

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

This subject of this book is human powered recumbent tadpole TriCycles. If you do not know what these are, proceed no further. For your own peace of mind, put the book down now, and instead go ride a bicycle.



Otherwise, proceed at your own risk ...

FREEDOM ... It's out there!



FREE  
OF  
THREE



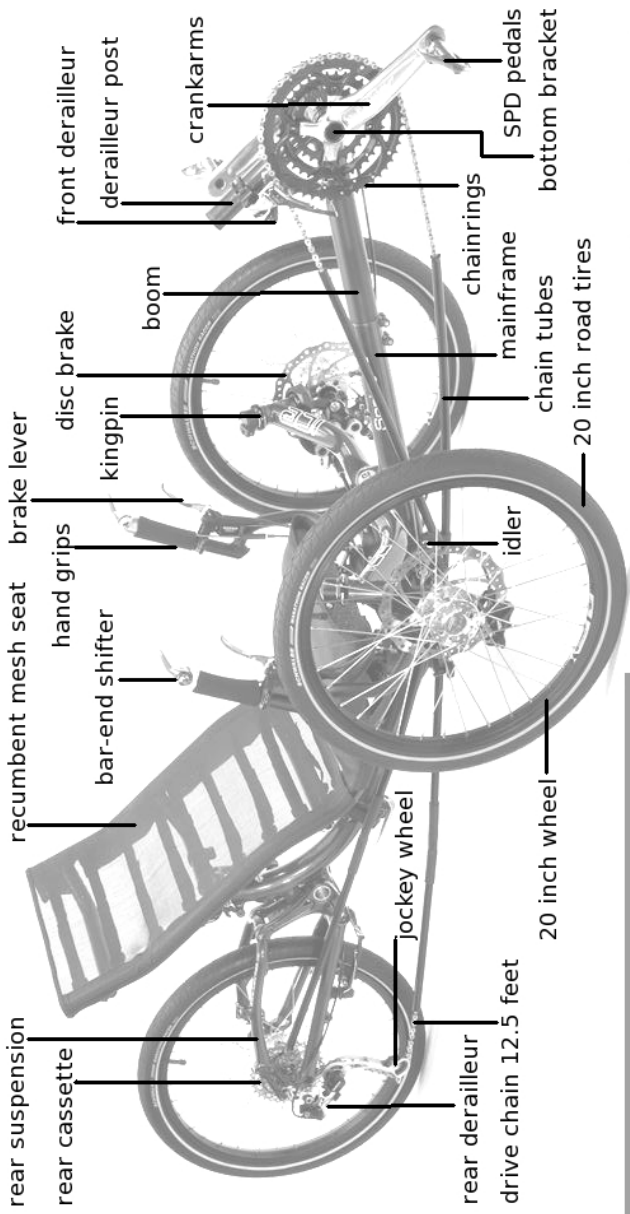
the WILD WORLD of  
RECUMBENT TADPOLE  
Tri  
Cycles



For the  
adventurous few,  
there is life  
beyond  
the box!







**ANATOMY OF A TADPOLE TRIKE**

Trike: ICE Sprint

# FREE ON THREE

The Wild World of  
HUMAN POWERED  
Recumbent Tadpole  
TriCycles

with 450 Illustrations

**Steve Greene**

*May your trike add smiles to  
your miles and years to your life!*

*- Stevie G.*

**iUniverse, Inc.**  
**New York Bloomington**



“Steve Greene’s new book, *Free on Three*, is a comprehensive, inspiring guide to the world of tadpole tricycles. There is something here for everyone: useful information; practical suggestions; triking narratives. Underlying it all is Steve’s contagious sense of commitment to life lived genuinely – with simplicity and in community with nature and other human beings.”

- **Terry Butler**, Oregon Coast & Northern California

#### **WARNING:**

The activities discussed in this book are potentially perilous, involving strenuous physical activity in unpredictable settings. They should be attempted only by trikers in good physical condition and with a keen eye for possible dangers. The information contained in this book should not be considered a substitute for common sense. The author, all contributors, and the publisher of *Free On Three* decline all responsibilities for any injuries, physical or otherwise, anyone might sustain while using a tricycle in any manner suggested herein. **That being said**, should anyone sustain a joyful infusion of exhilaration and adventure as a result of piloting a trike in any manner described within these pages, please give credit where due. Thank you. Trike on!



Utah trike pilot on two wheels

## Acknowledgments

Numerous helpful people and companies contributed to this book, and here they shall be recognized. I would like to personally thank each of you for your time, effort, and contribution to this book. It all comes together within these pages to bring the wild world of human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles to all enthusiasts across the planet. It is hoped that readers of this book will learn much from your endeavors, and be inspired to experience for themselves the joy of being free on three.

### **These people and companies deserve our appreciation:**

Joe Kurmaskie and Paul Mc Kenzie (Arkel), Brian Gobrogge (Berserker), Peter Stull (Bicycle Man), Bryan Ball (Bent Rider Online), Mark Egeland (Catrike), Charles Coyne (Recumbent & Tandem Rider Magazine), Dan Price (trans America triker), Denise Lanier (marathon triker), Ian Sims (Greenspeed), Rolf Garthus (Hostel Shoppe), Peter Ross, Ben Rotheway, and John Olson (ICE), Mike Davidson and Trevor Innes (Innesenti), Janet Buckwalter (trans America triker), Sean Kerrel (Kerrel Cycles), Kyle Bryant (trans America triker), Michael Newhouse (Sidewinder), Jeff Yonker (TerraTrike), Terry “Hoppy” Dean (T.Ryx Recumbents), Ashley Guy (Utah Trikes), Rodney Schram (trike pilot), Gary Bunting (trike pilot), Brian Stuart (trike pilot), Linda Newman (trike pilot), Bill Newman (trike pilot), Steve Newbauer (trike pilot), Don Saito (trans America triker), Will Baird (trike pilot), Norm Nieberlein (trike pilot), Bob Shaver (trike pilot), and Adam Payne (trike pilot).

*Who looks outside, dreams;*

*Who looks inside, awakens.*

**Carl Gustav Jung**







# FREE ON THREE TRIKE

*A trike in the garage is safe,  
but that is not why trikes are built!*

## Evocation

“Perfect day for a trike ride. Within a 5 minute span I came across an animal skull (*empty and lifeless*) and a newborn calf. Made me think of life and death, and the story we write between these two events. No rough drafts or editing allowed ... every page is final copy.”

**Janet Buckwalter**

from her *Chasing the Dream* trike tale



Janet's trans- America adventure

\*\*\*\*\*

**Cover photograph:** Leaving the lowest landscape in North America (282 feet below sea level), Steve Greene pedals his ICE Qnt trike out of Badwater Basin on Highway 178 in Death Valley, heading for Furnace Creek. Photo by Jack Freer, expedition security and chief photographer.

**Rear Cover Photograph:** A lucky trike pilot places the coveted Innesenti racing trike through its paces in England.

Cover design and creation by Steve Greene

## To The WARRIOR . . .

It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this book in honor of a true trike warrior, a man for whom life has dealt a cruel hand, yet in the spirit of unwavering perseverance, he aggressively moves forward to make a difference in the lives of many silent sufferers. Most of us ride tadpole trikes for a variety of common reasons, but there are those who pilot their three wheel steeds because there is little choice left. Friedreich's Ataxia is a disease that mercilessly destroys human bodies, bringing a tragic and premature end to an unfulfilled life. There is no known cure, so victims live in a body that progressively degenerates on a daily basis, taking away the ability to even walk.

The recipient of this dedication tells his story within these pages, a must-read for all of us who have ever dared complain about trivial issues like recumbent butt or sore muscles. For a former bicycle rider who can no longer balance on two wheels, and for whom muscular control progressively wanes by the week, piloting his trike is one of the few methods that keeps sending instructions to the muscles to grow stronger, not waste away, thereby keeping at bay the evil specter of destruction at least for a while longer.

**Kyle Bryant** is pedaling for a cure, bringing worldwide awareness to FA so that it may one day lose its sting for future generations. He took a big step in this direction in 2010 as part of Team FARA, piloting his Catrike 700 in the grueling 8 day Ride Across America, commonly known as the infamous RAAM. Yes, Kyle Bryant is indeed a trike WARRIOR, bravely showing the rest of us the truth that only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go!

Kyle, this book is wholeheartedly dedicated to you and all the others who suffer from Friedreich's Ataxia in the hope that these pages may help in your gallant quest to find a cure. Trike On, Kyle Bryant! You embody the true spirit of "Free on Three" as a man for whom I have the highest regard. You are the hero who deserves this dedication!

**Steve Greene**



**Kyle Bryant – Free on Three**

*Do not go where the path may lead,  
go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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“In 2003 we took the first GT prototype to Interbike at Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. This is an International Bike show just for dealers, and normally has 1,000 exhibitors. They also have two “Out Door Demo Days” in the desert. Now, recumbents normally have a bad name for hill climbing, so I was very surprised when one shop rider brought the trike back and exclaimed: ‘This trike climbs really well!’ At the end of the two days of testing, I noticed that the frame was bent, and made a mental note to strengthen it in that place. Then some time after the show, we discovered how it got bent. There, in a mountain bike magazine, was a photo of a rider on the GT3, going over a jump on the BMX track, about 2 feet up in the air! I wondered how many times it had been jumped...”

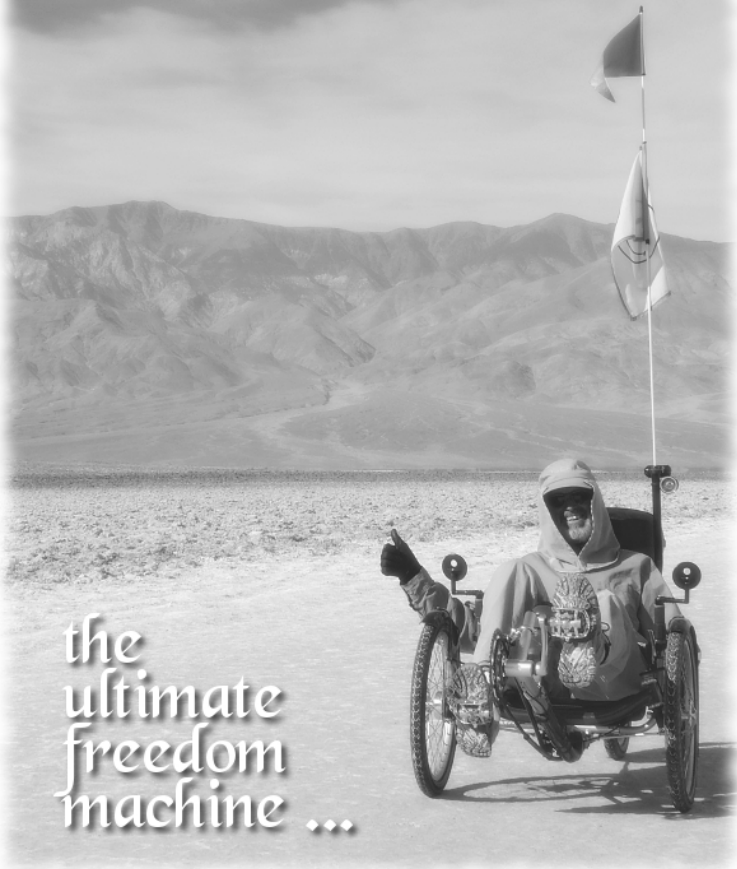
**Ian Sims**  
Greenspeed Founder & CEO, Australia



**Part One:**  
**The Ultimate Freedom Machine**



# FREE on THREE



the  
ultimate  
freedom  
machine ...

# The Closest Thing To Flying

by Peter Stull

What do you get when you cross a sports car with a bicycle? You get a recumbent tricycle that rides like a Porsche with pedals! Remember when you were a kid and a bike ride was the closest thing to flying? You would zoom around all afternoon and not notice any pain. That kind of fun and comfort is available again on a recumbent trike.

A good recumbent trike combines the comfort of an office chair and the exhilarating handling of a sports car. Why look back on the days when riding was fun? With a recumbent trike you can get exercise and fresh air you need while enjoying the view. You don't have to lean on your hands or crane your neck to see where you are going. You can relax and ride at the pace you want to. You can't fall over on climbing steep hills; you don't have to put your feet down when the light turns red or get back on when it turns green.

"No pain, no gain" certainly doesn't apply to a recumbent trike! Your wrists, back and butt can be as comfy as sitting in a good office chair. Your neck, elbows and shoulders are as relaxed as when you are driving a car. All this because the recumbent design puts you in a comfortable, angled position like a living room recliner. A recumbent trike seat is over a foot wide and has back support much more like the seat in your car than the ones you see on most bicycles. On a recumbent you won't need special padded gloves or pants to protect you. Why not ride comfortably? Why not have fun!

One day an Amish teenager was test riding one of our trikes here at Bicycle Man, where I sell recumbent tadpole trikes in addition to standard bicycles. As he rode by, he yelled to me: "These are fun, I think my horse is for sale!" Is that how you felt the last time you rode your bicycle? If not, maybe you should try a recumbent trike, one of the most fun and exciting human powered vehicles ever invented!

***Peter***

**<http://bicycleman.com>**

# Welcome Fellow Trike Pilots

## What is this book all about?

by Steve Greene

I am happy to have you here, with your hands now holding the first book on this planet devoted exclusively to the realm of human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles! Most of us rode tiny tricycles when we were just wee people, getting our first true taste of the freedom these machines held for our imaginative minds. Who would have thought that as adults we would be returning to a mode of transportation popularly associated only with small children? Tell someone you ride a tricycle and be ready for an inquisitive and perplexed reaction.

My own return occurred during my 59<sup>th</sup> year of life, with a trike-barren gap of about 53 years or so (the Dark Ages). But unlike my tricycle in times of yore that I pedaled around the driveway in my Buster Brown shoes, the trike I now own as an aging baby boomer is a highly sophisticated three-wheeled mechanical marvel, a personal freedom machine that will take me anywhere I have the spunk to travel. There are few bounds for a determined and fit pilot of a tadpole trike, a vehicle that, by its very appearance, commands the immediate attention of people and motorists wherever it is seen swiftly moving across the landscape.

There's no doubt about it! Human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles are indeed an attention-grabbing bizarre form of transportation, three wheeled vehicles powered by humans seated only inches from the asphalt. They're low, fast, and so unique that motorists and pedestrians can't help but take a moment to check them out. In fact, their strange appearance is the major factor why these machines are usually safer than bicycles in most traffic situations. Tadpole trikes, being little known, immediately bring drivers to a more lucid state, demanding their full attention, and a need to identify.

Automobile drivers are further amazed when they are witness to a trike heading down a long and steep mountain pass road, where speeds of 45 miles per hour or more are attainable for some trikes as the pilot simply coasts along in his reclined bucket seat. At those speeds, tadpole trikes are incredibly stable, instilling confidence in the rider, and awe in the motorists who are attempting to determine if they should pass the trike, or just pace it for a while for the show. Some drivers

report the thrill of simply watching the trike rocket down the grade, an electrifying experience that is magnified multiple times for the person actually piloting the machine. There is no room for agonizing over the past or worrying about the future. Difficult as it is to verbally describe the account of rapid downhill descents for the uninitiated, suffice it to say that they come as close as one could imagine to racing a Lamborghini through the curves. Trikes are race cars with organic engines: YOU.

Interestingly, the first tricycle was reportedly invented in 1680 by a German watchmaker who was disabled. This crafty fellow wanted to remain mobile despite his failing lower body, so his invention was powered by hand cranks, rather than today's usual method of foot cranks. Then, in 1789, a pair of Frenchmen developed a foot-powered cycle with three wheels, and coined the term "tricycle" to differentiate it from the ordinary dime-a-dozen bicycle. Finally, the British got into the act during the 1800s, and the efforts of two men, separated by 54 years, led to a regional revolution in England. Reports claim that by the end of that century, twenty trike manufacturers were producing more than 120 models to satiate the needs of the world's first corps of pioneering trike pilots.

There are two basic styles of tricycles. The most common in the mind of an average person is called the delta trike, as these are the kind that little children have ridden since the beginning of trike time. I started out on a delta trike when I was three. My parents must have gotten rid of it though because I can't find it anywhere. Bet it would be worth some money nowadays! Delta trikes are available for adults who who prefer two wheels in the rear, and only one steering wheel in the front. Tadpole trikes, on the other hand, have only one driving wheel in the rear, and two steering wheels in the front, with the exception of the Sidewinder, which uses the rear wheel for steering and the front for power.

This book focuses solely on recumbent tadpole trikes. When first looking at trikes to buy, I did contemplate for a while acquiring a delta trike because I had one manufacturer who was willing to deeply discount a model that was no longer being produced, but I reconsidered when I asked if he had ever flipped one of his delta designs. The owner said that he had gone over a couple of times, but it's not a point of worry. Well, once I began thinking about deltas in this way, I opted out of that design, and landed squarely in tadpole territory.

Hence, a tadpole man I became, even though I like the sound of

the delta word better. I didn't like imagining myself as a juvenile frog, but after I realized how capable the tadpole is while touring under load and cornering at speed, I soon forgot all about wording, which, in reality, is nothing more than some human-bestowed naming convention that means absolutely zip. What is important is that the trike is my escape into the freedom of peace, happiness, and solitude. It makes no noise and emits no poisons. It is my magic carpet ride into an alternative reality. I am Free on Three!

The title of this book is **Free on Three**, intended to motivate one's inner spirit of adventure, to get you out there seeing your planet from a whole new perspective. It's amazing how the same territory you've witnessed for years in automobiles or on foot suddenly transforms into an entirely different world from the cockpit of a trike. I call it a cockpit because that is precisely what it feels like as you lower yourself down into the ultra comfortable seat. We don't get "on" a trike. We get "in" it. Tadpole trikes are so unlike any other vehicle you've ever piloted. And yes, you do feel like a pilot inside one!

So, what will you find within the pages of this unique book? Well, quite a lot of knowledge about tadpoles, that's what! From who makes them and sells them, to how to choose the right one for your needs, to what it's like riding a trike hundreds or even thousands of miles across the country. Once you finish reading the final page, you'll have a comprehensive understanding of human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles. Whether an expert already, or just a greenhorn about to plunge in, you'll learn things you never knew, you'll become an expert on these three wheeled rigs, and you'll be eager to head out into your own wild journey of discovery.

This book is titled "Free on Three" to best capture the wild spirit of unlimited triking adventure. It is divided into seven sections. Right now, you are reading the first section. Here is the order of things, followed by what to expect:

- Part 1: **The Ultimate Freedom Machine**
- Part 2: **Trike Tips From Tadpole Dealers**
- Part 3: **Inside The Major Manufacturers**
- Part 4: **High Adventure On A Low Trike**
- Part 5: **Trike Pilot Profiles**
- Part 6: **Steve's TriAngular Realm**
- Part 7: **Tadpole Tricycle Resources**

**Part ONE** (The Ultimate Freedom Machine) consists of five introductory chapters to whet your whistle, thereby priming the essence of our primordial need for exploration and adventure. Trikes allow intrepid travelers to leave the car behind, while traveling many times faster than feet would ever allow.

Peter Stull, owner of **Bicycle Man** in Alfred Station New York, penned the first concise piece (**The Closest Thing To Flying**) that describes the unparalleled spirit of triking. Peter is an expert with trikes, and sells a complete line of tadpole tricycles ... he's not just a bike guy!

Yours truly scribed the next article, which you are reading right this instant in time. This welcome chapter is intended to set the stage for what you'll find within the covers of this book.

Up next comes an informative chapter written by Charles Coyne, publisher of Recumbent & Tandem Rider Magazine (**Ten Years Of Trikes In RTR**). He chats about how trikes have played an integral part of his magazine's first ten years in business.

Another well known journalist provides a few words in the next welcome chapter (**Grinning Like An Idiot**). Bryan Ball, creator of the world's most widely read online recumbent website, Bent Rider, muses about how recumbent trikes have grown from nearly unknown status to the default recumbent design in the minds of many a cyclist.

Wrapping up Part One is an emotionally laden masterpiece of tricycular brainwashing called **Free on Three**, which does its best to inject pure adrenaline into those triking veins of yours. If you believe that riding a tricycle is nothing more than basic transportation, intended only to accomplish certain necessary tasks of getting you from point A to point B, then just skip the next chapter because you'll likely think the author has been inflicted with the madness of overly dramatic exhortation. Actually, it may be true, as I have most assuredly become a three wheeled fanatic. If you like the ideology I offer in Free on Three, then you'll enjoy this whole book, which is overflowing with the same philosophy.

**Part TWO** (Trike Tips From Tadpole Dealers) is packed full of wisdom from four dedicated tadpole trike dealers, and describes many things that all enthusiasts are hungry to know. First, Peter Stull is back to explain what's necessary for choosing a unique tadpole trike that fits you just right, while serving your specific three wheeled needs.

Next, Rolf Garthus, owner of **Hostel Shoppe Recumbents** in Stevens Point Wisconsin, discusses many important aspects of

recumbent tricycling, and answers some frequently asked questions. Hostel Shoppe is a convenient and widely respected one-stop trike shop that offers assistance in person, online, or over the telephone.

