Africa. From the mid 90s I have participated as a recreational racer in the Alberta series of regional loppets, including our Canadian Birkebeiner. More recently, each year I also like to try to ski, if time and funds permit, in a major out-of-province race as well.

I try to get out skiing at least two evenings a week, as well as on weekends throughout the ski season. I travel a lot in my work and usually take my skis along to ski after work in the local area. I love trying different ski trails and over the years have skied all over Alberta and BC, as well as various places in Saskatchewan and the northwestern US. I typically average 1,200 km year on my skis. Normally, I split my time between skate and classic skiing.

For the past few years, I have been the Touring & Loppet Co-ordinator for the Edmonton Nordic Ski club and have been tasked with reviving the club's adult recreational ski program. As well as helping arrange the Wednesday evening social skis in Goldbar Park (in conjunction with EBTC) and day trips to outlying ski areas, we introduced a series of basic waxing clinics last year for club members, which proved very successful.

I am currently producing a series of occasional articles describing different ski areas within two hours drive of Edmonton. Copies of these articles can be downloaded from the [Edmonton Nordic website](#).

Mike Stern

Dealing with Discs (part 1)

Prevention & Back Exercises

Ideally, you want to stop back pain from developing by taking some simple steps to reduce strain to your back.

Many chairs don't offer sufficient support for your lower back. Even well designed chairs can be used improperly. For example, most people sit in the middle of the seat and then slouch backward against the back support.

It is important to maintain the natural lordosis of your lower back (the curve in your lower back) while sitting. You can use a specially designed lumbar support that can be attached to your chair or simply roll up a medium sized towel and place it between your lower back and the backrest of your seat.

As well, stand up regularly, put your hands on the back of your hips and bend backwards five or six times.

Many activities around the home like gardening, making the bed and vacuuming cause you to stoop forward. Make sure that you stand upright occasionally and bend backwards to relieve the strain on the back ligaments. If you are doing any lifting, make sure to keep your back straight and bend from your hips and knees.

In the event that your back starts hurting be sure to see your massage therapist right away. They'll be able to help you out or refer you to a qualified medical professional.

Here are several **extension exercises** you can do to recover from low back pain, specifically acute episodes of back pain □ when your back "goes out." They put the vertebrae in a position that pushes the soft centre of the disc forward so it stops pushing on the ligaments or nerves in the low back.

Before beginning, consult with your massage therapist to be sure that they are appropriate for you. Do them in the order outlined. When doing these exercises you should move until you just start to feel discomfort and then return to the starting position. If you do these exercises every two hours, about six to eight times per day, you should notice a significant change in pain within one to two days.

Closely observe the location and intensity of your pain. If your pain becomes less diffuse and localizes to your back or if the pain becomes less intense, you'll know these exercises are working. If the pain intensifies or starts to spread further from your spine, especially below the knee, stop exercising and get advice from your massage therapist.

1



Lie face down with your head turned to the side. If your neck is uncomfortable in this position, roll up a towel and place it under your shoulders. Take deep breaths and consciously try to relax the muscles in your lower back. Stay in this position for about five minutes.

2



Remain face down. Place your elbows directly under your shoulders so that you are leaning on your forearms. Take deep breaths and allow your back to relax completely. Hold this position for about five minutes. This exercise should be done only once per session after Exercise 1.

3



Place your hands under your shoulders. Straighten your arms and push your body upwards. Let your pelvis sag and rest on the floor. Relax the muscles around your low back and hips completely. It is important that you hold this extended position for one to two seconds before you lower yourself to the starting position. If you feel that the pain is decreasing or localizing, you may hold the position for a little longer. - Repeat this exercise ten times after having completed Exercise 1 and 2.

My Red Helmet

I know that bike-riding to work was not that popular in the days when I started cycling. It must be almost 30 years ago now! I worked in Government Centre and the ride from my house in the north part of the city to the bank was about a 7 KM bike-ride. I cannot remember if I started riding to save bus fare money or to keep in shape. There just were not very many cyclists on the road going to and from work!

I had this yellow mountain bike from Sears that became my constant companion. When I bought the bike at Sears, they talked me into a life-time warranty that covered EVERYTHING! That warranty covered yearly maintenance as well as anything that might go wrong with it, even flat tires! I would ride that bike everyday, rain or shine to and from work. My "parking space" was a steel fence right outside in front of the bank. I could keep a watchful eye on it from my office even though I always locked it up. Although we had bike locks, some sneaky thieves would still manage to steal a bike or two!



I am sure Sears started to hate me. Every spring I would lug that beast (it was a heavy bike) over to the warehouse and have my yearly check-up and maintenance done on it. I put on so many miles every season that they would have to replace cables, pedals and gears, brakes, and often give me new tires. When I would get a flat, I just hauled it over there for them to fix, remember, I had a warranty that covered EVERYTHING, even flat tires! I never changed a tire myself!