Then, Terry “Hoppy” Dean, owner of **T.Ryx Recumbent Trikes** in Escondido California, leads an informative talk about many facets of tadpoles, and discusses his own beginnings. Like quite a few trike companies, Hoppy believes that fossil fuels are extinct, which gave rise to his shop’s unique naming.

The first section of this book is brought to a close by trike guru Ashley Guy, owner of the superbly stocked **Utah Trikes**, a well-known tadpole trike dealership that does significant business both at their shop and online. Ashley’s chapter discusses a number of necessary elements that any serious trike enthusiast needs to know.

**Part THREE** (Inside The Major Manufacturers) takes you behind the scenes of some major trike manufacturers, including one pannier manufacturer and one ingenious mountain trike company that is now inactive. Taking the lead in part three is the Canadian company called **Arkel**, a good name to know if you are seeking cargo solutions on your trike for errands around town or treks around the world. Joe Kurmaskie describes many options that will carry your stuff on three wheels.

Brian Gobrogge of **Berserker Cycle Design** steps up next to explain why the Berserker tadpole trike is a good choice for riders who want the maximum in bodily comfort, a luxury his company offers through the trike’s full suspension system. The 26 inch wheels also afford more ground clearance and allow for easier ingress and egress.

**Catrike** then moves into the spotlight with its chapter written by Mark Egeland. Catrike’s extensive line of tadpole trikes are made in Winter Garden Florida, and have become a mainstay in the tadpole world. Here, you will learn the story of owner Paulo Camasmie, and how he started this famous trike business from humble beginnings.

Trikes for a small planet are the next order of business, and we have a chapter by Ian Sims, founder and CEO of **Greenspeed** trikes from Australia. He eloquently offers his wisdom from over 20 years of designing trikes, with the feedback of thousands of customers, many of whom have toured for thousands of miles on Greenspeed trikes.

From Australia, we move on to more northerly territory to visit Inspired Cycle Engineering, commonly abbreviated and known as **ICE** in the tadpole world. Ben Rotheway submits for our consideration and



enjoyment the history of this premier trike company from Great Britain. Learn about ICE from its earliest times to the present, and see how a race car driver sparked the flame.

The pursuit of perfection is what drives Trevor Innes, brilliant creator of perhaps the most sophisticated trike to be found in this part of the universe, the sleek and visually pleasing **Innesenti**. Mike Davidson offers this story about Trevor's carbon fiber three wheeler made one at a time to the highest exacting standards in England. Check out this steed if you are seeking a true conversation starter.

**Kerrel Cycle** is a story of a different sort. Imagine a tadpole trike that has the uncanny ability to traverse side hills through an unequaled suspension system that allows it to lean, thereby keeping the rider upright. Sean Kerrel masterminded such a vehicle, the amazing SK3 mountain trike, and tells the tale of its conception, construction, and current inactive status. Look into the mind of a master.

Nearly all tadpole tricycles have a rear wheel power train, with the front wheels steering. One does not. The **Sidewinder** drives power to the front, while the rear wheel steers the trike, which allows for this incomparable trike to turn easily at 90 degrees, making it capable of turning in its own length. Michael Newhouse tells the story behind this stand-alone vehicle.

Bringing to a close this section is the venerable **TerraTrike**, a world renowned company with a modest commencement in Kentwood Michigan. Jeff Yonker tells this story of a successful manufacturer that prides itself in being "part of the solution" to the world's transportation difficulties. From a simple sketch on a napkin at a Christmas party, TerraTrike has grown to a world class trike leader. Step inside.

**Part FOUR** (High Adventure On A Low Trike) is where we will need to settle in for some long term reading about four dedicated trike pilots. Find an easy chair, some spare time, and transport yourself into the wild world of cross country and life altering trike tales. Many of us use our trikes for local transport, relaxation, errands, and fun. Others, far fewer in number, choose the tadpole trike for other reasons. Two of the following four pilots came to trikes due to personal misfortune, and ended up making a significant difference in not only their own lives, but the lives of many others. You will be amazed by the deeds they have accomplished, and may even wish to become a part of their worthy causes. Tadpole trikes are the great equalizer, as you will soon learn!

The other two came to trikes with distance on their minds ... lots of it. They departed on epic treks equal to what most people would only do in a high speed toxic automobile. In fact, most “normal” people would likely believe these extreme trike pilots to be living on the edge of reason, or perhaps beyond, depending on one’s point of view. Having dabbled in this aspect of triking personally, I can most assuredly attest that it’s not as crazy as it initially seems. Of course, I like taking up less space by living on the edge, so take my words with a grain of salt.

Taking the lead in more ways than one, trike warrior Kyle Bryant relates an ever challenging life through his heartwarming tale, **Slaying The Ataxian Dragon**, the true story about a currently incurable disease that takes the lives of countless innocent victims, often early in life. Only in his mid twenties, Kyle’s life may be nearing a premature conclusion, one that leaves him physically helpless in its wake. Iron Man Kyle is using human powered recumbent tadpole trikes to make a difference, by bringing a world focus upon the crippling and deadly disease known as Friedreich’s ataxia. Thus far, he has been the driving force behind hundreds of thousands of dollars donated towards research to find a cure. You won’t believe what he’s done with a trike! Learn more at: [theAtaxian.com](http://theAtaxian.com) and [cureFA.org](http://cureFA.org).

The New York Marathon is for runners on foot, or at least that’s what the past restrictions mandated. At 46, Denise Lanier suffers from Multiple Sclerosis, a disabling condition that grimly took her away from triathlons and bicycling a few years ago. In her story, **Blazing A New Trail**, she tells how a human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle has given her a new chance at life, and how she rode her trike in this prestigious east coast event after having been granted permission to enter on the trike as a reasonable accommodation for a disability. Denise is a teacher, reviewer of books, and an award-winning writer. Her poetry has appeared in Bloomsbury Review, Cake, Luna, Best American Poetry Blog, and various anthologies. Her non-fiction has appeared in the Miami Herald and Story Circle Journal; her fiction has been nominated for Best New American Voices. Denise earned an MFA in poetry from Florida International University, where she also edited Gulf Stream Literary Magazine. She is the founder of WordPlay, a poetry-in-the-schools project which she “co-teaches” with her mobility assistance service dog Luke. Learn more at: [wonkybent.wordpress.com](http://wonkybent.wordpress.com).

In her early 50s, Janet Buckwalter scheduled three summers to ride a tadpole tricycle for 4,051 miles over the course of 81 days ... from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific! Her story, **Chasing The Dream**,

shares her joys, sorrows, and experiences during ten weeks in the seat of a trike. The tale is broken up into three phases, one for each summer, with the first phase told here in a fair amount of detail, and the remaining two sketched out as notes in a journal. Janet intends to document the entire journey in a detailed book of her own, thus you will have to wait for all the specific particulars of the second and third phases yet to come. Even so, there is enough in these pages to clearly give you the idea of what she went through, how she handled it, and why she loved everything that happened along the way. Her trike tale will encourage women who have been contemplating a long trike trip to finally get out there and give it a go. Learn more at her website: [BikeWriterUSA.com](http://BikeWriterUSA.com).

Part four of the book is finished off with **The Great American Trike Tour**, an epic endeavor mounted by naturalist, minimalist, and adventurer [Dan Price](#). This self proclaimed hobo artist lives on the slopes of the Eagle Cap Wilderness mountains in northeastern Oregon ... in a tiny hobbit house he built himself, which is tucked into the side of a forested hill just outside the miniature town of Joseph. Dan is a unique fellow, who made a decision a few years back to ride a tadpole tricycle from his home to the end of the Florida Keys, a distance of well over 4,000 miles, by himself in one chunk of time. He earns a modest income hand writing and drawing little journals about his life, called the Moonlight Chronicles, and he detailed his fascinating trike trek in three such issues, a few images of which appear in his story here. In this book is his compelling tricycle odyssey in its entirety (only a handful of his marvelous drawings are here unfortunately). This is a long one, so relax and enjoy every adventurous minute! It doesn't get much better. Learn more about Dan at his Moonlight Chronicles website: [MoonlightChronicles.com](http://MoonlightChronicles.com).

As an added delightful bonus for all you wordsmiths out there, a nifty **word-find puzzle** has been craftily inserted after Dan's epic tale.

**Part FIVE** (Trike Pilot Profiles) features very brief profiles of eleven people who love their trikes, from riding around town for fun and exercise, to riding across vast distances for the ultimate challenge. Included in this section are tiny tidbits of information, along with a few photographs, of: Rodney Schram, who rides a TerraTrike Zoomer; Gary Bunting, who rides a Catrike Road; Brian Stuart, who rides an ICE Adventure; Linda and William Newman, who both ride TerraTrike Zoomers; Steve Newbauer, who rides a Catrike Trail; Don Saito, who

rides an ICE Qnt; Will Baird, who rides a T1X Suspended Trike; Norm Nieberlein, who rides a Catrike 700; Bob Shaver, who rides a Catrike Speed; and Adam Payne, who rides a Catrike Road. These are people with somewhat normal lives just like you and me, working jobs, paying bills, and hoping for sunny days. What brings them all together in this section is their love of human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles and their spirits of adventure, all ten of them being far apart from the crowds when it comes to moving about the planet on their trikes. So you see, trikes are for everyone, regardless of their current life situation or age. You will learn a few of the joys of everyday triking by everyday folks.

**Part SIX** (Steve's TriAngular Realm) documents an abundant assemblage of the bizarre thoughts that are stuck in the mind of yours truly. Yep, contrary to widespread popular rumors of my cognitive demise once I chose to replace the ubiquitous automobile in my life with a lowly tricycle, I remain intellectually viable on all fronts, and thus will enlighten those pilgrims among you who seek my deeply cryptic, yet always profound, wisdom. Well, that was a supremely ego-centered sentence that could certainly lead strangers to think that I'm an arrogant puffhead, so I best set the record straight.

Those who know me realize that I am a happy go lucky, laid back fellow who loves to laugh at life and bring smiles to the faces of all I meet. This human world of ours is WAY too serious, so I opt out, thank you very much! Guess you could tell because I ride a tadpole. Whichever way everyone else goes, I turn and go another. I find my solace and answers to life in the natural world, a place my tricycle allows me to access with minimal footprint and consequence. In any event, five of my abbreviated writings appear in this section as follows:

**The First Eleven Days** recounts the first eleven days of my Death Valley Tricycle Expedition, which I experienced in October and November of 2009 (37 days total). This was my first time on a trike all by myself riding overland, camping, and trying to stay in one piece and alive. My mileage was not that of ultra long distance cyclists, but for me, it was an appropriate challenge for the first time out of the box. I only had four months to prepare for this journey, and that included purchasing a trike! I had sold my final car in December 2008, was asked to be a guest speaker about one of my Death Valley National Park books in May 2009, and decided to remain true to my environmental convictions by choosing a trike to make the 900 mile trip to America's

lowest, hottest, and driest landscape.

**Adventuring On A Trike** comes next, which is an article I wrote for Trike Asylum to provide a few insights about using a human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle to ride long distances on a road system not designed for human powered humans. Topics like where to sleep, what to eat, how to pee, and why to even go on a trike adventure in the first place are discussed, along with many other eye opening matters of supreme importance (anything to do with trikes is, of course, supremely important, right?). This chapter is a basic primer for those who dare contemplate such wild adventure. Living to tell your tale is essential, as we all want to hear about it. The full article appears on the Trike Asylum website.

**To Trailer Or Not To Trailer** tags along on the heels of the preceding piece, and probes the many pros and cons of towing a trike trailer cross country behind your trike. There are clearly loads of benefits to bringing everything but the kitchen sink in a trailer, but then again there are significant drawbacks too. This is wisdom only gained after actually towing a trailer day after day, mile after mile, mountain after mountain. A trailer allows you to have everything to survive right at your fingertips even in the most remote wilderness, and that is why I pulled one on my first overland trek. Find out what I thought about it, and see if you agree or think I'm a few cards short of a full deck.

**Trip Tips** conveniently gives you the scoop on a few aspects of trike piloting for the long haul, that is to say, things you will want to consider before you head out the door to three wheeled adventure across the countryside. This portion of Free on Three will at least get you thinking about some stuff the open road of freedom will surely teach you, sooner or later. There's much more to overland distance triking than is covered here, but the book finally reached the publisher's maximum allowed page count, thus I had to put the brakes on my out of control brain. If you have some tips of your own, head on over to the Trike Asylum forum and let loose ([link in Support section](#)).

**Meet Wild Steve** sends part six packing. This piece provides a fleeting glimpse into who the heck I am, in the event anyone has any real reason to want to know. But since most books seem to pop one of these in at the end, I figured I had better do likewise. Save this for last, which is precisely where it belongs! Some trikers are weird. I'm one of them. By the way, the "wild" is due to my strong passion and love for the wilderness of Earth, not because I party or initiate social unrest.

**Part SEVEN** (Tadpole Tricycle Support) puts a wrap to everything, and is where you will find contact and viewing information for a whole slew of things, from trike manufacturers to dealers, and anything else that might be appropriate for human powered trike pilots like ourselves. As time marches on (haven't figured out how to stop it yet), some of this may change, but that's life. Check the internet for any updates since publication. There are also **16** nifty **trike safety tips** included in this section from ICE for your consideration! Great stuff.

Well folks, that's about it for now. Jump into this book at your leisure, and read it in any order you see fit. It's not necessary to experience the chapters in the order they appear. Keep the book by your living room recliner and read a bit each evening to wind down. Pretend you're sitting in your trike as you read. Gee, here's a better thought: Bring your trike into the living room and use it for your seat if you're really into this whole triking realm. After all, what better place to be seated while reading about tadpole trikes! Needless to say, your spouse may well think you've lost your mind ... but that's okay because some of the most interesting people I know already have. Might as well enjoy your fling through life according to your own priorities. In a world where you can be anything, be yourself!

Finally, on the wild chance that you are indeed a kindred spirit and primal adventurer, and this book inspires you to plan and execute an ambitious endeavor like taking off across the vast countryside for parts unknown on your trike, keep these worthy words from the classic US president and rough rider Teddy Roosevelt in your mind as you contemplate your most wonderful wild adventure:

*“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”*

# Ten Years of Trikes in RTR

by Charles Coyne

Recumbent trikes have been a mainstay of our reviews in *Recumbent & Tandem Rider* magazine (RTR) since our first issue was printed in 2001. Since then, we have put many miles on a wide variety of recumbent trikes. The list includes the bread-and-butter staples that have helped some manufacturers to become leaders in the industry, a few of them have been one-off prototypes that have demonstrated the designers' prolifically clever engineering talents. Of the dozens of recumbent trikes that the RTR staff have reviewed over the years, most have been the familiar tadpole layouts from the mainstay manufacturers, such as Greenspeed, ICE, TerraTrike, Big Cat, and HP Velotechnik.

We have also tested a few delta-configured trikes, notably those from Hase Spezialrader, Cycle Genius, Stites, Beanz, and the now-defunct Haluzak.

Reflecting the broad range of innovation that the recumbent industry, some of the more interesting 'bent trikes have been the one-off, or very limited production machines. While not strictly speaking considered to be true trikes, the one or two quad-wheeled rigs share more technology with trikes than anything else under the sun.

One interesting engineering exercise we enjoyed was the Beanz Rowcumbent Trike, a delta-configuration from Greg Beanz. The Rowcumbent combined the rowing action similar to the Rowbike, with pedals in a similar configuration as the Hase Lepus or Kettweisel trikes, so you rowed, and pedaled at the same time. The Rowcumbent was well made, fun to ride, provided a great workout, but in the end was perhaps too complex, too difficult to build, and too expensive to bring to market.

The Sherer Lever Trike was another attempt at powertrain innovation, this time applied in the tadpole configuration. Instead of the rider's legs spinning a chain with pedals, two long levers were pushed by foot. Each lever would pull a cable, which would pull a chain, which turned a freewheel, which . . . well, which is another exercise in trike engineering that didn't quite get into mass production, but it was a fun rig to ride.

One of the most intriguingly engineered recumbent trikes reviewed in RTR #21 was the Stites ChameleonECO Trike. A delta configuration, the ChameleonECO is still available from Stites on a

limited production basis. The trike is a front-wheel-drive machine, fitted with under-seat steering. Turning is accomplished by turning the USS bars, *and* leaning in the direction of the turn. The bars turn the front wheel via a drag link, but remain level while the front wheel leans in the direction of the turn, as does the very comfortable seat. The bars and rear wheels are connected to a sub-frame, while the seat and front fork are connected to a separate sub-frame and the sub-frame pivot separately from each other. Quite an ingenious design, and perhaps the machine that serves as the very highest example of construction quality we have seen in the magazine.

One example of tadpole trikes that was really fun to ride was the Hellbent Spitfire, which sported a unique steering system. Rather than the typical under seat steering or direct steering found on most tadpole trikes these days, the Hellbent's rider was provided with a tiller-type steering system. However, rather than swinging the tiller left or right, steering input was accomplished by rotating the tiller which had a 90-degree handle for the rider's left hand to grasp. Bar end shifters were installed at the end of the tiller and handle for shifting, a single brake lever at the end of the tiller was actuated using the right hand. In a way, the steering input required was similar to turning a steering wheel in a car. Perhaps installing a segmented type steering wheel might have made the trike a bit easier to adapt to for neophytes. Aircraft companies such as Cessna and Piper made the switch from control sticks to wheel-shaped controls many decades ago for that very reason. The Hellbent's were beautifully built aluminum 'hot rod trikes' in all other respects.

Sales of recumbent trikes have increased steadily since the first issue of *Recumbent & Tandem Rider Magazine* was published in 2001. With the mainstay manufacturers growing and dominating the market, we haven't seen much in the way of 'out of the box engineering' in evidence for some time. What we *have* seen is a market that has become very competitive. This competitive market is causing manufacturers to become very price competitive, while offering ever-better fit and finish and more features for enthusiasts to choose from. Trikes have become lighter and more comfortable, and serious engineering has resulted in correct steering geometry and steering systems that deliver precise and balance steering. High speed aficionados can sate their adrenaline desires with a lightweight carbon fiber-framed trike designed for high speed and handling. Looking for a strong, dependable mount that can be relied on over the course of a months-long cross country expedition?



Many choices there, including gearing options that can provide enough rear-wheel torque to pull the stump of a Sequoia.

Like to travel as a couple? Two of the mainstay ‘bent trike builders offer tandem trikes, Greenspeed and TerraTrike.

Samples of engineering innovation still evolving would include offerings from ICE, of Great Britain, and Germany's, HP Velotechnik. Their talented engineering and design teams have produced sophisticated suspension systems that improve trike ride and handling markedly.

Portability and storage is a bit of an issue with tadpole recumbents; to address that issue, there are now many models being offered with folding frames and quick-disconnect wheels. Transporting a fully assembled trike by car can be difficult, but several rack companies have developed trike-specific hitch racks for that purpose.

The demand for recumbent trikes is likely to increase in coming years, perhaps at an even faster pace than we have seen in the past. This increase in demand will come from the ever-increasing number of baby boomers reaching the point in life where a recumbent trike makes sense as a part of their life style. The aging boomer population has/will have the financial ability to ‘indulge’ in a trike as a part of an overall attempt to maintain health and combat the cruel eventualities of aging. A trike’s slow-speed ‘can’t fall over going slow’ stability is a real attraction to those who still want to spin some pedals, but have become wary of possible balance issues when riding only two wheels.

It’s hard to predict the future of the recumbent trike phenomenon, but it’s likely to look much like the recent past: more trikes being sold; better and better trikes being sold; prices and features offered being priced very competitively by the current mainstay manufacturers.

*About the author: Charles Coyne is the publisher of Recumbent & Tandem Rider Magazine, which produces the annual Recumbent Cycle-Con Convention and Trade Show.*

**www.rtrmag.com**  
**www.recumbencyclecon.com**

\* \* \* \* \*

# Grinning Like An Idiot

by Bryan Ball, Bent Rider Online

Well ... I have to say that I really should have seen this coming. I'm the editor of the longest running and most widely read recumbent news source in the world. People expect me to spot trends a few years away. Sometimes I get it right, but I was definitely wrong about trikes. In 2002 I actually said, "I think that tadpole trikes will eventually make up 10-15% of the market, but I don't ever see them doing much more than that." Oops...

Fast forward nine years, a time when tadpole trikes have absolutely taken over the recumbent market. When I first started 'BentRider in 2000 and I would tell people what I did for a living, they were often confused. They didn't have a clear image of what a recumbent bike was in their head. Some would ask if they were the "sit down bikes", some would ask if they were those bikes "with the big bubbles on the front", and even more thought recumbent bikes all "had the steering under the seat". Now almost everyone who bothers to ask me says, "Oh. One of those three wheeled things?". Tadpole trikes have become the default recumbent design in the eyes of many.

It's not hard to see why. Tadpole trikes have no learning curve. You just sit down, pedal, and steer. They're also at least as comfortable as any other recumbent design. You can easily find a design to match what your body needs. High seat, low seat, mesh, hard-shell, upright, laid back ... they're all there.

Above all ... They are FUN!!! No matter how long you own one, you'll never get over that human powered go-kart feel. There is no better conduit back to your childhood than a recumbent tadpole trike. When I used to work at a dealer, first time owners would often ask how long the front tires would last on their new trike. I always replied, "The first set won't last long at all. You'll be out turning tight circles in parking lots and grinning like an idiot for hours at a time. You'll ride it like a child and burn them up in a thousand miles. Don't worry. You won't mind buying more."

At least I was mostly right about that!



The Azub trike



Bryan on an HP Velotechnik Scorpion recumbent tricycle



Parker on a Catrike Dash



Steve on a Catrike 700

<http://bentrideronline.com>

# FREE on THREE TRIKE

*by* Steve Greene

Are you one of those odd maverick types who always seems to choose your own path in life? Do you turn left when everyone else turns right? Do you head out the door for adventure when the rest of them stay sheltered and safe at home? Do life's alternatives speak to your spirit, sending you into a realm where boredom never gets a foothold? Do you seek mobile freedom without the use of petroleum fuels? If so, you may be an ideal candidate for the elite "Free on Three" fellowship, a loosely confederated clan of rogue nonconformists who navigate Planet Earth's terrain on human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles.

A human powered what, you say? Tricycle? Banish those archaic images of yourself and playmates as tiny new humans during your formative years riding little red and white tricycles with metal seats. We're not talking about tediously creeping along back and forth in your driveway and in front of your parent's house. No, the magical kingdom of tadpoles is a distant world far removed from childish pedal pushing on a squeaky uncomfortable transport device, and yet, one foundational aspect closely bonds the two points in time. One unbelievably powerful characteristic forms our need to ride as children, and then again as adults.

Humans seem to have a desire to move about. We began this tens of thousands of years ago as we migrated across the landscapes of this planet to find new homes, explore new territories, and taste the flavors of freedom. We used our feet back then, and our progress was slowly measured in steps as we wore out primitive shoes and the soles of our feet. Negative impacts on the lands and skies of our routes were not an issue. Then, as human brains evolved into more capable organs, a few mavericks found new ways to get about. Wheels provided the means, humans provided the effort, and ingenuity provided the vehicle. Bicycles developed. We got around faster. Eventually petroleum powered cars enabled perilous high speed movement ... at high environmental and human life costs that ever increase as the years go by.

Now, in the twenty-first century, cars have overridden our cities and roadways like white translucent termites in the framing of an old rotting house, and what was once a novelty driven by the wealthy adventurous few, is now as common as a toilet. You see both everywhere, and you HAVE to use them. Life cannot exist without either, or so goes the typical mindset. To be contrary nowadays, to be that rogue traveler who makes a difference in the health of the body and the planet on which he lives, a new call beckons ... one that brings forth images of a five year old in a 1950s driveway. So what is that one powerful characteristic that underlies both childhood and adult need to ride a tricycle?

Simple: **Freedom!**

Freedom, in more ways than one, is the result of riding a tricycle, whether you're a preschool rascal sampling your first joys of breaking loose from mom and dad, or a spunky brain surgeon needing to breathe fresh air instead of acrid antiseptic. Tricycles provide freedom on three wheels to move our bodies to new physical locales. Tricycles provide freedom to ease the mind out of traditional stresses of life. Tricycles provide freedom to be an intrepid explorer in brave new worlds. Tricycles provide freedom from sedentary lifestyles that slowly erode the body into a state of nonfunctional dilapidation. And for adults only, tricycles provide one of the ultimate routes for labeling ourselves as members of the coveted OTB "Outside the Box" club. We are Free on Three!

We knew about this freedom as kids, because our tricycles, commonly abbreviated as trikes, sure got us where we wanted to go in a lot more style than our feet did. Of course, we always were back where we started for dinner each evening; it was a temporary freedom, but boy was it great! We rode trikes that had two little wheels in back, and one big wheel in front, a traditional design referred to as a delta trike. The rigs had one speed, a mid-range gearing that was perfect for little legs flying along on flat pavement in suburban neighborhoods. If you lived on a street with a big hill, then life got tough real fast. The seats were metal, because lots of kids left their trikes outdoors, and steel would stand up best to the weather. We had a small squeezable bulbous horn on the handlebars, and we never rode after dark. Getting to the end of our street was the ultimate treat, the freedom from home that set the tone for later wanderings once we returned to three wheels as adults.

Of course, most humans never did return to three wheels. They got their four wheeled automobiles and were happy right there. Happy to pay colossal sums of money for thousands of pounds of steel, rubber, plastic, and glass. Happy to pay hefty yearly fees to insurance companies equally happy to take it from them. Happy to hand large amounts of cash over to specialists trained to keep the intricate vehicles viably mobile. And happy to maintain the image of being just like everyone else. Clones.

But then, there were the divergent ones, the humans who colored outside the lines since elementary school, those who discovered unique happiness on their own paths. They knew they had something good on those little old tricycles of yesteryear. They tried bicycles growing up and as an adult, but truly hated that hard thin leather seat ever trying to thrust its way farther up into their posteriors ... a real pain in the rear. Sure, it was fun to ride, but it was just as much of a relief to stand up and let the hindquarters return to a more comfortable state. It was good to get down the road, but welcomed when the wrists could hang loose without the unnatural strain of the upper body bearing down upon them. And the spinal column below the skull! Having to keep the head actively forced back to see the scenery ahead and the magnificence of the sky was a genuine, well ... pain in the neck!

Consequently, a select few grown-up humans who were motivated to remain human powered as much as possible, turned to a new vehicle as their mode of transport, one that had three wheels, got everyone's attention wherever it went, didn't cause bodily unpleasanties, and one that reminded them of their living room recliners. It was, and is, the incredible recumbent tadpole tricycle, a vehicle that instantly sets its occupant so far apart from the status quo that everyone wonders what the bizarre thing was, and what type of human would be at the controls!

The human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle has two wheels in the front and one wheel in the rear. On nearly all tadpole machines, the two wheels in the front steer, and the one wheel in the back delivers forward power to move down the road. Between the front wheels and rear wheel is a reclined seat that is a joy to settle into for a long ride. The pedals are out front, ahead of the front wheels, and it gives the feeling of pedaling while reclined in a living room lounge chair. The rider's rear end can be anywhere from five inches off the ground to the height of a standard office chair. These trikes, especially the lower ones, handle like sport cars or go-carts, quickly taking sharp turns that

seemingly defy the iron clad laws of physics. It is utterly impossible for any human being to take one of these unconventional vehicles out for a first spin without coming back sporting a massive grin across the face.

What's the best way for a tadpole trike dealer to sell a trike? Simple: let the curious customer take a short ride on one. If that doesn't seal the deal, nothing will. Who can return from a test ride and not want one of their own? Those of you who own or have ridden a human powered recumbent tadpole trike know the sensation. Those of you who have not yet tried one, soon will. If you're reading this book, you're already hooked. Trust me ...

Welcome to the wonderful world of the tadpole, a playful place that has absolutely nothing to do with juvenile frogs. It is a distinctly rebellious world that brings together a vastly diverse array of humans with a focused interest in triangles. No boxes allowed. Four sides are for squares. Three sides are for escapees from the drudgery heaped upon them during decades of rote conformity and societal brainwashing. Triangles set us apart, so far apart that the squares stop us to talk about our transportation everywhere we go. "Wow" they say, as they happen by, followed up with a million and one questions to learn all about our three wheeled conveyances. This is such a regular occurrence that we all become exceptionally adept at answering them without hesitation. We sound like a commercial ... and our audiences eat it up. Triangles are always different.

Slicing aerodynamically through the airspace, we pilot our trikes silently along the roadways, emitting no toxins, no noise, and no evidence of our passing. Like a stealth jet in enemy territory, we maneuver adeptly amid noisy, toxic, and obnoxious cars, and then strike out on the nearest country road to enjoy the unspoiled wide open spaces. It's full speed ahead as we watch flowers and roadside critters pass at eye level, and we hear the babbling of the brooks and the cries of the eagles, fine emotional pleasures absolutely invisible to petrolized motorists. A whole new world mysteriously reveals itself to our senses on every ride, whether its our first or five hundredth. It never gets old, and as we pilot our stylish freedom machines across the Earth, we slow our own aging, both physically and mentally.

Trike pilots! That's what we are, for sitting in the cockpit of a recumbent trike is like settling in to the seat of a stealth jet. We don't get "on" a trike as ordinary cyclists do when they awkwardly straddle their butt bisecting bicycles, gently lowering their spandex clad cheeks over those black torture devices. No way! We slide into the cozy



recumbent seats of our sleek low-slung trikes, ready for unparalleled adventure and comfort on every ride, regardless of the distance. The trike begs to be ridden hard, fast, and long – real long ... whipping us through curves like a Ferrari at Le Mans. Pilots of all kinds are a breed apart, whether they command jets or race cars, and so it is that humans bold enough to acquire a trike set themselves apart in the manner they transport themselves. Practically anyone can “ride” atop a bicycle as it sways from side to side, its rider expending energy simply to remain upright. Those who rise far above two wheeled mediocrity, by lowering themselves into a cockpit, pilot a trike!

Trike pilots are hopelessly addicted to a state of travel known as TriAngular LocoMotion. Our vehicles are clearly triangulated by intelligent design, and the act and power to move from place to place defines our locomotion. There may be those among our highly evolved upright species who muse the “loco” part refers to something else in our collective psyche, that we must be a bit skewed in the head for choosing to skim along the asphalt like a cockroach on the kitchen floor. We must be loco, or crazy ... who else would engage in such antics? Well, what they don’t know is that we are having more fun than ought to be legally allowed in our narrow minded cultures typically bogged down in the boredom of daily life, and we don’t even need a driver’s license! During our few decades on this planet, we’re going to have some fun, and the trike is one peachy route to put a positive reality into an otherwise predictable routine.

Regarding our finite time here on Earth, which nearly every rational person would claim is way too short, recumbent tadpoles offer another path to freedom for the dedicated trike pilot ... the freedom to live longer and remain functionally fit for years beyond the traditionally accepted norms of human existence. Why wiggle around on a stationary plastic seat of a computerized hunk of exercise equipment watching the grim news of CNN while pedaling nowhere in an offensively pungent local gym with others in the shared stale air grunting and sweating all around you? Instead, imagine your body receiving superior results in a fresh air pursuit that actually makes sense, and doesn’t even seem like tiresome work. While having a caboodle of fun being Free on Three, the mind does not perceive the activity as the tedious and often monotonous drill that gym goers commonly experience, that thing they call exercise. This is because REAL scenery and AUTHENTIC life are passing by for every pedal stroke we put into the machine. Try riding the gym’s recumbent stationary “bike” to the grocery store or to a friend’s house,

or taking the dog for a walk alongside.

Free on Three may be simply a novel notion to some of us, as we choose to pilot our trikes for various reasons like fun, personal health, longevity, saving the planet, or saving money by leaving the car at home, but for others, the words take on an urgent and all too real meaning that is essential to their very existence as a human. Some people with certain physical disabilities or diseases find the recumbent tadpole tricycle to be a type of personal deliverance from the jaws of permanent immobility. Not everyone can walk or ride a bicycle. What most of us take for granted, they wish they had. For a person with Multiple Sclerosis or Friedreich's Ataxia, the tadpole tricycle is a necessary means of remaining personally mobile, a true freedom machine that not only provides the fun and satisfaction everyone finds on a trike, but also allows a liberating equality with other long distance cyclists, runners, or walkers. One west coast trike dealer says that roughly a third of his customers have some sort of a mobility or disability issue that brings them to the trike.

For the environmentally conscious among us, those who take very seriously a move away from the petroleum addiction that has so thoroughly continued to define how humans poison the very air they breathe, the trike is also an open invitation to make a profound difference. Walking everywhere is not always practical, for some journeys would require hours, days, weeks, or months on foot. A pace of two or three miles per hour as a pedestrian, while promoting health, can quickly make for an unsustainable life in this period of hectic hurried history. It's just too slow for most situations.

Enter the trike, a human powered vehicle that easily makes short work of long walks. Commute to work? Impractical on foot, but doable on trike. At speeds up to ten times faster than on foot (or more), TriAngular LocoMotion allows for a whole new outlook on how to get around in an industrialized world sadly dominated by toxic two ton titans. Trikes are just different ... like the people who ride them!

We had it right all along as kids, but we didn't know it then. Our tricycles were the key that would eventually bring us back to a simpler and more satisfying way of life, one that we could continue to enjoy even if things went poorly for our bodies over the years, and one that would allow us the best chance yet at maximizing our health and longevity. No matter what your reason for joining the elite Tricycle Corps of Freedom, your trike genuinely forms the pivotal key to a fresh means of independence, and every time you pilot it around the

neighborhood or across the country, people ALWAYS take notice. You are an ambassador. You are unique, one who stands out in a social sea of muddied mediocrity. Trike pilots are nonconforming rogues who do things their own way. Trikers actively shape their own lives. They don't follow the paths well worn by the media-manipulated masses. They blaze their own!

Trike pilots are not mavericks because they own a trike. They own a trike because they are mavericks. Leave your car behind and feel the freedom of the wind, the freedom to be FREE on THREE! Welcome to the alternative realm of TriAngular LocoMotion, where only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go.

### **TRIKE ON!**

*Here the Journey begins ...  
Where it ends is up to you!*

\* \* \* \* \*





Wild Steve trikin' across southwestern Nevada's remote hinterlands



Norm Nieberlein – Oregon, USA



Linda Newman – Nebraska, USA



Bob Shaver – Idaho, USA



Rodney Schram – Ontario, Canada

**Part Two:**  
**Trike Tips From Tadpole Dealers**



FREE ON THREE



*And the trike will  
grant each pilot new life ...*



# How To Choose A Trike

by Peter Stull



*logo by Craig Prophet  
photos courtesy Peter Stull*

## **Why would you want to ride a recumbent?**

Because you fondly remember when riding a bike was fun, but now it's mostly uncomfortable. Because you are tired of leaning on your hands and craning your neck to see where you are going. Because you don't feel safe balancing on a bicycle. Because you don't enjoy the view on a bike where you mostly look at the front wheel. Because you think your bicycle should be as comfortable as your office chair or your car. Because you don't like the way you look in Lycra anymore. Whoever said "no pain, no gain" had not tried a "bent" (short for recumbent)! If a few miles on your current bike makes your wrists, neck, back, shoulders, elbows or butt ache, consider a recumbent. A recumbent cycle seat is more like your car seat than most bike seats. Recumbent seats are over a foot wide and have back support. Oh, what a joyous feeling!

## **Why would you want a trike, rather than a bike?**

A trike is stable because it has three points of ground contact. You don't have to think about it falling over if you hit a patch of sand in the road. You can ride from the road to the shoulder and back without "tripping" over the edge of the road. You can enjoy a trike immediately without learning to balance (like a recumbent two wheeler) or getting your butt hardened to the seat each spring (like most bikes). There is hardly any learning curve on a trike; you will be doing figure eights in no time.

Most trike riders are just regular folks who enjoy their trikes more than they ever enjoyed a bike. For some folks the stability of a

trike is particularly appealing due to some physical condition. If your balance isn't what it used to be, you will find a trike very friendly. If you are experiencing weakness, even if you have trouble walking, a trike can restore your mobility and get you back outdoors where life is more fun! If your bones are brittle, and a silly fall at a stoplight could be a big problem, trikes solve the issue. A trike makes riding safer again. At our business here in New York, we have seen folks who were living with limited mobility resulting from a stroke, Parkinson's, multiple Sclerosis or ALS climb onto a trike and ride away. Riding a recumbent trike requires less strength, coordination and balance than walking. You will never know how much fun you could be having until you try several trikes for yourself!



It takes less attention to ride a trike, so sightseeing, bird watching, nature photography and socializing on group rides is easier. You still have to watch out for traffic and road hazards, but especially on the increasingly more common dedicated bike paths and rail trails trikes are a real joy. Linda and I like riding a pair of trikes as much as riding a tandem bike, especially in low traffic situations. Some riders also find trikes more relaxing than bikes. With balance removed from the equation, you can relax and enjoy the ride! You can snack with less distraction on a trike too...

In traffic, trikes have some unique advantages, along with a disadvantage or two. At a stop sign you needn't take your feet from the pedals, and when the light goes green, you start without a wobble or delay as your second foot finds its pedal. You don't have to worry that a crack in the pavement will cause you to spill in front of a taxi either. Then again, that taxi may not see you as well down there, so wear

bright colors, use a flag or two and maybe a few flashing lights to be sure you are well noticed by motorists.

You might find trikes more fun than bikes. Some riders do, some do not. The best reason to switch to a trike is because you like it better!

Who should not ride a recumbent trike? Riders who want to enter major European bicycle races can't ride a recumbent; they have been outlawed there since 1934. In the US, they weren't outlawed until a few years ago. Riders who want to chase traditional racing bikes should pick a fast recumbent. Hill climbing is particularly important when riding with traditional racing bikes. Test riding up hills is a great idea. Trikes are usually not quite as fast as a quick two wheel recumbent. Many riders who ride in congested urban/suburban traffic prefer bikes that sit higher. Some riders feel their trikes are too wide for some roads. They often forget the stability of a trike lets a trike ride on the shoulder better than most bikes do.



When you begin shopping for a human powered recumbent tricycle, you will have to pick between the two main types: Tadpole trikes and delta trikes. Each type has its strengths and weaknesses, its followers and detractors. If you can, you should make the effort to try both tadpole and delta trikes and see which you prefer. We have customers here at Bicycle Man who strongly prefer their delta trikes and others who strongly prefer their tadpole trikes. The choice between delta and tadpole is a chocolate-versus-vanilla decision. There are cheap chocolates and expensive chocolates, the same for vanilla. Most people

prefer one over the other. Many would rather have a cheap chocolate over high quality vanilla. But the decision between them is a personal preference, not good versus bad. To determine your favorite ice-cream, would you surf the internet, read a book and call Baskin-Robbins for advice? Or would you go to the nearest ice-cream parlor that stocks over 20 flavors and spend a day on an ice cream cone diet? (yum!)

### **Tadpole trikes**

Tadpole trikes have two front wheels that steer. They have one rear wheel, which is powered by the pedals. Tadpole trikes are steered by a handlebar at each side of the seat. These trikes tend to be smaller, lighter, sportier and faster than most delta trikes. Most tadpoles are lower and can be harder for some riders to get into and out of than most delta trikes, especially riders who have not exercised in decades. Tadpoles are typically less maneuverable than deltas, but some are more maneuverable. Most tadpoles are harder to tip over than deltas. They are usually chosen by more serious distance riders than deltas. Tadpole trikes have fewer proprietary parts that might prove hard to obtain, like rear axles. Tadpole kingpins and steering gear are proprietary, but rarely/never require replacement.



Sporty Catrike 700 (foreground) and utilitarian TerraTrike Rover

## Delta trikes

Delta trikes have one wheel in front that does the steering. They usually have one rear wheel driven by the pedals; a few delta trikes drive both rear wheels. One-wheel drive delta trikes pull to one side when accelerating and climbing, which can be annoying. Two wheel drive delta trikes are best if you plan to climb steep unpaved roads where one wheel drive delta or tadpole trikes are prone to spin their drive wheel. The less expensive delta trikes usually have over seat steering, the more expensive delta trikes have under seat steering more like tadpole trikes.



Delta trikes typically have higher seats although some lower deltas and higher tadpole trikes blur this line. A higher seat is easier for some riders to get in-to and out-of. All delta trikes are larger than tadpole trikes and harder to transport. Most are also heavier, slower and less sporty except for a few that are quite expensive. Most of the least expensive recumbent trikes are delta trikes. The rear axles on delta trikes are proprietary, meaning you can only get replacements from the trike manufacturer. These rear axles have been known to break or require replacement bearings. Sometimes we have had customers wait for months for the correct parts to arrive in the US, even if they are not arguing whether they should be covered under warranty. This has happened with inexpensive deltas and very expensive ones. Some of

these designs have been improved and should be more reliable in the future, others have not.

On tadpole trikes, you could replace the rear wheel with another brand, on a delta you cannot. Delta trikes are more stable in a panic stop. On a tadpole, it is possible to lift the rear wheel when you slam on the brakes. Is it as dangerous as flipping a standard bicycle by grabbing the front brake? I don't think so, but it is something to be aware of, especially on a tadpole with a relatively high seat. If the trike's seat is adjusted far forward, it can make this worse. Short riders are usually better off on a trike with a small frame or a trike that adjusts the pedals back instead of the seat forward. Be cautious adjusting a trike with adjustable seat and pedals. You want the seat somewhat near the middle of its adjustment range and the pedals adjusted to fit you.

Tadpole trikes are more popular than delta trikes. There are several reasons for this. Tadpole trikes are smaller so they fit in your car, garage and lifestyle better. An increasing number of tadpole trikes fold, thereby giving them a further advantage. Tadpoles are almost always lighter, certainly lighter than similarly priced delta trikes. Tadpoles are generally sportier than deltas too. There are a lot more tadpole models to choose among than deltas. This is another cause of (or the result of) their popularity.



The original Old School Store, circa 1979

### **Ride, then decide!**

After reading about the many advantages of recumbents in general, and of trikes in particular, you may decide a recumbent trike would be just the thing for you. There are two ways to select a trike: 1) read, think, talk, type, buy a trike you have never ridden; 2) Find a shop with a large trike selection and a knowledgeable staff, travel there (may involve airline tickets), ride a dozen different trikes from several manufacturers, buy the one you fall in love with!