Mom and dad lived halfway between my office and my place. It was very usual that I would make a stop there with my bike after work for a visit. Dad would be out puttering in the yard and we would catch up on any news and gossip. Dad would show me his special garden and what new thing was growing there. He tried growing the oddest things! Even though Edmonton is a northern city, he would try growing things that had no business being planted in Edmonton. He would make tall piles of dirt and plant seeds he brought back in his jacket pocket from Europe or elsewhere. If it could be planted, he would try growing it! There was all types of German lettuce, grapes and even asparagus. It was a lot of work for him but he just loved it! He would grow the biggest dahlias the size of dinner plates in his garden! Some of the things would never really grow that well because of early frosts and hard and bitter winters, but he always gave growing things a try so he could say he tried! He was always sharing plants and seeds as well as his expertise with neighbors, friends and even strangers!

In those days, not many cyclists ever wore a bike helmet. You just didn't see it on the streets! There were not that many cyclists going to work and back either! I never thought about wearing a helmet much, that would just look goofy and wreck my hairdo!

The Rathole

One day my dad said, you know Jasmine, you should get a bike helmet. He didn't think the streets were very safe. On my travels to and from work, I would ride through what was then known as The Rathole. Anyone who knew The Rathole, knew why it was called that! That Rathole was reason enough to have to wear a helmet, and other safety gear for that matter! The Rathole was this long dark windy tunnel that was at least a block long. It only had 2 lanes and the traffic in there was nasty. It was supposed to have lights, but I think they were all covered in dirt and grime. Seeing anything in The Rathole was near impossible. I think I used a headlamp! It smelled moldy and was damp and cold even on the hottest days of summer. One side of The Rathole had a sidewalk for cyclists, the other side was for people who dared to walk through there. Often there were big holes in the pavement in the road that would fill up with this slimy water that ran down the sides of the walls of The Rathole. When I rode through there, it wasn't uncommon to get splashed when cars would hit those holes filled with dirty water. You almost needed to wear a rain-suit every day, because rain or shine, The Rathole always had hidden pools of yukcy water everywhere!

Getting through the tunnel was always tricky since sometimes there would be people walking on the wrong side where the bikes were supposed to be and visa versa. Since you could hardly see, there were near misses with cyclists and pedestrians and even a few collisions now and again! No doubt about it, The Rathole was a dangerous place! It was my easiest route, so I stuck it out and used that Rathole everyday! It was pretty scary and I know I almost crashed in there a few times!

Dad knew all about The Rathole. EVERYONE in Edmonton knew about The Rathole.

That is probably why Dad started talking to me about wearing a helmet. Dad was an avid cyclist in his younger years and I am sure he had a lot more experience when it came to bike-riding (and crashes) than I ever did. He rode a lot in his youth. He even won a bike race in Germany as a young man. I always said that my love of cycling was passed down to me by my dad!

Buying a helmet wasn't exactly on the top of my "to do" list. It was on the list, but somewhere on the bottom I think. I kept putting it off. After work when I made my stops at Dad's place, he would keep asking me when I was going to go to Georges Cycle and buy that "brain bucket"? My reply was always the same...yah, yah...I am going to get one! I had the money, I just didn't worry so much about buying a helmet. Remember few cyclists were wearing them around town!

So one day we were in his garden, Dad and I. He pulled out his well-worn leather wallet and pulled out a \$20 dollar bill. He handed it to me and said, look, I want you to buy that bike helmet! I told him I did not need his cash to get one, I had the money but not a whole lot of enthusiasm to wear a helmet. He said it would be a lot better for my brains if I ever got schmucked on the road by a car or fell off my bike! He would not take the 20 bucks back! There they were, squished in my hand!

I made my way to George's Cycle. That was THE bike store in those years. I really had no excuse not to go since it was almost on my way home! In I went and looked at bike helmets. There was not the variety like you find now, there might have been 2 types and two colors! Mine became a bright red number that you could spot a mile away. It was round and made my head look like a cherry, but I loved that helmet!

I wore that red helmet faithfully every time I got on my bike after that. My dad was pleased! I know people would look at me funny, but I didn't care! It was the smart and safe thing to do and it sure gave my dad (and me) piece of mind. He was always glad to see me wearing that red helmet! In fact, I wore that helmet longer than a person ought to wear any helmet, but in those years, nobody crowed about replacing them every couple of years!

A few years ago when bike helmets became more fashionable and the safe thing to do, I decided it was time. Time to retire the red helmet and buy something more modern and safe! I bought a new helmet! I kept the red helmet on a shelf in my garage.

Recently my dear dad passed away.

The red helmet still has a special place in my garage and in my heart. Every time I see the red helmet sitting there, it reminds me of all the great rides I had wearing that helmet and the concern my dad had for me!

I sure will miss him!

Jasmine Hohenstein

Footloose Caboose



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