If you can't get to a trike shop and try a variety of recumbents with test rides, you will have to rely on the opinions of others. There is much written on recumbents, some of it factual, some emotive, some travelogues. This info can be helpful, but it can result in the purchase of someone else's favorite trike. I've worked with a customer who owned several recumbents in the \$1700 to \$5000 price range. All were models legendary for their high performance ride and well reviewed online. He finally visited us to test ride a wide variety of bents. He picked a recumbent that was relaxing more than sporty, and he loves it. It would have saved him thousands of dollars to fly to a shop and test ride for a few days before buying his first recumbent.

If you are looking for a less expensive trike, say one under \$1500, there are fewer choices, and the cost of travel could eat into your available cash. Read what you can, talk to shops that sell them and

make a decision. Beware of trikes that can only be purchased directly from the importer. Some of these importers have a poor reputation for after-sale service and parts availability. Check the manufacturer's reputation before buying, especially if you are not buying from a known reputable dealer!



### **Anatomy of a test ride:**

If you can make it to a recumbent shop, we recommend you plan an entire day of test riding, or even two or three days if the shop has a very large selection. Buying a trike is a **big** decision, so definitely take your time. You might want to call the shop in advance to verify: 1) what recumbents they actually have in stock at the moment, 2) how they would feel about you spending a whole day (or even two) trying them out, and 3) what types of surfaces, terrain and distances you will be allowed to ride. If they have much selection, and you can plan two days for test riding that is even better. I like to have riders spend the first day sampling a very wide variety, making sure they have not ruled out something they would actually like. Try some that you are pretty sure won't suit you just to be sure. And above all, have fun! In addition to many other health and environmental benefits, trikes are a lot of fun! They always bring a smile.

When you take your first trikes out, you want to ride with caution until you get used to riding them. If you can, start in a low traffic area so you can focus your attention on the trikes rather than any automobile traffic. A parking lot, a back road, a side street or a bike path all offer a great places for your first riding experiences. As you begin to narrow your search, try different surfaces, especially surfaces similar to



what you will be riding on when you get your new trike home. Dirt roads, broken pavement, stone dust bike paths, cobble stones, whatever most resembles the riding you plan to do. If you will be riding in hilly areas, you should certainly try climbing hills. If you will be climbing hills on dirt roads, be sure you try steep dirt hills. On most trikes, less than one half of your weight is on the drive wheel, so you may spin your tire if you really pour the coals to it. If you plan to do 50 mile rides on your trike, you should ideally ride at least ten miles on a trike to see how comfortable it is after a while in the saddle. Most riders are comfy on pretty much all trikes for a mile or two. Once you are a bit more used to them, try hard braking on a few of your favorites. If performance is important to you, try some sprints on your test rides. Sprinting can cause “pedal steer” on some trikes more than others. If high speeds will be on your menu, carefully try some down hills, if available.

Plan to make your selection well before the shop’s closing time, especially if you will want them to install accessories that day. You might consider a few of these popular accessories with your new trike: Fenders, speedometer, lights, flag, mirrors, luggage rack or a rack to carry the trike on your car.

There are many excellent recumbents and a few that warrant your caution. The trouble is picking among the good ones. It's like ice cream. I like vanilla ice cream. Even high quality chocolate ice-cream is not my favorite. In the same way you will probably find medium priced trikes you like and may find very high quality trikes you don't like. Try as many as you can, as wide a variety as you can. It is best if you can ride 2 or 3 of your favorites 5-10 miles on hills, gravel, whatever you will be riding on when you get it home. None of them are cheap, and you want one you will like for many years.

### **Features and their importance:**

Turning circle – You will do more “U” turns while test riding a trike than once you get home, so do NOT over emphasize the importance of a small turning circle. Once out on the road, it makes little difference.

Suspension – This is a great feature if you will be riding on rougher pavement, even if you will be doing long rides on “smooth” chip seal roads, which can be pretty nubbly. If you will ride almost exclusively on really smooth pavement, you probably don't need suspension.

Aerodynamics – A trike with a more reclined seat will have less wind resistance than a trike with a more upright seat. Wind resistance is relatively unimportant at lower speeds. Riding at 20 miles per hour wind resistance is significant. If high speeds are important to you, check out the lighter, lower, more reclined trikes.

Seat height – A low trike will have better high speed handling and better emergency stopping ability. A high seat can make a trike a less stable in hard cornering and panic stops. A low trike seat requires more physical effort to enter and exit. A high seat is easier in that regard, which is particularly useful if a personal physical limitation is part of your life.

Seat comfort – Unless you are mostly into racing your trike, seat comfort is very important; it is also very personal. What recline angle will you like best? How much lumbar curve do you like? How wide does a seat have to be to keep you comfy? You won't know for sure until you personally try several trikes. Looking only at photographs won't be conclusive.

Folding – Folding is a handy feature. For some riders, it is indispensable. If you plan to take your trike in your vehicle (and you don't drive a pickup truck or van with the rear seats removed) you will like folding. You will never know how useful it is to have a folding trike until you actually get used to living with it!

### **Are trikes safer than bikes?**

It depends on who you are and where you ride. If you have severe back problems, osteoporosis or some other condition that would make a small fall a big problem, then you are probably safer on a trike. If you have balance issues, are prone to dizzy spells or seizures, the trike would almost certainly be better. If you commute in heavy urban traffic, a bike may be safer because you sit higher to see and be seen better. When I ride a trike, I find drivers give me more room as they pass, but I live in the country where cars can see you from hundreds of feet away. My few friends who ride trikes in urban traffic say it is about the same there, but I would certainly be cautious. Flags, flashing lights and bright colored clothing are good ideas any time you ride in traffic, especially on a trike.

Bikes have accidents that trikes don't, and vice versa. A bit of sand or gravel is more likely to cause a spill for a bike rider than a trike, especially in a corner. After all, traction and coordination is all that keeps a bike upright. Keeping a trike in a straight line as you slowly

ride up a steep hill is easy, on a bike it can be hard not to wobble. If your feet fall off the pedals on a recumbent bike it can cause you to wobble and potentially fall. If your feet come off on a trike, they are more likely to hit the ground and stick to the pavement. Then the trike's cross frame can hit your leg, ouch! We recommend clipless pedals and shoes, which pretty much eliminate this. And on a trike, you never have to worry about getting your feet on the ground quickly at a stop ;-)



The origins of Bicycle Man, at the Old School House, 1979

\* \* \* \* \*

<http://bicycleman.com>



## High-tech Trikes

New generation of recumbent trikes aren't kid's stuff

by Rolf Garthus  
Hostel Shoppe

So why are recumbent trikes becoming so popular? Trikes combine the comfort and efficiency of a fast recumbent with total stability. These high performance trikes are built for long distance riding by demanding enthusiasts, but also fill the needs of recreational riders wanting to ride in comfort and many riders with special needs. There is no learning curve on a trike, because all you have to do is get on and go. No longer do people with balance problems have to settle for heavy, slow trikes that aren't much good for anything but an occasional ride around the block. There's also a big fun factor when you ride a trike. Just move the handlebars and lean into the turn like you would on a go-kart.



There are a number of advantages to hill climbing with a recumbent trike. On a two-wheeled bike, there is a minimum speed needed to maintain balance. If you are not strong enough to maintain this speed on a steep hill, you either get off and walk or tip over. On a trike, you can use lower gears and go as slow as you like with complete stability - even stop, rest and restart on a steep hill if need be. Plus, you can increase your pedaling efficiency by using clipless pedals, and you

don't have to worry about doing the embarrassing "Laugh-In fall" at a stop sign while trying to get unclipped from the pedals.

One of the more dangerous biking situations is being passed by one vehicle while meeting another. You can escape these dangerous situations on a trike by simply riding onto the shoulder. It's easy to maintain control on soft, mushy shoulders due to the stability of three wheels. Sand or gravel on a corner or some obstacle in the road won't cause a crash on a trike.

Recumbent tricycles are available in two configurations: tadpole trikes (two wheels in front) and delta trikes (two wheels in back). Tadpole trikes tend to seat the rider lower and more aerodynamically, are lighter, and they usually have a wider gear range. The delta design seats the rider a little higher and allows the rider's heels to slide back under the leading edge of the seat, which makes sitting down and getting up very easy.

Transporting trikes can be a bit of a challenge depending on your vehicle. Vans, pickups and sport utility vehicles usually have room to easily carry trikes, and even some hatchback sedans also will work. Several receiver hitch trike racks are now available to carry one or two trikes, or even one trike and another bike. Folding trikes offer an even greater transport advantage, allowing you to pack a trike in a car trunk or even fit two of them into the back of a compact car, like the Toyota Prius, with room to spare for luggage. Folding trikes can be broken down even further using optional quick release kits, allowing you to pack them in a large suitcase or travel trunk for air travel. I.C.E., Greenspeed and HP Velotechnik make folding trikes.

The brands of trikes that I am most familiar with are I.C.E., Catrike, TerraTrike, Greenspeed, HP Velotechnik and Hase. Other brands are available, but I think these trikes offer superior workmanship, are well thought out and extremely dependable. In addition, these companies have all done a great job of accessorizing their trikes. Bags, mirrors, computers, lights, safety flags, fenders and more are available for virtually all these trikes.

Catrike (Paulo Camasmie) started building trikes in Florida in 1990. Since then, Catrike has received 6 awards for "Trike of the Year" by readers of 'BentRider Online. These lightweight, aluminum, American made trikes work flawlessly, are user friendly, look fantastic and are reasonably priced. Catrike owners are passionate about their trikes. We have Catrike customers that have toured extensively on their Catrike Expeditions and they can't say enough about them.

I.C.E. offers a great lineup of extremely well designed and elegant looking trikes. All their trikes fold, which eliminates the trike transportation problem. Riders can also choose between rigid, rear suspension and full suspension models, as well as models with different seat heights and rear wheel sizes. The handling is superb and the suspension is extremely well designed. We have a customer who says that he did a 110 mile ride on his I.C.E. trike in about the same time as he had done on his two-wheeled bike.

TerraTrike (formerly WizWheelz) was founded in 1996 and has been producing quality trikes that are a blast to ride ever since. Their recent introduction of the Rover has taken the recreational end of the recumbent market by storm. However, you're mistaken if you get the idea that sport and performance riders should look elsewhere. Serious trike riders, who aren't interested in suspension and folding, should definitely check out TerraTrike. TerraTrike also offers a great economical tadpole trike tandem, which breaks down into two parts, using S&S couplers, for easy transport.



Greenspeed is legendary for its durability. The toughness of their trikes has been proven in heavily loaded tours around Australia. One of the older trike manufacturers on the market, Greenspeed has had ample time to debug their trikes and they have used this time wisely.

Greenspeed also makes an elegant tandem trike, the Gtt2S. This tandem uses two S&S couplers to allow disassembly for transportation. The 39" wide wheelbase of this tandem adds a noticeable amount of stability in the corners. Greenspeed's reputation was built around tadpole trikes, but they now offer a delta trike, the Anura, as well.

Hase is a German company that makes the lightest and best performing delta trikes that I have seen. A wide variety of gearing options are available, and riders can add an optional differential if extra traction is needed. Hase also makes a tandem hitch that allows two of their trikes to be linked together to make a tandem. The resulting tandem has true independent pedaling. Each rider has complete control of the gearing and braking. This allows tandem team members to pedal at different cadences and to pedal or coast at any time. Switching from two trikes to a tandem and back again is about a 30 second process.

HP Velotechnik started making recumbent bikes 16 years ago and added trikes to their line-up in 2006. The consumer response was extremely favorable. One test ride and you'll know why German engineering is so highly acclaimed. Suspension, folding, mesh seat or molded seat: take your pick. These trikes have been higher priced than some, but HP Velotechnik's introduction of the new Gekko for 2011 proves that you can have great engineering and folding at a reasonable price.

It's fun to watch people take test rides on trikes. They sit on the trike, and inevitably a big grin begins to form. The gleam in their eyes is indicative of some long forgotten childhood experience being revisited. Customers who wouldn't consider trying a two-wheel recumbent bike will find that trikes offer a non-threatening alternative. We have them sit a trike and they start pedaling around the sales floor, and the next thing you know they are out on our test track and beyond. If you are thinking about trying recumbents, but are not too sure about the balance and handling, try a trike!

## **Why A Recumbent?**

Rolf Garthus *answers*

About how many miles can you ride in a day? Five? Fifty? One hundred? One hundred and fifty? When you've reached your limit for the day, what makes you want to stop? Are tired legs the reason or do

you get off your bike because something hurts? If you answered, "Because something hurts.", then you may want to consider a recumbent. Recumbents aren't just a little more comfortable; they are totally comfortable. You're sitting on a comfortable seat, with no pressure on your wrists, butt, neck or shoulders. Your back is fully supported, and at the end of the ride, nothing hurts. Plus, there are some added bonuses. You don't have to sacrifice aerodynamic efficiency to be comfortable and you have a great view of the scenery. Most people feel it's easy to learn to ride a recumbent and many have increased their riding mileage since switching to a recumbent.



I made the switch to recumbents in the late 1980's due to problems with my neck and shoulders. Doctors told me I may need spinal surgery. I stopped riding regular bikes and switched to recumbents 100% of the time and two things happened: I started going on longer rides, and within one year I was almost totally symptom free from the neck problems without surgery. The problems have not returned. My wife Barb, on the other hand, did not have physical problems that would keep her from riding an upright bike. She was riding about three thousand miles a year and didn't feel she needed or



wanted a recumbent. In the mid 1990's, we took our first recumbent tandem ride on a Double Vision. The ride was a fairly long one, about eighty miles, with a tough head wind for the last thirty miles or so. She couldn't believe biking could be that comfortable and she got her first recumbent two days later. We sold her carbon fiber road bike several months later. We both feel that we are faster on our Volae Team recumbents than we were on our uprights. Our aerodynamic body position is a little better on our Volae's than we would experience on aero bars on an upright bike. Neither one of us would be able to stay on aero bars for very long.

Many people find long rides on upright bikes to be uncomfortable. One problem with upright bikes is that your legs hang down around the seat. Make the seat big enough to be comfortable to sit on and it chafes the inside of your legs. Make it small enough so it doesn't chafe and it's not comfortable to sit on. There is simply too much pressure per square inch. Of course you can take weight off your butt by leaning forward onto your hands, but then your wrists, hands, shoulders and neck feel the discomfort. Sitting up straighter takes the pressure off the hands, but puts it back on the butt and makes the rider less aerodynamic as well. The conventional bike industry is working hard to try to make an inherently uncomfortable design more comfortable. Suspension seat posts, suspension stems, padded grips, padded gloves and shorts, gel saddles, and even padded underwear are just part of a long list of items that are supposed to make your upright bike more comfortable. However, many people find that it still hurts.

Recumbents, on the other hand, alleviate these problems by positioning the rider so the legs do not hang down around the seat. This allows two important things to happen. First the seat can be made large enough to reduce the pressure per square inch. The result is total comfort with a natural head position and no weight on the hands, arms and shoulders. Secondly, the rider is in a very aerodynamic and comfortable "recumbent tuck". The feet and legs are placed up in front of the torso to achieve great aerodynamics while in a comfortable position that can be maintained for well over a hundred miles. You always have a full view of where you're going and your center of gravity is lower for greater stability. You can see a long way ahead of you at all times, enabling you to ride more defensively.



You will be using a slightly different muscle group on a recumbent, so plan on several months before your "recumbent muscles" are as strong as your "upright bike muscles". Because of pain free riding, people tend to increase their cycling mileage on a recumbent. More riding = more adventures, more fun, additional exercise and better health. I recommend using bike shoes and clipless pedals, which will allow you to work on spinning. When you have mastered the spinning technique in your new riding position, and developed your recumbent muscle group, you should find that you will climb about as well as you did on your upright.

Not all recumbents are designed to max out the efficiency meter. Some are designed to be easier to learn to ride with a more upright and less aerodynamic position, while others are designed for speed. All the human powered speed records, including the DuPont Prize for breaking 65 M.P.H., are held by recumbents. Francis Faure set speed records for the mile and kilometer in 1933 on a recumbent. The faster recumbents either have the crank set elevated to about the height of the seat, or have lower crank sets but are designed to work well with a fairing. The Rans Stratus XP is a good example of a bike with a lower crankset that is very fast when used with a fairing. The Volae Team is an example of a bike that is very fast without a fairing.

Recumbents, like people, come in a variety of shapes and sizes. You can choose from bikes with a long wheelbase, a short wheelbase, over seat steering, mid seat steering, under seat steering, suspension frames, rigid frames, small rear wheels, large rear wheels, tricycles and tandems. Sorting it all out to get the right bike the first time can be

tricky. The best bike for urban riding may not be the best for rural riding. Sport riders value different features than leisure riders. Tall people prefer bikes that shorter people may not be able to ride. When shopping for your first recumbent find a shop with plenty of demos. You will need to get out of "the parking lot" and ride awhile. Plenty of riding time is helpful in getting past the short term issues of handling and balance, so you can focus on the important long term issues like performance, seat comfort and ease of transportation. Shop personnel that have experience riding and selling recumbents are invaluable.

Cycling is a great sport on any type of machine. It's as healthy for the rider as it is for the planet. Today, many are rediscovering the joy of biking by riding recumbents. Also, those who had never enjoyed biking before are now riding many miles on recumbents. Total comfort on a highly efficient bicycle or tricycle is allowing an ever-increasing number of people to experience the rewarding adventure of human powered cycling.

## Questions and Answers

*with Rolf Garthus*

### **Why a recumbent?**

You are certain to increase your bicycling mileage on a recumbent because it doesn't hurt --- not even a little bit, and you will be just as fast as you were on your regular bike. Except for a short period of getting comfortable with the balance (if you are on a two-wheeled recumbent), learning to spin in a new position, and developing a slightly different muscle group, there is no downside. The upside is more riding, more fun, and all the health benefits that go along with the additional exercise. If you're like most of us, you probably don't feel you get enough exercise. My personal philosophy is, "If it's fun, it gets done." Recumbents make exercise fun.

### **Is it really that comfortable?**

Yes! You are sitting on a real seat, with no pressure on your wrists, seat, neck or shoulders. Your back is fully supported and at the end of your ride, nothing hurts. As an added bonus, you get a full view of the scenery instead of looking down at the road and front wheel. On most

recumbents the seat is an integral part of the cycle, so look for models that offer different seat styles and sizes to make sure it fits you properly.

### **Are they fast?**

Yes! Many recumbents place the rider in a naturally aerodynamic tuck position. Many riders find that the high racer recumbents are noticeably faster than upright bikes. Most riders cannot stay in the aerodynamic tuck position on conventional bike for more than a mile or two without discomfort, while a "recumbent tuck" is completely comfortable and is the position you always ride in. All the human powered speed records, including the DuPont Prize for breaking 65 MPH, are held by recumbents. Francis Faure set speed records for the mile and kilometer in 1933 on a recumbent. The Union Cycliste Internationale (U.C.I.) promptly banned recumbents from racing because they felt recumbents provided an unfair aerodynamic advantage. As a result, recumbents have not been used since in main-stream racing and have not been mass-produced until recently.

### **Do recumbents climb hills?**

A good recumbent climbs about the same as a good road bike. However, it's very important to spin, and I found that I needed to re-learn spinning on my recumbent. Of course, you can't spin without good shoes and clipless pedals. You will be using a slightly different muscle group, so plan on several months before your "recumbent muscles" are as strong as your "upright muscles". After the first season you should climb hills about like you would on your regular bike. The best recumbents for climbing have very stable and supportive seat systems and a very efficient chain line.

### **Are recumbents safe?**

On a recumbent you ride feet first so you always have a full view of where you're going and your center of gravity is lower for stability. Most recumbents position the rider more than high enough to be seen as easily as an upright bike. Because there are so few recumbents on the road, drivers actually notice you sooner and give you a wider berth than conventional bikes (along with a few stares and waves!). In addition, it's nearly impossible to "flip over the handlebars" on a recumbent.

## **Are recumbents as visible as regular bikes?**

Many people think recumbent riders sit so low that automobile drivers cannot see them. In fact, overall rider height on a two-wheeled recumbent is not significantly lower than on a road bike. Most two-wheeled recumbents position the rider's head at the same height as a motorist driving a sedan, which makes eye-contact easy. In over 80,000 miles of recumbent riding I have never had the feeling that automobile drivers could not see me. Trikes, which are a bit lower than two-wheeled recumbents, have safety flags and lighting options available to enhance visibility.



## **Are they easy to transport?**

Many short wheel base recumbents fit on certain standard receiver hitch and roof racks. Easy seat removal and reattachment is very helpful when transporting your bike, so make sure you consider it when looking for a bike. Tandems and long wheel base bikes are more difficult to transport, but should fit on most roof racks with a tandem attachment.

Special receiver hitch racks are also available for both short and long wheel base recumbents, plus tandems and trikes. Folding trikes offer an even greater transport advantage, allowing you to pack a trike in a car trunk or even fit two of them into the back of a compact car, like the Toyota Prius, with room to spare for luggage. Folding trikes can be broken down even further using optional quick release kits, allowing you to pack them in a large suitcase or travel trunk for air travel. I.C.E., Greenspeed and HP Velotechnik make folding trikes.

### **Should I consider a recumbent tricycle?**

Recumbent tricycles are the fastest growing category of recumbents. There is no learning curve on a trike. Just get on and ride and I bet you'll smile. Trikes are great for anyone seeking total stability, and can make great "pack mules" for self-supported touring. ICE, Catrike, Greenspeed, TerraTrike (formerly WizWheelz), HP Velotechnik and Hase make high-quality tricycles that many two wheel enthusiasts find appealing. They are very stable in the corners and extremely easy to ride.

### **Delta Trikes vs. Tadpole Trikes:**

A delta trike is configured with two wheels in the rear and one in the front. Conversely, tadpole trikes are built with two wheels in front and one behind the rider. Tadpole trikes frequently have a lower seat height, which provides great stability and contributes to the "go-cart" feel. Delta trikes usually have a higher seat height and don't have the frame cross member just ahead of the leading edge of the seat making it easier to get on and off.

You can simulate this difference in a regular chair at home:

1. Tadpole trike simulation: Place your heels 6" ahead of the leading edge of the chair and try to stand up without using your arms to push off.
2. Delta trike simulation: Place your heels 1" behind the leading edge of the chair and try to stand up without using your arms to push off. See how much easier it is to get up in situation #2? This is what it's like when you don't have the tadpole cross members to force your heels ahead of the leading edge of the seat. Now add to this the seat height difference and you really have a substantial difference in ease of

standing up from the seated position. Center of gravity is important on a trike, so you'll want to find the balance between ease-of-use and performance that fits your needs best.

### **Are recumbent bicycles hard to learn to ride?**

First time two-wheeled recumbent riders frequently feel a little shaky, but most can ride without tipping over almost immediately. An unsteady, wobbly feeling for a while is normal, and then your body will quickly become accustomed to the new position. It usually takes about twenty to fifty miles to become completely relaxed and confident on a recumbent bicycle. Then --- look out! There are reports of smiles that had to be surgically removed.



### **Do people without medical reasons find recumbents better?**

The answer to this one is very close to home. I made the switch in the late 1980's due to problems in my neck and resulting nerve damage. Doctors told me I was going to have to have major surgery. I stopped riding regular bikes and switched to recumbents 100% of the time and two things happened.

1. I started going on longer rides.
2. Within one year I was almost totally symptom free from the neck problems and all without surgery. My wife Barb, on the other hand, has no physical problems. She rides about three thousand miles a year and didn't feel she needed or wanted a recumbent. Until, that is, we went on

our first recumbent tandem ride on a Double Vision. The ride was a fairly long one, about eighty miles, with a tough head wind for the last thirty miles or so. She couldn't believe biking could be that comfortable and she got her first recumbent two days later. We sold her carbon fiber road bike several months later and she has no desire to ever ride a conventional bike again. Incidentally, Barb feels she is a little faster in the head winds and is at least as fast when going up hills. I found the same to be true.

### **What are the medical reasons that cause people switch to recumbents?**

The most common physical problems that people are complaining about when purchasing a recumbent are as follows:

1. Pain in the neck, shoulders and back.
2. Pain in the hands, wrists and butt.
3. Carpal tunnel syndrome.
4. Impotence for males.
5. Nerve impingement in the neck.
6. Nerve trauma in the hands.

### **What are the differences between SWB & LWB?**

Short wheel base (SWB) bikes are generally lighter, have more responsive steering, a higher crankset, may be a little better for climbing hills, and are easier to transport. Long wheel base (LWB) bikes give a little softer ride, allow a shorter reach to the ground and usually have lower cranks in relation to the seat.

### **What's best, under seat steering (USS) or over seat steering (OSS)?**

OSS puts the rider in a more aerodynamic position, makes it easier to walk the bike and provides a better place to mount mirrors and computers. Some riders find USS to be a very comfortable position, but it's difficult to implement effectively in a bicycle design, which is why many manufacturers don't offer it as an option. The newly-refined open cockpit design with Mid Seat Steering (as found on Volae recumbents) offers the best of both worlds.



### **Seat Height vs. Crank Height:**

If the crank height is about the same as the seat height you will be in a more powerful and aerodynamic riding position. On the other hand, the lower crank height found on many LWB recumbents may make the bike easier for some riders to get used to and works better if you plan to ride without clipless pedals and shoes.

### **How can I relieve the "sleeping feet syndrome" I sometimes get when riding my recumbent?**

1. Make sure your shoe soles are as stiff as possible.
2. Make sure your shoes are not too tight in the ball of the foot. Try lacing them a little looser.
3. More supportive insoles can make a huge difference. Offerings from companies like Sole are very affordable alternatives to custom insoles.
4. Shift down to a lower gear and work on "spinning" more. During the spinning stroke you should actually be pulling down and backwards for a short time. This helps me when my right foot occasionally starts to burn and fall asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

<http://hostelshoppe.com>



# T. Ryx

## Because Fossil Fuels are Extinct

by Terry “Hoppy” Dean



I’ve always liked cycling, although I didn’t become serious about it until I became an adult. I’ve also always had a wander lust. My friend, Bruce, owned a Fuji bicycle and planned to ride from the Detroit area to Chicago, and he invited me to ride along with him. I sadly declined because neither my bike nor I were up to the ride, but that began my interest in pedal powered touring. As time went by, I dreamed of touring across the USA. I was never in good enough condition to do it though, physically, financially, or otherwise. Besides, my wife wouldn’t let me leave home for months at a time.

I built an Easy Racer recumbent bicycle from plans I bought from Gardner Martin of Tour Easy in about 1990 when I began to have lower back problems. I rode that for 16-17 years, with some breaks due to medical problems. I had surgery on my lumbar spine in 1993, and again in 2001. With the spinal fusion, my lower spine is basically a single bone now. A permanent “natural” curve was affixed in my lumbar spine, but I can no longer bend normally. In 1996 I had a couple of relatively minor strokes, but they permanently affected my balance. I was able to resume riding again after a long recovery period, but couldn’t ride an “upwong” bicycle again comfortably. The Easy Racer, which I upgraded several times over the years, was a God-send to me.

Then in 2006 my balance started getting so bad that I could no longer ride a two-wheeled cycle at all...even recumbent. I decided that swerving out in front of a semi was not how or when I wanted to die. I began looking for a good recumbent trike, and at that time decided on a

Hase Lepus, a high quality folding delta trike with rear suspension. I had never seen a recumbent trike in person, but the idea suited me very well. My son, Jeremiah, was already involved professionally with the cycling industry. He purchased a Lepus for me at the Interbike trade show in 2006. I rode it and loved it. I loved it so much, in fact, that I started my business selling recumbent trikes. I became an authorized Hase dealer initially, but then picked up additional trike manufacturers: first Greenspeed, then ICE, Catrike, TerraTrike, HPVelotechnik, and KMX Karts. All but Hase and Greenspeed strictly manufacture Tadpole Trikes. I might mention that several of the companies also make fantastic recumbent bicycles (two wheels), and both Hase and Greenspeed offer hand-cycle options for their trikes. Hase strictly manufactures delta trikes, while Greenspeed was initially only a tadpole trike manufacturer. In recent years, Greenspeed developed the Anura, a delta-style trike. Even more recently, Greenspeed also put its Glyde velomobile into production.

After riding my Lepus a while, I decided again that I wanted to tour, but now by trike. Unfortunately, the Lepus was a bit too heavy for long-distance touring. Hase also makes a great touring version of its Kettwiesel, but I needed suspension because of my back problems. So I began riding another German model from our demo trikes. I then fell in love with the Scorpion FX by HPVelotechnik. I rode that for a few months, and then HPV introduced the full-suspension Scorpion FS. So I sold the demo FX and ordered an FS. Even though the FX was fantastic, the FS was surprisingly a lot better for me.

I rode the Scorpion FS for a few months and then sold it to a customer in Canada. I ordered a new one immediately for myself, but before I could even pay for it, a customer in Alaska bought it. I rode a Catrike Pocket (no suspension) until I could get a new Scorpion FS. I recently received my new FS and the difference is night and day. The Catrike was a sports car, but the FS is a luxury sports sedan: a Mustang V-6 vs. a Mercedes Benz SLS-AMG Supercar. Bentrideronline goes so far as to liken the FS to a Maybach (German super-luxury car.) Don't get me wrong: Big Cat makes a full line of fantastic trikes, including some "muscle car" types. Some of the fastest riders in my Trikes Treks group rides have Catrikes, such as the Speed and the 700. But for the lack of suspension, the Pocket was a great little trike for my purposes until I got my Scorpion. Now you can't pry my new steed from my grubby little hands. You can test ride it in my parking lot, though.

## T. Ryx Recumbent Trikes

Our philosophy is based on getting people to ride. Our society is too fixed on driving a gas-guzzling monster from our garage to the end of the driveway and beyond. That's why we are all getting fat and lazy (myself included). We're all like puppets of the Auto and Petroleum industries. From the time we first watch TV, we're indoctrinated to use cars and trucks for everything. That's why we're breathing noxious fumes instead of clean air, too. The more people realize the benefits of cycling, the better off we'll all be. But what about those who can't ride standard bicycles? That's where trikes shine. Trikes are much more comfortable than upwong bicycles. They can be set up for special needs such as single hand operation. They're great exercise, and easy to ride. They're also safer than standard bikes for many reasons that I'll get into later.



But recumbent trikes are definitely NOT just for people who can't ride standard bicycles. They're arguably a lot more fun than upwong bikes too. A lot of the fun in cycling disappears when the rider first gets a sore butt and nether regions on a standard bike. The first time a rider falls off a bicycle is often the last time he or she sits on one too. It hurts. But while it isn't impossible to fall off a trike, it's generally not easy to fall, and the fall is not typically nearly as bad as from a

bicycle. After all, you're on a tripod, and that's the purpose of tripods: to make you more stable. While riding and while standing still.

Delta trikes and Tadpole trikes are very similar yet very different. They're both great styles for their purposes. The difference: Deltas (fourth letter in the Greek alphabet  $\Delta$  triangle-shaped) have a single wheel in front and two wheels in back. Unless a differential is installed, the right rear wheel is typically the drive wheel. They tend to be longer wheelbase and sit higher off the ground. That makes them easier to mount and dismount than tadpoles. The rider gets a better view of the surrounding environment. It also makes them a little top heavy and therefore minimally less stable than tadpoles. Since the single wheel is up in front of the rider, with little or no restriction by the frame, deltas tend to have a sharper turning radius despite their longer wheelbase. They also "feel" more like a standard bicycle because the rider isn't "surrounded" by the front wheels as on a tadpole trike.

Tadpoles, on the other hand, tend to live up to their name: they can "squirm around" like a tadpole. They also have a shape like a tadpole: with two wheels in front and the single, drive wheel in the back, their general outline is wider in front and narrower in back. With the shorter wheelbase, they "feel" like they're more nimble than deltas, even though they often have a wider turning radius. Being lower to the ground than deltas, they are more aerodynamic, so they are typically faster than deltas.

### **Tadpole Trikes**

Form follows function, so to speak, when it comes to tadpole trikes. A racing trike will be lower to the ground than an all-around/commuter-style trike, which will itself be lower than a touring trike...normally. There are exceptions to every rule, though. For example, TerraTrike (aka WizWheelz) makes an entry level general use trike called the Rover that is designed to sit higher off the ground than other TerraTrike models. That makes mounting and dismounting a bit easier for those with physical limitations who want a tadpole trike. At 18.5 inches, the Rover sits much higher than most tadpoles. It's a little higher than most touring trikes, although not as high as typical delta-style trikes.

Most manufacturers offer several models of their recumbent trikes, including some designed for children. Catrike offers the Dash model that's made for a larger child or a small adult. At 4"-10" tall, my

wife can ride this one.

Most, if not all, tadpole trikes can be adjusted to fit a wide range of riders. While a few models require alternate booms for more than minimal adjustments for rider X-seams, most have telescoping booms that move in or out for shorter legged riders from just over 5 feet tall to those with very long legs and generally well over 6 feet tall. Again, my wife being 4'-10" tall with relatively short legs is somewhat limited in trikes she can ride.

But there are accessories and alternate components that can make a lot more models suitable for shorter, and taller, riders. For example, Inspired Cycle Engineering (ICE) out of the United Kingdom, maker of the Adventure, Sprint, and Vortex models, offers the "FF" bracket for shorter riders and the "FB" seat bracket for taller riders. These brackets enable the seat to be mounted forward or back, respectively, enough to accommodate the rider's shorter or longer legs. My wife, for example, is able to ride our demo ICE Adventure 3FS with the FF bracket. By the way, the Adventure is her favorite of the bunch. HPV, on the other hand, offers a modified seat with the brackets on the Scorpion seat frame elongated to move the seat forward for shorter riders. Since I'm reeeeeeally tall (at a whopping 5'-6"), I don't quite need the modified seat. And my personal trike (as well as our showroom demo) is the Scorpion FS.



Each manufacturer has models that are “best in class”, and in fact each company’s trikes are, in general, better than most or all of the others from at least one standpoint, depending mainly on the intended use of the trike by the rider. As I said, I currently sell recumbent trikes for seven different manufacturers. So for example, I’ll list the manufacturers I represent and state a point or two that makes that brand better than the others. It’s up to the buyer to decide what factors are most important to him or her. All of the companies I represent make high quality trikes. I don’t sell junk.

TerraTrike, formerly known as WizWheelz, out of Michigan generally offers the most bang for the buck. For example, the Cruiser, with a 24-speed derailleur system, is virtually the same as the Path and the Tour models but for components. The Path is a 3- or 8-speed, while the Tour is a 27-speed. For just tooling around the park or neighborhood on flat, level surfaces, a 3-speed is fine. The hillier the terrain, and the longer you want to ride, the more critical are the higher end components and additional gears. For example, I recommend at least 24-speed derailleurs or a Schlumpf Mountain Drive for the hilly areas in southern California.

KMX Karts of the UK, while not offering the more expensive and highest end trikes, does design their trikes to be usable on- and off-road. These are well-made trikes that, for the price, are hard to beat. KMX offers a Youth trike, called the Cyclone, that is great for riders up to about 12 years old or so. Then the kids move up to the Tornado or other adult trikes.

Catrike, made by Big Cat HPV in Florida, makes 8 different models, with variations available on most or all of them. As I said previously, the Dash is their smallest model, made for larger children or small adults. In fact, it’s virtually the same as an adult trike, but without some of the bells and whistles. Those upgrades can be added, however, to make the Dash just like “the big boys”. The models are designed for varying purposes and sold at varying prices. The Catrike 700 is arguably the fastest recumbent trike on the market. The Expedition is designed for light to moderate touring, but is built well enough for extended tours as well.

Another British manufacturer is Inspired Cycle Engineering (ICE), Ltd. This company has improved its trikes continually since it began to produce them. With the new folding system, it’s easy to fit this trike in the back of a Smart Car, especially when the additional Quick Release Kit is installed. It’s currently the smallest-folding trike on the

market, and one of the easiest. All models are folders, and all but the Vortex and the base model Adventure and Sprint have rear suspension. In fact, a full-suspension version of the Adventure and Sprint is also available. (We have the Adventure 3FS in our showroom as a demo model.)



Greenspeed has been “mass producing” recumbent trikes longer than any other production trike company. Starting in 1990, the Australian manufacturer has long since worked the bugs out. But GS still improves its products each model year. From its world class touring model, the GTE, to its tandem, to its entry level trikes, this manufacturer has it all. They’ll even custom build a trike for you!

The German company Hase Spezialräder, although a delta trike manufacturer, deserves mention here too. Hase makes what I consider the Mercedes Benz of delta trikes...and bikes. My first trike was a Hase Lepus. It’s what made me decide to sell recumbent trikes in the first place.

HP Velotechnik is another German manufacturer, and I’ve got to say, German engineering is not just a cliché. Both of these companies, Hase and HPV, make fantastic machines: trikes and bikes. HPV only makes tadpole style trikes, while Hase fills the delta sector of the market. The original Scorpion is a top racing machine as well as an all-around great trike. The Scorpion FX and FS models add folding and suspension to the mix. When I rode a Scorpion FX, with rear suspension, I thought it couldn’t get better than that in a tadpole trike.



But then HPV introduced the Scorpion FS, a full-suspension model. Once I rode that trike, I was hooked! It is now my personal trike of choice. Depending on your needs or riding style...or budget (the Scorpion FS is not cheap)... it may or may not be your preference in trikes. Personally, I'm not a competitive rider. I like great quality and comfort for a touring trike.

### **Deciding which tadpole trike is for you**

There are many factors to consider when choosing your trike. As I discussed above, your intended use of your trike is a prime consideration. For example, if you're a competitive rider and want a trike for racing purposes, maximum comfort is likely not your primary concern. In general, most or all trikes are very comfortable compared to standard, "upwrong" bikes. Riding a standard bicycle is like riding dental floss while bending yourself into a pretzel shape. One of my customers compares it to sitting on a razor blade. Trike manufacturers make more than one trike for each purpose, with many models appropriate for multiple riding needs and styles.

Racing trikes must be the most aerodynamic, and thus the lowest frames and seats to the ground. They are the most difficult to mount and dismount for anyone with mobility issues, but man are they fast! Most trike manufacturers that I represent make at least one trike for racing. For example, the TerraTrike Zoomer SL, the Catrike 700, the Greenspeed X5, the ICE Vortex, the Hase Kettwiesel Fast, and the HPV Scorpion are all addicted to speed.

General purpose trikes are the most common, and most overlapping, style of all trikes. These trikes combine comfort with speed and durability, and tend to be the most affordable models. The frame and seat position are higher than those of racing trikes. While some manufacturers list models specifically for commuting, others may consider them general purpose trikes. Again, a rider may want a trike for commuting very fast, or to be also loaded with gear for a long tour.

For example, the Catrike Expedition was formerly considered the fastest trike on the market. (It's now eclipsed by the Catrike 700, and many other trikes will give even the 700 a run for its money.) Many Expedition owners use their trike as touring or commuting trikes. Greenspeed considers the GT1, GT3, and GT5 the "ultimate commuting series". While I wouldn't consider these racing trikes, they do make really great light to moderate touring trikes. Each manufacturer has at

least one commuter trike to offer.

My personal favorite is the touring trike. This style is also commonly used for commuting, but it's up to the challenge of long distance touring. My dream is to tour across/around the USA, and if time permits, into Canada. I'd also like to tour in Europe and other continents, but time is running out and money has never been.

Greenspeed makes what I would consider the ultimate World-Class touring trike, the GTE. Built for fully loaded touring, with high end components made for durability and performance, this trike will support a 350 pound rider. My personal steed is the Scorpion FS, a full-suspension model that folds for transport. I've upgraded this one with 81 gears using a SRAM Dual Drive and a Shimano XT derailleur system. As with all touring trikes, this one is made for comfort, durability, climbing, and visibility. I want to be able to climb mountains carrying or pulling a heavy load. The ICE Adventure is another great touring trike. Tana bought her Adventure from me with rear suspension only for her 3-year ride across Canada. It's a great touring trike, and it's great looking.



### **Special fit for rehab or special needs**

Approximately 30-40 per cent of my customers are recovering from injuries or have other special needs. Some children with disabilities use recumbent trikes in order to join in the fun with their friends and families. Others simply like recumbent trikes. We can fit trikes with single-hand operation, special pedals to support the feet

and/or legs, and many other means of assisting riders to use their steeds. Delta trikes are the easiest to mount as I mentioned above, but tadpoles are also suitable for customizing to meet the needs of the rehab sector. In fact, at least two of our manufacturers offer hand-cycle options to their standard trikes. We also sell trikes that are designed specifically as hand-cycles. We have modified and sold trikes to the Veterans Administration and Wounded Warriors Battalions so that soldiers who have been injured in military service for our country are now able to ride again. Several of our customers have had spinal cord or other injuries leaving them unable to use one or more limbs. Others have had medical conditions such as strokes or heart attacks, or have lost limbs due to other diseases like cancer or diabetes. I am a stroke victim, so I know at least some of these issues personally.

### **Conclusion**

We can find a tadpole (or delta) trike to fit and suit just about any rider. But these vehicles are great for everyone, regardless of a medical or physical condition. About seventy per cent of my customers are not inconvenienced by medical or physical issues. The important thing is that the rider be comfortable with the trike. Of course, everyone should have his or her doctor's "okay" to ride before purchasing a trike. Many medical doctors will actually recommend recumbent trikes for their patients, though. This is partly because of the benefits of low-impact exercise, but also because riding trikes is like riding furniture. When you get tired, you just stop and rest. You don't have to keep up any speed to keep from falling over, and you don't have to balance with your foot on the ground when you do stop. You've already got your own chair, so just take your time and enjoy yourself. Or not...you might want to race against other riders or against the clock. They're great exercise, great fun, and great transportation.

### **A couple of final observations**

I like to take credit where credit is NOT due. So I'm going to tell the reader something that I read in an article on Bentrideronline. I believe it was written by Bryan Ball of that Web Site, but I've found it to be very accurate:

Many people are concerned that they won't be seen by motorists because recumbent trikes are so low to the ground. Well, it's

true that trikes are generally low profile vehicles, but in comparable conditions, trikes are safer than standard upwrong bicycles for several reasons. First of all, humans tend to see things that are out of the ordinary. Standard bikes on the road are a dime a dozen. They're very common, so drivers seem to ignore them, thereby unintentionally driving too close to allow clearance between the motor vehicle and the bike. Alternatively, there are many jerks out there who don't want a bicycle on "their" road. "Bikes don't belong on the road", so they try to run them off. I have had that experience several times when I rode a bicycle. One of my mechanics was literally hit to drive him off the road. Recently a customer told me of his similar experience.

Recumbent trikes, on the other hand, DO NOT LOOK ORDINARY. They are normally seen from a good distance back. And from that vantage point, drivers see the extra wheel and automatically assume the rider is in a wheelchair. "Nobody wants to see their name in tomorrow's newspaper as the guy who ran over a handicapped person!" So they give the trike a wide berth to keep from coming too close to the wheelchair. I've had drivers literally drive into oncoming traffic to keep from getting too close to the handicapped person. Another reason for giving a lot of room is that people want to see what it is that this guy is riding. So they pull far enough away to be able to see the horseless carriage out the passenger's window. They often slow down in the process. I've experienced this myself too, sometimes with the driver yelling at me to get off the road. But at least I know they saw me! Don't get me wrong, though. Not everyone is going to be driving safely enough to see anything on the side of the road. Case in point: cell phones. 'Nuff said.



Another reason why recumbent trikes are safer than bikes is that, well, they're tripods. Tripods are designed to prevent falls. Not that you can't tip or flip a trike, but it's much more difficult than a bike. If you ride too fast around a sharp turn, you're going to tip. But then if you do tip your trike, you're much closer to the ground than you would be on a bicycle. You're a lot less likely to be hurt seriously falling off a trike.

The point is, you're safer on a recumbent trike than on a bicycle in most cases. But don't let your guard down. Always...ALWAYS...ride defensively. I've experienced many occasions, on bikes AND on trikes, where drivers apparently don't want to be delayed or inconvenienced by a cyclist. Automatically assuming that the cyclist is going so slow that they'll miss a traffic light or an opening in traffic, drivers frequently turn or pull out into the intersection in front of a cyclist, even when making eye contact. They'll also pull over into the shoulder/bike lane at traffic lights to make sure the cyclist won't delay their turn...even when traffic in front of them is stopped. So always make eye contact, but be ready to hit the brakes at any time. And don't try to squeeze into the bike lane between the car and the curb. Even if the driver saw you while passing you a few feet back, he or she won't necessarily know you're in the lane if you're a foot away from the passenger window.



When it comes to a competition between a truck or car and a bike or trike, the truck or car wins. No question about it. Always obey traffic laws. Always use lights, not just reflectors, in low-light conditions/at night. Always wear bright clothing (neon if possible) day or night. Always use a safety flag on your trike. When you're positioned between two motor vehicles along the side of the road, a driver CANNOT see you without a flag of some sort. My son thinks flags are dorky. To coin a phrase, though, "better to be a live dork than a dead cool dude" (or whatever the heck kids say nowadays).



Electric assist motor on trailer wheel

Here's another tidbit to consider: I've had people come to my shop or walk up to my booth at special events, and say, "They cost HOW MUCH?? I could buy a used CAR for that much!" Yes, that's true about many of the higher end trikes. But do you know how much it costs just to operate a car? I recently did some unscientific, unofficial research on-line, using information I found from sources that did do official, scientific research. According to these sources, including some governmental agencies, it costs an average of \$16,000 nationwide per year to operate an automobile! That's NOT including the purchase price of the car, even if monthly payments are made. It does include insurance, fuel, highway taxes and tolls, road repair, and all other expenses involved with owning and operating a car. And you lose the benefits of health improvement, exercise, enjoying the outdoors and

actually seeing what you're traveling through, reduction of air pollution, etc. And recumbent trikes (and bikes for that matter) run on water...well, and maybe an energy bar or two. So you don't have to help support OPEC and the auto manufacturers. Or at least you can reduce your support of those monsters.

There's much more I could say on the subject of recumbent trikes, but "methinks I doth ramble too much".

**Post Script:** I mentioned Greenspeed's Glyde velomobile near the beginning of this article. Velomobiles are basically fully enclosed/faired cycles, designed for aerodynamics and all-weather riding. Most frequently they are based on tadpole-style recumbent trike frames, though typically the trike frame is proprietary to, and designed with, the velomobile design. They are usually expensive, and are produced in two general styles for the most part: racing and commuting. Most velomobiles are produced in Europe, though as I said previously, the Glyde is produced by Greenspeed in Australia. A few are even made in the USA. I am currently the only Leiba velomobile dealer outside of Europe, but due to the economy, sales have been at a standstill at my shop. I am in the research phase of R&D for developing my own line of velomobiles. Of course, without financing, this is still a dream. My goal is to develop a velomobile that is affordable and appealing to the mass market, not just to those who are already hooked on these vehicles. But that's another story...

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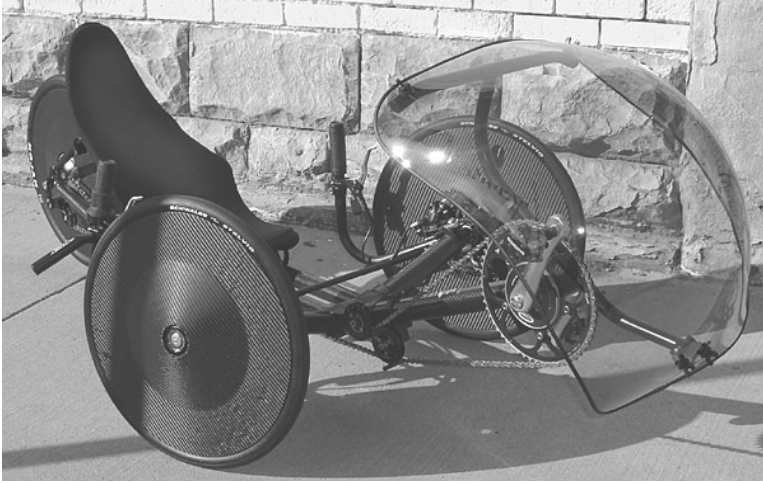
<http://www.t-ryx.com>



# Utah Trikes

## Valuable Thoughts About Tadpoles

by Ashley Guy



### Why Recumbents?

The many reasons recumbent cycles are preferred over traditional uprights include the following:

- Spreading your body weight over a much larger area than on a conventional bike explains "recumbent comfort".
- A much more comfortable seat means less back, neck, shoulder, and posterior pain and none of those unnecessary trips to the urologist.
- No wrist pain from bearing your weight.
- Smaller frontal area means better aerodynamics which have allowed recumbents to set every bicycle speed record.
- The heads up position lets you enjoy the scenery instead of the grit on the road.
- In the event of an accident, there is a shorter distance to fall and the rider will fall feet first instead of head first.
- The high seat back allows you to leverage more pedal power by pushing with your back against the seat. Human power is maximized under these conditions.



- The feet up position is more physiologically efficient because the body can circulate blood more effectively, providing more oxygen to the muscles.
- They are virtually impossible to flip forward (endo).
- They attract attention.



### **Why Trikes?**

We prefer trikes because they have all of the recumbent advantages mentioned above, plus the following three-wheeled benefits:

- Stability - loose gravel, sand, ice, tire blowouts, etc. will not send a trike crashing to the ground.
- Ride during the winter - hitting a patch of ice is fun on a trike.
- Do you have trouble balancing? No problem with a trike.
- No need to drop a foot off the pedal in tight turns to protect against wipeouts
- Leaning into the turns makes cornering on a trike fun. They handle like a sports car or go-cart - you can even brake-steer on a TerraTrike.
- Pull up to a stop and never unclip your feet from the pedals.
- No wasted energy balancing the trike on those slow steep climbs - this is the reason that trikes are believed to be better climbers than two-wheeled recumbents.
- More respect from motorists, they slow down and give you a wider

berth when passing - primarily out of sheer curiosity.

- Easier to track a straight line on the side of a road - no need for wobble room during a steep climb in traffic.
- No need for a kickstand or leaning post.
- Less road friction/tire scrub from a rider's side to side balance shift (wobble).
- Instant celebrity status - you may be the first person in your neighborhood with a trike - people will know who you are.
- Great platform for attaching fairings and accessories.
- They attract a ton of attention.

### **Top Ten Reasons To Ride a Trike:**

1. Riding a Trike is Fun!
2. You will have the coolest ride on your street!
3. Riding a Trike won't hurt you!
4. It's Great Exercise!
5. Most Anybody can do it!
6. Easy to maintain!
7. Save money on gas!
8. Can be accessorized to match your outfits!
9. Cannot explode!
10. You can put "My other car is a trike" on your license plate!

### **Are Trikes Safe?**

At Utah Trikes we often see a myriad of customers who have many different reasons for being interested in our Trikes. Some enjoy the comfort of recumbent trikes. Others like the speed and aerodynamics. Occasionally we'll get people asking if our trikes are safe. Their main reason for asking this is due to many Tadpole Recumbent Trikes being lower to the ground than a standard diamond frame bike. While being closer to the ground in a recumbent position can help with wind resistance and comfort, some people are concerned.

I commute to work on my Trike. It's my main commuting vehicle. Because of the unique shape of the Trike, I've found most people in cars go out of their way to slow down and take a closer look. Bikes are so common place that at times we tend to subconsciously blend them into the scenery. Especially if they're not following the bicycle safety laws by riding on the sidewalks instead of with traffic.

One way to assist in being seen is to follow your local safety laws and ride with the direction of traffic in your bike lane or as close to the side of the road as possible.

Another way to ensure that your Trike ride is a safe one, is to enhance your visibility using a brightly colored safety flag, safety helmet and dress in highly visible colors. Some accessories can assist in making you more noticeable like carrying bags, a fairing (windshield) or tailsok. Having a safety flag can bring your visibility more into the range of larger vehicles. Other items such as an air horn will help others notice you. While accessories like a mirror will keep you aware of what's going on around you.

Because many Tadpole Trikes sit lower to the ground, it makes the vehicle more aerodynamic like a sports car. And much like a sports car, the Trike has a very similar height. While commuting on my Trike, I can usually make eye contact with the driver of any vehicle next to me that is average sedan size or shorter. Still, with any vehicle on the road, even if I feel I've made eye contact or that they see me, I ride defensively. If you just assume that you're invisible, you'll remain very safe.



The Trike itself is also a very safe human powered vehicle. On a tadpole recumbent trike you sit between the front wheels, your body

weight is more properly centered, making it extremely difficult to tip over. Also, having two wheels in front to steer rather than the one wheel steering in front, it adds stability making it more difficult to flip the trike. And, on a Trike, if you hit a rock or pothole, you will not flip head over heels onto the pavement. About the worst I've ever experienced is having your feet come off the pedals, which can be easily fixed with clipless pedals (also called clip-in or step-in pedals). On a Delta Trike, much of the steering instability is overcome by increasing the length of the trike and lowering the rider. Traditionally though, most Delta Trikes place the rider higher off the ground than a tadpole trike. Still, in my test riding, the tadpole trikes can take high speed turns better than a Delta Trike.



While riding in traffic, I've found that vehicles tend to give you the full legal three feet (if not more) of distance between you and their vehicle. When I used to ride my standard diamond frame bike to work, I'd have some amazingly close calls. I don't know if people looking at the width of the bike tires hitting the road assume that the entire bike including the rider must also be that wide, but I rarely would get anyone giving me the proper amount of space on my bike. Also, on my bike, I couldn't really skirt the edge of the asphalt for fear that one slight variation on the road would flip me off my bike and into the side ditch.

On a Trike, there is no fear like that. I feel safe that if one wheel went slightly off the road and into the dirt, I wouldn't completely lose

control. The overall stability advantage makes a Trike a very safe pedal vehicle to ride.



### **Learning Proper Pedaling Technique:**

When people use the cliché "It's just like riding a bicycle" they are referring to how once you learn to ride in your youth you never forget. Well, the same pedaling technique you used when you were young may not be the best technique now. What if I told you there was something you could do to help you go faster, climb hills better, and lessen the force on your joints? If you are willing to spend the time to master correct pedaling technique your riding will be better.

#### **Mashing:**

The most common pedaling technique is referred to as "mashing". Mashing is where extreme force is used to push the pedal down and away from the rider, one pedal at a time. This usually happens because the gearing is too high and a high level of force is needed to turn the cranks. This is a common approach to riding an upright bike that you'll see when the rider stands on the pedals as they climb a hill. On an upright bike the amount of force is usually limited to your weight when you stand on the pedals, and since your legs are used to supporting your body's weight there is not as high of a chance that you'll hurt yourself. On a recumbent pedaling machine, like our trikes,

you can actually push much harder than your bodies weight.

If you've ever worked out in a gym, or took weight training in high school you'll be familiar with the leg press. The recumbent position is very similar to this and allows you to push your legs away from the back of the seat. Because the back of the seat keeps your body still, the average active person can typically exert a force 2-3 times the weight of their body with each leg. This extra force is great and can make you go faster, but without training you'll end up with sore knees and leg muscles.

### **Spinning:**

A word that you'll hear frequently around cyclist, especially recumbent types is "spinning". Instead of mashing the pedals and pushing the cranks one at a time you can train yourself to spin the cranks smoothly. Think of a hand-crank pencil sharpener and you take the handle and use a fluid motion to turn the crank instead of just pushing back and forth like a saw.

Spinning minimizes the amount of force on your feet and knees. At the same time proper spinning technique can increase your pedaling force by allowing you to pull on the cranks as well as push them. To learn and use proper spinning technique, we do recommend making the modest investment in proper pedals and shoes. At a minimum you'll want toe straps that hold your shoes onto the pedals, but we recommend getting something more secure like clipless pedals. Our favorite is the Shimano SPD pedal system, but there are other systems out there. With your feet firmly attached to the pedals you can apply an even force with both legs for each revolution.

### **Cadence:**

Once you master the actual process of spinning the cranks you'll want to develop a cadence (pedaling rpm) that will allow you to apply maximum power to the pedals without hurting your joints. Most people without any training have an average cadence of about 60-65rpm, which when combined with a high gear and mashing technique can move you along pretty good. By using a higher cadence and a lower gear you can go the same speed without the stress on your joints.

A good cadence to shoot for is about 85rpm, although some faster cyclist may keep their cadence in the 100s. The best way to find your ideal cadence is to use a cadence sensor that will tell you your rpms as you ride. That way you can shoot for a target cadence and train

for that. A great way to train is to pick a higher cadence as a goal and drop to a lower gear until you can ride that cadence comfortably. You'll know that your cadence is good when you can ride without your knees hurting and the hills become easier to climb.

### **Take it or leave it:**

Well, that is my pedaling advice and you can use it or not. If you are a casual cruiser then it may not make any difference to you. If your knees are hurting when you ride then these tips may help you. If you want to climb hills faster then spinning fast will definitely help.

### **Trike Away the Pounds:**

I weighed 350lbs. I had fallen into the rut of many office workers and had adopted a sedentary lifestyle. As I had gradually gained weight over the years I failed to realize that my health might be suffering. One day at my daughter's doctor appointment the doctor used me to demonstrate how easy it was to test blood pressure. While the test eased my daughter's mind, the doctor pulled me aside and told me my results were extremely high.

This was a turning point for me. I joined a gym and after a few months of cardio workouts, I had lost 25lbs. Unfortunately, the gym started to bore me and I found the treadmill and elliptical workouts to be quite monotonous. It was then that I remembered my old mountain bike that had been stuck in the rafters. Hmm, I thought, perhaps I could try commuting to work on my bike.

My first bike ride was a killer. I live eight miles from the office and it seemed like a hundred. I was tired and thirsty and could feel how foreign exercise was. My heart hurt, not just from the excessive pounding caused by overexertion my recently sedentary body, but because I felt depressed that I got so worn out so easily. How had I gotten so out of shape? I never wanted to be this way. It just happened. I was determined to keep with it, despite the pain.

After several biking weeks, my body started aching. I was still massively overweight, and my butt, arms and wrists would hurt more with every bike ride. Soon, I started hurting even when I wasn't riding. And not just the normal soreness that comes with exercise, but I felt that because I was so overweight, that my massive weight putting pressure on more fragile parts of my body was actually doing more damage than good. My wrist would crack and tingle and I couldn't get comfortable

standing or sitting. I was burning nearly 2,000 calories everyday, so I didn't want to give up the riding. That's when I started looking into different bike alternatives. I had heard about pedal cars and did a Google search to fine out if that was my answer. But with every search, the vehicles that kept coming up were the recumbent trikes.

The recumbent bikes and trikes looked a lot more comfortable, almost like sitting in a recliner. Now that's the kind of exercise I could handle! After just one test drive I was sold, and I soon had my own WizWheelz (TerraTrike) Cruiser. I couldn't believe how comfortable I was. My focus soon shifted from just enduring the painful ride to work and back into actually enjoying the leisure and comfort of the ride. Because of the recumbent trike, my lungs and body felt more open. It was easier to breathe, unlike a bike where my weight was actually getting in the way. My wrists stopped hurting, since the trike doesn't put your weight on the handlebars like a bike does. Because I felt so comfortable, I was able to ride longer and stay happier. I also learned to train myself to become faster to burn even more calories. Most days I now burn about 3500 calories and go about 30-40 miles. Since I've started riding my trike, I've lost over 100lbs.



I'd guess if a person were already skinny, perhaps they could handle a standard upright diamond frame bike without having a big



belly getting in the way. But with the standard bike, I felt as though I had to fold up into myself and my lungs were getting rammed into my gut. I'd cramp early in the ride and was really just plain miserable. With a comfortable seat, pressure off my wrists and arms, and the ability to recline in a more naturally open position allowing my lungs to work at their fullest capacity, the trike was the best solution for me. Still, even with my weight being in a much healthier zone, I prefer the comfort and feel of my Trike. With its naturally aerodynamic design, I find myself passing other standard bikes as I ride to and from work. Having failed many times at weight loss in the past, I can't think of a better thing to happen to me.

### **Preparing your trike for high speed:**

I am a speed demon. I love to go fast -- The faster the better. When I tell other riders that I have gone over 50mph on my trike, and that I go over 40mph almost every day on my commute, I usually get a response like "no way, you are joking" (especially when they find out I'm riding a Cruiser). Well, I promise you that I am not (having the Edge 305 computer to prove it!), and welcome you to join me for a ride sometime. I often get these responses from other trikers who feel their trike is too unstable at high speed. Below are some pointers that I offer from my own personal experience.

#### **Seat position:**

I have found high-speed stability to be greatly improved by moving the seat as close to the front cross member as possible. Doing so moves the center of gravity between the front two wheels. For this reason, I recommend getting the longest boom that will still fit you if you get a fixed boom trike (like the Cruiser, Tour, or Edge). If you have an Access, Sport, or Race your boom is adjustable, so you can typically move the seat all the way forward and slide the boom. The Zoomer and Zoomer Elite have the bottom of the seat integrated into the frame, and sliding the boom makes nearly all the adjustment. The Zoomer trikes already have the base of the seat as close to the front wheels as possible though.

If you want to go faster you'll also want to play around with a seat recline that works best for you. I personally like to have the seat reclined back as far as possible as this tends to provide some aerodynamic benefits at speed. Some riders find they can't push as hard

on the pedals with a reclined seat, so you'll want to play around with it and find the best position for you.

### **Alignment:**

Once you have your seat position set, you'll want to make sure your wheels and steering are set up to minimize any road resistance. The best way to do this is to make all three wheels parallel. Any misalignment will cause the tires to scrub on the road and will increase friction. The best way to do this is to measure the distance between the fronts and rears of the front wheels while the steering bar is centered. You can use a ruler, but I prefer to use a trammel bar so I don't have to eyeball it as much. I recommend against setting any toe-in when adjusting the alignment. You only need toe-in if you have slop in your linkages. If you have slop in your linkages you need to fix that first!

I've also found that, for me, having linkage steering at high speeds helps me keep the trike as stable as possible. While direct steering is very responsive at low speeds, this can turn into a dangerous situation when you're going so fast that a shaky hand turns into a lane change. This is also why I've chosen WizWheelz trikes with linkage steering as my main racing trikes.

### **Faster Tires:**

With your steering aligned, the next step to minimize road friction is your tires. Most of the WizWheelz TerraTrikes come stock with the 40psi CST tires. These are not made for speed. A faster tire will usually have a harder/smooth surface and run at a much higher pressure rating.

There are a lot of faster tires available. I recommend the Schwalbe Marathon tires as good all-around tires. They are very fast and also have a very high puncture resistance. If you are looking for the fastest tires check out the Schwalbe Kojaks or Schwalbe Stelvios.

### **Aerodynamics:**

Despite the lower profile of our recumbent trikes, air becomes the greatest force working against me when I reach about 18mph. At 25mph the air really pushes against me, making that about my top speed on level ground, under most circumstances. Once I hit a 20mph average I knew I needed some help, so I turned to the Mueller Windwrap Fairing. Besides making the trike look super cool, the fairing adds a true speed advantage. To obtain the best advantage you'll want the fairing to

come as close to you as possible as well as the front being as low as possible. My experience with the fairing was fairly dramatic. On level ground I picked up about a 2-3mph-speed boost. On downhill runs I found the results to be even more dramatic with even a 4-5mph boost at max speed.

Beyond the front fairing, there is still more that you can do to better your aerodynamic profile. The next thing I tried was the Terracycle Tailsok. The Tailsok is comprised of a frame that attaches to the back of the trike and is covered with fabric. The idea is that the pointed shape reduces air turbulence. In combining the Tailsok with the front fairing I found an improvement of about 1-2mph. So compared to the completely unfaired trike I get about a 3-7mph-speed increase with both the fairing and Tailsok working together.

The next step would be to tie the front fairing and Tailsok together. I am currently working on this project with a whole new design, so I'll tell you how it goes later.

### **Gearing:**

Once we've improved our ability to move through the air as much as possible, we need to make sure we can actually pedal as fast as we want to go. I am a big believer in fast cadences. If you want to go fast you have to pedal fast. Hammering on the pedals when your moving at 40mph can result in "pedal steer", where your pedaling motions can actually cause the trike to weave back and forth. Faster spinning with a lower force on the pedal will eliminate this. To check your cadence, I highly recommend the use of a cadence sensor on your bike computer. For me a good, maintainable, fast cadence is about 120rpm with a peak of 135rpm. So, if you can spin 120-135rpm and you want to hit 50mph you'll need a top end with about 130-134 gear inches. I won't cover that again, since I already wrote about it in my Ultimate Gearing Modifications article, but you will need to modify your gears.

### **Efficiency:**

Once you have the gearing and your already pretty fast you'll want to go through every part of your trike to squeak out extra performance. Make sure your brakes don't rub and your wheels all turn freely. If you really want to get efficient then consider modifying your chainline with our High Performance Idler Kit. This is something that we've spent months working on and testing with the folks at TerraCycle.

Our custom kit eliminates the power-robbing sideways chain bending and promotes better shifting.



Up on two wheels – a tricycle wheelie (not recommended)

### **Training:**

Ultimately how fast you go is going to be up to your own personal strength. The best way to get stronger and faster is to train. The best speed training exercises for me are those that increase my cadence. Try this one: ride for a half hour at a time and go as fast as you can, but stay in your lowest gear. Each day go up one gear ratio. To build strength in your legs incorporate hills into your daily ride. Going up hills in a low gear forces you to combine strength with a higher cadence.

### **Find a hill:**

Most of us are not going to be able to propel themselves up to 50mph without some help from gravity. So, find a hill, relax, spin fast, ride trikes! Oh yeah, make sure your brakes are adjusted properly so you can stop when you need to.

### **Schwalbe Marathon Plus Tires:**

Living out in the country, and using the trike as my primary commute vehicle, I was not very happy with the stock CST tires that come on the Cruiser. With a max pressure of 40 PSI, they do give me a very cushy ride, but just after a couple hundred miles of riding on the shoulders through glass and thorns, I had already had 4 flats and the rear tire was starting to look worn down.

I started looking for replacement tires that would be more flat resistant and go faster. That's when I decided to try the Schwalbe Marathon Plus tires. They have a thick rubber layer for the best puncture prevention rating and have a much lower rolling resistance

than the stock CST tires. I'm sure they roll easier because of the better rubber compound and the higher air pressure they can hold (45-70psi).

They feel much slicker with a harder rubber material. The tread/tire thickness is much thicker than the stock tires. I inflated the front tires to the max of 70psi and the rear to a cushier 60psi. That gives me a little better pedaling traction. At 70psi the front tires feel like rocks. Initially these tires felt very hard and made the ride seem bumpier, I got used to it after about a week and now hardly notice. They are definitely faster. I noticed about a 2MPH increase in speed over the stock tires in the 15-20mph range. So far no flats.

These are also the tires that Steve Greene from Trike Asylum runs on his ICE Q trike, and he swears by them, having ridden them on a trike trip to Death Valley from Oregon. Even a year after the trip, he still has not had one of the Marathon-Plus tires go flat! On that trip, his Schwalbe tires ran through a bunch of goatheads, with no casualties. He also uses EarthGuard tire liners and the super thick puncture resistant Q-Tubes. Steve runs all three of his tires at the full 70psi, preferring the slightly rougher ride so that he can have a faster top end speed with less rolling resistance.

UPDATE: After putting 3,000 miles on the Schwalbe Marathon Plus tires, I have not had a single flat. This is downright amazing! I ride through all sorts of junk in the road without even worrying now. My guess is that I'll get at least another 1,000 miles before I need to change the tires. I most definitely recommend the Marathon Plus to any triker sick of getting flat tires.

\* \* \* \* \*

<http://utahtrikes.com>





Naturalist Steve Greene on 2009 Death Valley Tricycle Expedition

**Part Three:**  
**Inside The Major Manufacturers**



# FREE on THREE



Out here,  
there are no signs



# Arkel:

## Canadian Trike Pannier Systems

by Joe Kurmaskie

Arkel designs and builds the highest quality cycling panniers for commuting, mountain biking, cycle touring, or around-the-world expeditions. Whether it's a ride down the block or an expedition around the world, you'll be taking a bit of home with you in comfort and style. Cyclists worldwide praise Arkel panniers, handlebar bags, and racks.

We have been helping cyclists carry their gear safely, in comfort and with style, since 1988. Arkel is devoted to creating products that perform and last for the long haul. We think everyone should ride a bike or trike ... and whether it's to the store, the office or clear around our planet, we want you to bring what you need in an Arkel bag. We engineer and manufacture our top quality cycling panniers, bags, and racks for demanding riders ... here in Canada!



RT-60 Pannier

Discover for yourself the innovative design concepts and quality workmanship that go into every one of our products. We have a

full range of waterproof panniers, handlebar bags, and rack trunks. Arkel bags are designed FOR cyclists, BY cyclists, because there is no substitute for on the road experience.

We've come a long way from our humble beginnings in 1988, when Serge set out to design what he thought was the best bicycle pannier bag available to cyclists, bar none! This was the birth of Arkel. From the very first pair of touring panniers he made for himself, to any touring, off road, or commuting pannier you find here today at Arkel or through your favourite local bike shop, one thing remains true: We build panniers because we care about your experience on the trike.



GT-54 Pannier

We've always made and will continue to create panniers for cyclists like you with the best fabric (Cordura), the best zippers (YKK), the best hook systems (aluminum) with sound designs that work and make your tour, commute or trike ride more satisfying. We are engaged in making the planet a better place to live by promoting cycling through advocacy with our partners from Velo Quebec, The Bicycle Trade Association of Canada (BTAC), Adventure Cycling, and The League of American Bicyclists. We're also engaged in providing great quality

Eco-Friendly bicycle bags at an affordable price, sewn with fabric made from post consumer and post industrial recycled materials (Kargo line by Arkel).

Our designs integrate countless hours of experience from the road and in the saddle, and from considerable customer feedback. There's no place better to gather information than from the road, so yes, we listen and we continually try to improve our saddlebags in all aspects. We back our products with a no-hassle warranty so you get peace of mind when you purchase your Arkel equipment. We also provide what we hope is the best possible customer service you can expect from a pannier company. We are dedicated to the complete riding experience from beginning to end.



### TailRider Trunk Pannier

Here at Arkel, we know bikes and trikes, and will assist you with whatever question you may have on outfitting your human powered cycle for your next ride, urban commute, tour or off road adventure. If you have a question about getting outfitted, chances are we've discussed it and will have an answer to your query. If we don't, you can be sure we'll find it. Our website is filled with information from how to choose the right bicycle pannier equipment to the age-old debate over waterproof or not. We also have a complete selection of racks from Old Man Mountain and some essential riding gear from Endura of Scotland.

Arkel's owner, Paul McKenzie, is a tireless leader from day

one, who is in the office before most of his staff, bringing his passion for panniers and his love of cycle touring to every product and every customer. He didn't start Arkel because he needed work. He works everyday because he loves creating the very best bags in the world.



GT-54s and TailRider Panniers on Trike

The word is out that Arkel makes the best bags in the business; durable, functional, great looking and with up to three layers of waterproof protection. But what hasn't been spotlighted until now is that a lively crew from CRDITED Estrie – a social service program for folks with Intellectual Disabilities and Pervasive Development Disorders – has worked at Arkel's Quebec headquarters for some time now. We think of them as family around here. Once the designers have finished creating our bags and the seamstresses have stitched them tight, the gang from CRDITED Estrie goes to work assembling and putting the finishing touches on each Metropolitan, GT-54 and commuter bag.

More than being treated with dignity, given a great work environment and paid a livable wage, the crew from CRDITED Estrie contributes to Arkel's success. Without their energy, laughter and

dedication, Arkel would be just another bag company. In a era marked by outsourcing and automation, Arkel is a place where people still matter, creating and giving back to the community is second nature, and making a quality product one bag at a time is how we roll.

We carry a Catrike Bag Series. These bags are specifically made for the Catrike. They are made right here Sherbrooke, QC, Canada from 100% recycled 600 denier polyester fabric with foam and high density polyethylene stiffeners. They are sold as sets and fit snugly on each trike. No rack necessary! The designs are made to carry from the frame and require absolutely no other hardware.



RT-40 Pannier

Many of our panniers are fully compatible with most trikes. In fact, Steve Greene, the author of this book, and publisher of Trike Asylum online, is a firm believer in our products. He personally uses a pair of Arkel GT-54 panniers on his ICE trike for his overland journeys, and runs an Arkel TailRider trunk atop the rack. This combination provides about 65 liters of cargo storage on his trike. He also uses a pair of Radical Design seat panniers, bringing his total to roughly 90 liters of gear storage. You may read his review of the GT-54 panniers on the Arkel website, which he submitted shortly after his 2009 trike trek to Death Valley National Park. Arkel bags served him well.

If you need a cargo pannier solution for your tadpole trike, give Arkel a look. You won't be disappointed!



Liner inside GT-54 Pannier



XM-45 Pannier

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<http://panniers.com>



# **Berserker**

## **Enjoy Cycling in Comfort**

with Recumbent Suspension Tricycle

by Brian Gobrogge, Berserker Cycle Design, Santa Barbara, CA



Berserker Full Suspension Recumbent Tricycle

### **Cycling in Comfort with a Recumbent Trike:**

Cyclists who enjoy riding recumbent tricycles are not doing it to race or set time records. They are out there to have fun, exercise, and enjoy staying active outdoors. To these people life is about being comfortable and enjoying every moment's sights and sounds, and not about seeing who can break a record.

Once you ride a tricycle you will never want to ride a regular bicycle again. With the tricycle you have the ability to go up steep hills, stop in the middle of the hill, and take a rest with just two fingers on the brake. You can stop at a stoplight by just tapping on the brakes and do not have to put your feet down. When riding a full-suspension trike, you do not experience the sore back and neck from bending down for long periods of time, and your hands will not hurt from gripping the handle bars. Especially if you are used to riding over rough terrain without suspension, you will see a huge difference.



On a recumbent tricycle you are in a heads-up position looking forward and better able to enjoy your surroundings, since looking around does not interfere with your riding. In contrast, when riding a regular bicycle, the cyclist is looking down most of the time, because it is not comfortable to look up. Cargo carrying capacity makes it easy to strap your backpack to the rear of the trike.

Unlike running which is hard on your knees, and standard cycling which puts a lot of pressure on the back, neck and hands, riding a tricycle is a good low-impact cycling exercise. In a gym you see mostly recumbent or semi-recumbent equipment, because it is a comfortable position for exercising.

I personally like riding the Berserker full-suspension tadpole recumbent tricycle because it is fun. The Berserker is a heavy duty trike designed for all-terrain riding and I am always experimenting with it and trying to push its limits and see where I can take it. When I first started riding a Berserker, all I wanted to do was ride up and down curbs, just because it was not something I could do on a regular bicycle. I also enjoy how my body feels after riding the Berserker: my neck and back are not sore from bending over, which used to bother me a lot with a bicycle. The Berserker trike is also a great conversation starter to meet people. When riding one of these weird vehicles on the road and around the community, you never know who you are going to end up talking to.

In addition to recreation and fitness uses, full-suspension tricycles are of interest as economical eco-friendly business transportation vehicles. They are useful for getting around parks and golf courses, or as a low-pressure mode of transportation for farm workers on the field. A trailer hauling produce or equipment can be easily attached to the trike, and heavy duty racks allow carrying of miscellaneous tools and supplies. Tricycles also offer a solution for people looking for alternative to cars, if they can not get a drivers license due to medical issues.

### **Advantages over Regular Bicycles:**

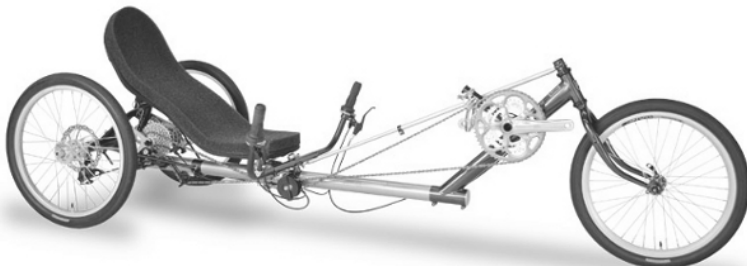
There are many advantages of tricycles over regular bicycles. Three-wheeled design is stable and comfortable, because the cyclist is not constantly working on balancing. Tricycles allow the cyclist to sit down in a comfortable position and to ride longer with less pain. Tricycles don't fall over when they come to a full stop, they are stable at low speeds, they can carry tremendous loads, and the cyclist can take

a break any time. Tricycles minimize typical problems people experience on a regular bicycle, such as back pain from bending over and hand pain from gripping handle bars for long periods of time. Since the tricycle has three corners, the cyclist can climb steep hills or stop at stoplights without having to get off the trike. They can just hold the brakes and stop in position. Tricycles in general and specifically recumbent tricycles are easier to ride, as if the cyclist is sitting in a lawn chair.

A major safety concern with a standard bicycle is that most drivers of cars don't respect bicycles on the road, because they are so narrow and don't take up a lot of space. This results in a lot of traffic accidents that involve bikes. Semi-upright tadpole tricycle is usually about 36 inches wide and with a larger profile looks more like a vehicle. As a result car drivers treat semi-upright tadpole trikes as vehicles and leave them more room.

### **Advantages of Tadpole Tricycle Design:**

There are two types of tricycles, defined by their wheel arrangements.



Delta Trike Configuration, Rans Trizard shown

Standard or delta tricycles have one wheel in front and two wheels in the rear. Delta tricycles are often used as cargo tricycles, where the cargo is behind the driver. Delta design is often used to carry passengers. These trikes are known as cycle rickshaws, pedicabs or bike taxis. They are widely used in major cities around the world, but most commonly in cities of South, Southeast and East Asia. In these countries tricycle rickshaws are a popular mode of transportation for

tourists over short distances. They also have environmental benefits and may be quicker than other forms of transport if traffic congestion is high.



Tadpole Trike, Berserker shown

A tadpole tricycle has two wheels in front and one wheel in rear. This type of tricycle can also be used as cargo tricycles, except now the load is in front of the rider. These tricycles are useful for drivers that need to keep a close eye on their cargo or need quick access to it without having to get off of their trike. It is often used for transporting little children, or for food vendors such as selling ice cream or vegetables. In the recent years, tadpole tricycles have become increasingly popular as recreational and exercise vehicles for people who love riding and being outdoors and want to stay fit, but can not ride a regular bicycle for health related reasons, such as back pain, wrists or balance issues.

The primary advantage of a tadpole over a standard tricycle design is stability. The tadpole design has two wheels in front, resulting in better support during turning and lower risk of tipping over, as most of the cornering forces are applied to the front corners of the vehicle. The tadpole tricycle offers platform stability by having the widest foot print in front as opposed to the standard tricycle design where the widest foot print is in the back. For this reason tadpole designs with

improved stability are becoming increasingly popular not just for tricycles but also for motorcycles and motorized scooters. Another advantage of tadpole versus delta tricycle design is simpler maintenance, resulting from a much simpler bicycle drive wheel, as opposed special axle with cassette which is specially designed for delta tricycles.

### **Tadpole Designs: Upright, Fully-Recumbent, or Semi-Recumbent?**

There are tricycles on the market where the cyclist is in an upright position just like on a regular bicycle. The advantage of this design is high visibility and ease of getting on an off the trike. The primary disadvantage of this design is the narrower seat which puts pressure on the back and the tailbone. Just like in the regular bicycle, the cyclist's arms are in front, gripping the handle bars to maintain upright posture which applies a lot of pressure to the wrists.

Unlike upright design, the fully recumbent cyclist is lying comfortably on the seat and moving with a forward leg motion. This type of tricycle offers maximum comfort and convenience. The primary advantage of a fully recumbent tadpole tricycle is that it has the lowest center of gravity, because the cyclist is positioned very low to the ground. Low center of gravity helps keep the weight on all three wheels during cornering, resulting in better traction and stability when turning.



Fully Recumbent Trike: ICE Vortex shown

The primary disadvantage of a fully recumbent tricycle is a safety concern with visibility on the side of the road. With a typical fully-recumbent tricycle the cyclist is positioned 4 to 5 inches off the ground and laying back at about 30 degree angle to the ground. The cyclist's head is only about 20 inches off the ground, which means cars on the road can not see the tricycle well. Typically the bottom edge of the car window on a compact car is at more than 32 inches above the ground, which means car drivers are not able to see somebody riding a fully recumbent trike. As a result, fully recumbent tricycles are not respected by drivers as a vehicle, but rather as a foreign object driving on the side of the road. In addition, because the cyclist is so low to the ground, he or she has low visibility of the traffic, as they can only see what is directly in front of them.

A compromise between upright and fully recumbent tricycle design is a semi-recumbent, such as Berserker tricycle. This design incorporates the comfort features of a fully-recumbent trike where the cyclist is reclining and the feet are in front of the cyclist. However, in a semi-recumbent design the cyclist is higher off the ground, improving the visibility of the tricycle on the road as well as cyclists' visibility of what is happening around them. The drivers of the cars can see the trike and it is treated just like another vehicle on the road. Additional benefit of a semi-recumbent tricycle is that the higher seat makes it easier to mount and dismount the tricycle.

In the last twenty years the market has been moving towards recumbent as opposed to upright tadpole trike design. This trend is due to the increasingly aging population and various health problems that cyclists of all ages have been experiencing. Typical cyclists keep cycling for life and would like to continue cycling even if they can no longer ride a traditional bicycle for health reasons as they get older or experience injuries.

Typically, young cyclists with no medical challenges do not appreciate the advantages of a tadpole recumbent tricycle, because they are fully capable of riding an upright bike and that is what they learned as kids. The aging demographics such as baby boomer generation would like to continue exercising to stay fit and enjoy being outdoors, breathing fresh air, but because of physical limitation such as back problems, wrist problems or balance problems can not ride a regular bicycle or sit upright for long periods of time. Recumbent tadpole tricycle provides a solution for this growing group of people. In addition, because tricycles are so much easier and more comfortable to

ride, some cyclists might prefer a tricycle because it allows them to travel longer distances before getting tired. For example, it is not unusual for some people to ride about 100 miles in a day on a semi-recumbent tricycle, while they would only be able to ride about 15 miles with a regular bicycle.

Position of a cyclist in a recumbent tricycle is more aerodynamic and enables the cyclist to efficiently apply leg power to the movement of the vehicle. While cycling in an upright position on a bicycle a lot of motion is wasted in bobbing side to side and up and down as the cyclist is pedaling. Recumbent tricycle positioning allows the cyclist to have a smoother cadence enabling efficient power transfer.



Hammock style Seat, with rear steering:  
Sidewinder ProCruiser shown

In the recumbent tricycle market, the seat typically provides support not only for the cyclist's bottom but also for the back. There are typically two main types of seat configurations, both of which offer certain advantages and disadvantages. The first is a fabric or hammock type, which conforms to riders and offers a comfortable and breathable seat for casual cruising or riding. The other type is a hard seat pan style which is typically a better ergonomic fit that hugs the rider's body, offers more support and allows the rider to shift bodyweight more efficiently.

## **Why is Suspension Important for Comfort?**

The majority of tricycles currently on the market are tadpole design. Most of them do not offer any suspension. Typical design is a low-cost, entry-level tricycle, low to the ground, with no suspension and small wheels in front, usually 16 or 20 inches in diameter.

A tricycle that offers no suspension is not very comfortable, because the cyclist will feel every rock, pothole and crack in the road, which offers the potential for handling problems. If the tricycle without suspension is moving at high speeds and encounters a small obstacle, the whole tricycle will be impacted - the wheel will no longer make contact with the pavement and lose traction, resulting in possible loss of control of the tricycle by the cyclist. Depending on the roughness of the road, the cyclist will feel vibration on the hands holding the handle bars as well as in the whole body while riding.

In addition, most of the tricycles that don't offer suspension come with narrow road tires that have low compliance and absorb very little impact. Smaller diameter of the wheels results in a small contact patch, forcing the cyclist to experience every bump on the road. In addition, small diameter wheels are not as able to roll over top of obstacles.

Some tadpole tricycle designs offer rear suspension only. Rear suspension helps minimize the impact of some obstacles but does not help with maintaining the contact of two front turning wheels with the road. It improves rider comfort, but does not result in improved handling when riding over uneven pavement and obstacles.

In contrast, full-suspension tricycle designs such as the Berserker offer the cyclists maximum comfort and controllability. In addition to full-suspension, Berserker uses large 24 inch wheels with all terrain tires. When the Berserker tricycle encounters a bump or a dip, the full suspension absorbs the shock keeping the tire in contact with the ground over a longer period of time, as opposed to becoming airborne, which allows better control of the tricycle.

Shock absorption also ensures that minimum vibration is felt by the cyclist. Full-suspension in combination with larger all terrain tires further enhances this effect because larger wheels provide additional suspension and cushioning and have a larger contact area with the road. The large wheels roll over obstacles easily and further reduce the impact to the cyclist. Large mountain bike wheels used on Berserker make it possible to ride up a six inch curb, which is impossible to do

while riding other tricycles on the market.



Long travel suspension on all three corners:  
Berserker Tricycle shown

In short, suspension is a critical feature for ensuring maximum controllability of the tricycle, as well as best rideability and cyclist's comfort level, as it minimizes the impacts to the cyclist's body from all the bumps and debris on the road.

### **What is Electric Assist?**

Due to the aging population and associated medical problems, electric assist is one of the features often requested by tricycle customers. Electric assist is a system that includes a motor, a battery and a controller. When engaged, electric assist increases the cyclist's pedal power. Typically multiple levels of assist can be selected with a controller. It provides a power assist, multiplies the power the cyclist creates by pedaling, and makes it easier to pedal the tricycle.

Electric assist can be used in many different ways. If engaged at a low level, electric assist makes pedaling easier. Increasing the level of the assist reduces the effort required to ride the tricycle at a given speed. It can help a cyclist go uphill, accelerate faster, and go longer distances. It can be used as a safety net for cyclists who want to go long distances,



but want to make sure that they will have enough energy and power to get back home. Those people who are looking for a combination of commuting and exercise might want to ride the tricycle to work with the help of electric assist, because they don't want to get sweaty, but might want to turn it off on the way back home to get good exercise.

Bicycles and tricycles are unique vehicles because they do not require a license or registration to operate. Many countries in North America and Europe have allowed the implementation of electric assist on bicycles and tricycles, while maintaining non-registration. These vehicles have to fit the several speed and maximum power requirements. For example, in California maximum speed is 20 miles per hour and maximum power is 1000 Watts. In addition, it is required that the vehicle has the capability to be powered with the motor or human power.



Berserker Tricycle Shown with hubcentric Bionx electric assist, and Rear Rack battery pack

In previous generations, electric motors have been implemented on bicycles with a motor that includes a drive wheel applying pressure to the regular tire of the bike. There are other ones that have incorporated additional sprockets. Latest advances in electronics

technology have enabled implementation of a hub-centric motor design. In this case the actual hub of the wheel is replaced with an electric motor - the hub is a motor. Advantage of this design is simplicity and efficiency. Since it is incorporated into the wheel, there are no extraneous mechanical components.

There are several companies that manufacture electric motors. Berserker tricycle currently incorporates Bionx electric motor, which is a high quality hub-centric design from a leading manufacturer.

### **What Makes a Good off-Road Trike?**

Full suspension and large all-terrain tires are critical for shock absorption, riding over obstacles, good controllability and minimum impact to the cyclist. Wide platform in a recumbent design insures stability with low center of gravity. Stable wide platform is important in all-terrain cycling because the surfaces are very uneven and the likelihood of the tricycle tipping over is increased. The Berserker design incorporates all of these features to ensure the most comfort and controllability for all-terrain use.

### **The Berserker Tricycle Story:**

The inventor of the Berserker tricycle is Adam Stephens, an Industrial Technology instructor at CalPoly. When Adam, an avid cyclist, flew over a 12-foot ledge on his mountain bike several years ago, he broke the front end of his mountain bike and compressed two disks in his lower back, which made traditional cycling too painful for him. Adam used his injury as a catalyst to create a prototype for an off-road, recumbent tricycle that could tackle the terrain he loved while taking the pressure off his spine. The standard trikes available on the market did not fit him, because he was primarily interested in off-roading but there were no off-road tricycles available on the market.

The result was the Berserker trike, which was designed for durability and all-terrain capability. The trike's wheels can handle obstacles of up to 6 inches with its suspension, and has a wide reclining seat with more than an inch of foam padding on the back, which is crucial to distribute weight evenly.



Founders of Berserker Cycle Design; Adam Stephens (left), Brian Gobrogge (right)

Berserker Cycle Design was formed after Adam and I met at an MIT Enterprise Forum in Santa Barbara in April 2008. At that time, I was looking for a business opportunity to invest in that would match my extensive experience in product design, development and manufacturing as well as business know-how. I was immediately intrigued by the product concept that had a lot of potential, but needed to be redesigned with manufacturability and cost in mind. There had already been significant press coverage about Adam's idea, which validated the market need for a full suspension tricycle. We sat across the table from each other, hit it off right away, and within a couple of months Berserker was formed. It took about a year to design and

develop a production version of the Berserker tricycle.

The Berserker team has been offering test rides at Earth Day festivals along the California coast and seeing tremendous interest. People love the trike – it is comfortable, easy to ride and, most of all, it is fun. We were pleasantly surprised at how many people were looking at the Berserker tricycle for everyday commuting. Businesses are also looking at the Berserker as an effective eco-friendly transportation solution to enable employees to get around the golf course or tend large farm fields. The biggest market so far is older riders, an average Berserker cyclist is about 55 years old. In addition to older people, the trike appeals to people with carpal tunnel syndrome and problems with their fingers, as well as those who have balancing problems or never learned to ride a traditional bike.

One of the most effective ways to get people interested in the trike is just riding it out in the community. It always gets a lot of attention when seen out in public. The Berserker team exhibits at many community events in California where people can test ride the trike. At first, they are intimidated because it looks so different, but they all come back with big grins on their faces.

An extra benefit of the Berserker is that it is made from a Chromoly steel frame which is easily recyclable, making it a truly eco-friendly form of transportation.

### **What Makes Berserker Tricycle Unique?**

Berserker is a full suspension tricycle capable of withstanding off-road abuse with its independent three wheel suspension and welded chromoly frame. It is a semi-recumbent tricycle that incorporates under seat steering with linkages to the wheels for added comfort and to minimize any impacts to the riders hands and arms during aggressive all terrain cycling. The Berserker is also great for commuting to work, or running local errands. The heavy duty rack allows easy attachment of loads. For those looking for optimal comfort or need help going up the big hills, Berserker offers Bionx electric assist packages integrated at the factory. The tricycle is hand built in the United States from premium components designed to last.

Berserker team believes that everyone is different and that everyone should be able to get their new tricycle in the color of their choice. They now offer the choice of 188 standard colors at no charge. A special effect or metallic powder coating finishes can also be made.

Berserker can also custom make a specialized tricycle.

The Berserker was built for a lifetime of lasting enjoyment. It is not a disposable trike. All the wearable components are easily replaceable and the basic frame is pretty close to indestructible because it is a heavy duty design.



Berserker Trike with Bionx Electric assist,  
Front Battery Configuration

With questions, comments and inquiries please visit:

<http://www.berserkercycle.com>,

or contact us via email:

[info@berserkercycle.com](mailto:info@berserkercycle.com)

### **Key Tricycle Features:**

24" Wheels for navigating all forms of terrain

Adjustable length boom to cater to riders of all shapes and sizes

27 speeds

Composite seat pan with widened comfort zone and ergonomic lumbar support

15" High Seat Position for increase visibility and access

Long travel suspension design with independent suspension

6" Rear Suspension Travel

5" Independent Front Suspension Travel

Frame build in the USA from Aircraft grade Chromoly tubing

Tadpole Configuration

Independent Left and Right 4 piston hydraulic brakes

No idler rollers to maximize drive efficiency.

Powder coated finish for maximum durability

Battery Operated LED Light Kit (Headlight and Taillight)

Extensive Color and Finish Options Available

Tricycle Safety Features:

Battery Operated Light Kit (Headlight and Taillight)

White Wheel Reflectors

Dimensions and Weight:

35" (89cm) Overall Width

15" (38cm) Seat Height

48" (122cm) Wheel Base

Optional Accessories:

Rack System, With Heavy Duty Formed 12GA Platform,  
Powder Coated black or to match the trike

Fully Adjustable Head Rest with Integrated Pad, Powder  
Coated black or to match the trike

\* \* \* \* \*

**<http://berserkercycle.com>**



# Catrike

## Made in the USA

by Mark Egeland

Paulo Camasmie first became interested in cycling when, as a young boy in Sao Paulo, Brazil, he received a high-quality five-speed Caloi road bike. As he developed his math skills, Paulo also developed an interest in designing and building things, particularly functional products that made life simpler, easier, and better. When he completed his mechanical engineering degree at FAAP in 1991, Paulo accepted a six-month internship at Chrysler's international operations in Detroit, Michigan.



Paulo had long dreamed of designing and producing his own products using his mechanical engineering training and his math skills, although he had no idea what he wanted to design or produce.

In 1998 Paulo saw a Diamondback cruiser bicycle parked inside a garage of their apartment building. The bike had balloon tires and a large, comfortable saddle. As he looked at the bike's frame, he said to himself, "I can do this; I can make a better and more comfortable bike than this." He quickly decided he could move to the United States, build two bikes and sell two; build four, sell four, and grow a company. He rushed upstairs and asked his wife Rafaela to come downstairs. He showed her the bike and said, "Let's move to the United States and I'll make bikes."

She asked if he knew what he was doing. Paulo really did not have any idea, but simply said, "Sure!", so Rafaela agreed to the plan.

As he searched the Internet for recumbent, Paulo came across six or seven small firms that sold recumbent bicycles. Paulo considered what it would take to start a recumbent tricycle company. He was confident he could design and engineer a superior tadpole trike. Based on phone conversations, Paulo learned that California had by far the most recumbent bicycle manufacturers, dealers, and customers, so in 1998 he traveled to Los Angeles to meet with many of them.

Paulo then returned to Brazil and sketched a design for a high-quality, premium-priced tadpole recumbent.



In 2001, Paulo rented a 1,500 square foot factory space in the Orlando's Pine Hills area and bought a drill press, a manual tube bender, an inexpensive band saw, some chrome moly steel tubing, and a \$100 copy of Turbo CAD at the local Office Depot. He also purchased a tube notcher and a set of hole saws. He then flew to Colorado Springs for a two-week course in bicycle assembly, bicycle maintenance, and wheel building at the Barnett Bicycle Institute. When he returned, he needed a bicycle jig to properly align and hold the tubes together for welding, but had never seen one. He purchased a book on building jigs and fixtures and two days later made a jig out of wood.

Paulo built a prototype of his revised design but decided it was not special. He decided he needed an aluminum frame to build the trike he wanted. Paulo asked some of his contacts if there were reasons why



recumbents were not made of aluminum. They told him aluminum was far too difficult to weld and that no one did it. However, because aluminum was common in high-end road bikes, Paulo contacted suppliers about what was needed to weld aluminum.

Paulo found a supplier who sold welding equipment and asked him whether it was difficult to weld aluminum. The vendor said it was easy, and he could teach Paulo to weld aluminum in an hour. He offered to sell Paulo a tungsten inert gas (TIG) welder for \$1,500, with a free welding hood and a bottle of argon included. Paulo agreed, and an hour later the vendor arrived with Paulo's welder, hood, and welding supplies. He quickly and easily demonstrated how to weld aluminum tubes by holding an aluminum welding rod in the left hand, the electric arc welding torch in the right hand, and controlling the temperature with a foot pedal. The weld was nearly perfect. He told Paulo that if the aluminum was burning, he should reduce the heat. He then had Paulo try the technique.

Paulo quickly burned through the tube and produced an ugly weld. The vendor said, "Good—keep trying until you stop burning through the tubes," and started to leave. Paulo said, "Herbie, come back here you . . ." The vendor, who is now a friend, laughed and left.



Paulo (left) at Catrike factory

After two weeks of shocking himself, burning himself, and burning through tubes, Paulo learned how to weld aluminum tubes. At that point he was confident he could weld frames for his prototype trikes—not good enough to weld frames for production trikes, but good enough that he could now design a trike, weld the frame himself, and then test ride the trike. He was determined to refine the design, build a better frame than the competition did, and include better components, such as standard disc brakes, which competitors offered as a \$200 upgrade.

Paulo realized that he was far from an expert aluminum welder, so he called the head of welding at Westside Tech, a division of the Orlando high school system, and requested the best aluminum welder in Orlando. The head of welding informed Paulo that the best welder was Sharon “Sherry” Little, who happened to be his sister, and who was hearing impaired. Paulo’s only concern was how they would communicate, but he was assured she could read lips and that she was the best. Paulo wanted her.



When Ms. Little interviewed for the job, she commented that Paulo had an accent—his lips moved differently—but she assured him she would quickly learn to read them. A week later she and Paulo could easily communicate. Ms. Little had more than 20 years experience as a

welder when she joined Big Cat as its second employee (after Paulo). She was so skilled that she welded all the available frames in two days. During the following six weeks, Paulo would assemble the welded frames into trikes and then cut tubes for the next batch of frames. Ms. Little would then return and weld for two more days.



Paulo was able to keep costs low by assembling the trikes and lacing (building) the wheels himself. The firm was marginally profitable in 2002, after a modest salary for Paulo. However, at 67 trikes, Big Cat was a marginal firm. The Road was similar to other tadpole trikes, so even though it was exceptionally well-designed, well-built, and sold for far less than other trikes, the product generated little interest. Being the firm's only factory worker other than Ms. Little, Paulo gained the experience to become a far better designer and engineer. As he built the frames, he realized he had not designed the product for ease of production. He asked himself why the frame had so many brackets, small tubes, welded joints, nuts, bolts, and moving parts.

He had read books on designing products for ease of manufacture and assembly. He knew the rule that better design can lead to better quality and lower cost. However, he now realized that if you make something with your own hands, you think about those issues all of the time: you observe every detail, and you think about the product from the point of view of your vendors and your production operators. One thing he observed was that if the frame had one more bend, it would have one less bracket with bolts and nuts or one less weld. That would make the trike lighter, stronger, more reliable, and easier to build.

He also observed that his frames, and all other tadpole frames,

flexed as a rider applied force to the pedals, and the rear wheel twisted. That flexing and twisting was a waste of energy. From his mechanical engineering background, Paulo knew that torsion stiffness, as in a sports car, leads to better handling and less wasted energy. Paulo observed that his seat stays, the tubes that connect the back of the seat to the dropouts (hub) of the rear wheel, were parallelograms, a shape free to move. He redesigned the seat stays as a triangle. Paulo also realized that if he designed a part with more than one function, he could increase strength and reduce weight. Throughout a Big Cat recumbent, parts serve two, three, or even four functions. Once he had a refined design, Paulo built a model out of wood, hung weights on it to observe the deflection, and used a freeware version of an infinite element analysis software program, FEA, to verify the deflections.



He built a prototype of his second model, the Catrike Speed. The trike weighed only 29 pounds and the ride felt like a low-flying, flying carpet. Paulo polished the trike by hand, added a neck rest made from a triathlon bike part, and rented a small booth at the 2003 InterBike sales convention in Las Vegas, the national convention for bicycle manufacturers and retailers (dealers). Dealers who stopped by his booth were amazed by the Speed's clean design and build quality—there was nothing else like it in the market. When they asked the price,

Paulo responded \$1,995. They asked for the retail price, and when he said that was the retail price, they asked if it was built in Taiwan. When he said the United States, they asked if the frame was made in Taiwan. When Paulo said that both the frame and trike were made in the United States, many of them immediately signed on as Catrike dealers and placed orders. By the end of the 2003 convention, Big Cat HPV had signed 60 new dealers.



Paulo and Mark at Interbike

As demand soared, Paulo began to read everything he could about manufacturing. He read *The Goal* by Goldratt and Cox about the theory of constraints, he read about six sigma quality assurance, and read all he could about Toyota's lean manufacturing, which is where he focused most of his efforts because lean manufacturing made sense to him. Paulo would read about a technique at night and then introduce it to his factory the next morning. He became a production engineer. Paulo realized that if you have excellent production systems, with rapid growth there is just more of the same; if you have weak production systems, with rapid growth you have chaos.

Paulo decided his products were suited for single piece flow production, not batch mode production. He moved powder coating in-

house and purchased low-volume production equipment. Over a two- to three-year period, Paulo spent most of his time refining Big Cat's production systems. He visited Toyota's Georgetown, Kentucky, auto plant. He also attended numerous manufacturing and quality assurance seminars, but after three years of refining his firm's production processes, he believed he could develop Big Cat's production systems better than outsiders could.

In 2005, he hired Lynn Bradbury to do Big Cat's drafting. Lynn quickly became a Solid Works professional, which gave Paulo time for free-hand drawing, which he loves. He believed that another key to Big Cat's success was the hiring of Mark Egeland in 2007. Mark, a friend of many years, was an avid cyclist, and he raced bicycles and owned trikes. Mark brought his expertise in marketing and detailed knowledge of the cycling industry and cycling culture to the position. Mark quickly developed a strong rapport with Big Cat's dealers, which gave Paulo time to work on a vision for Big Cat's future and excitement to Big Cat.



From 2008 through mid-2009, Paulo followed each trike model through the production process from beginning to end, recording each of the 750 production steps and the time (in seconds) needed for each step. He also took pictures of each part and each piece of equipment used in the process. He created a database that contains a bill of

materials and a process routing sheet for each product, linked to a spreadsheet, so he can predict the time needed to produce each product as well as keep the line in balance.

Big Cat has now a team of 15 members. Big Cat has all production in house and in 2010 inaugurated its own dedicated R & D room to focus on new and innovative products. The lead time in 2010 is now one to two weeks, and the firm ships an average of about 9 trikes each day (about 2,000 trikes each year). Big Cat continues to grow at a rate of 20% per year.

For years, Big Cat has had an enviable market position. Since 2005, it has held a popular rally at its factory each winter, started at the request of a Big Cat riders' group from Virginia. That turned into an all-day event, and over the years grew to a gathering of more than 200 owners from as far away as Seattle, Washington, and Canada. Big Cat is also widely known in the industry for providing exceptional service.

Readers of BentRider Online, the leading industry Web publication, voted a Big Cat trike model "Trike of the Year" every year since 2003 meaning that for every year there was such a contest, Catrike won 100% of the awards by popular vote.









Lucinda's Victory



Catrike Rally:







Tour of Discovery



Kyle Bryant, Team FARA, Catrike 700















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<http://catrike.com>

# Greenspeed

## The Design and Development of Trikes for a Small Planet

by Ian Sims, Greenspeed Founder & CEO

“Recumbents suffer from a lot of stigma. To the uninitiated, they appear difficult to control, unstable, and because they are lower to the ground than an upright, less likely to be seen in traffic. Yet, after touring on the Greenspeed for only a couple of days, it became clear that none of these concerns is real. What emerges is that the Greenspeed is probably the best thing a touring cyclist can wish for.” Australian CYCLIST, 1998.



Why should the editor of a respected national cycling magazine give Greenspeed such a glowing report? And why do trike dealers refer to Greenspeed as the Gold Standard? These days there are a number of trike manufacturers, and to many people, they may all look the same. In the Age of the Internet, anyone is an “expert” offering their opinion, and what suits some, may not suit others. So there are a number of traps in buying a trike, which may not be apparent, until half way through a long tour. In my opinion, the best way to choose a trike is to have some understanding of the design principles, and to road test as many as possible. Thus I would like to offer you my experience gained from over 20 years of designing trikes, with the feedback of thousands of customers, many of whom have toured for thousands of miles on our trikes.



### **First Recumbent Bikes**

Way back in 1989, I lost my job as a laboratory technician with a large chemical firm. While unemployed, I looked around for more economical transport than my sports car. I tried my son's mountain bike, but found it too slow, too much like hard work, and I did not feel safe on it. Then I remembered seeing pictures of recumbent BIKES (two wheelers) in a book called - "Bicycling Science" - which I had bought to help me with the design of Electrothon vehicles – lightweight battery powered vehicles for club racing. To me, this recumbent bike looked like a more intelligent way of designing a bike. So I designed and built one from scraps left over from the Electrothon vehicles.

While I had some trouble learning to ride it, and felt rather self-conscious falling off in front of the neighbours, I did feel a little safer, as I could now brake much harder, without any fear of going over the front wheel. What's more, my sons had no trouble riding it, and found it faster than their friends' racing bikes. So this encouraged me to build a better one.

However I still did not feel safe enough on it, as I knew that I could fall off if I hit some obstacle on the road. Then the bike shop owner, who had sold me the parts for the second bike, showed me a

road test of a UK recumbent TRICYCLE (three wheeler). As I had already built a couple of 150 mph road racing sidecar outfits, I was sure I could do better, and set about building my first recumbent TRIKE, using the lessons I had learnt from the sidecars and the Electrothon vehicles. Then I lost my car driver's license, for doing 94 kph in a 60 zone. This somewhat expedited the building of the first Greenspeed trike, # GRT 20260001 – “Green” because it was greener than a car, and “Speed”, because it was faster than an ordinary bike.



Sylvia, Big Sur tour

### **Safety at last!**

Once I got the trike on the road, it was pure revelation. Suddenly I was able to concentrate just on pedaling, and not have to constantly keep the damn thing balanced, and keep a hawk eye out for debris or obstacles on the road. At first I used it just on the bike paths, where I felt safe. Then when I finally ventured on to the roads, I had a pleasant surprise. Instead of cars cutting me fairly close as I wobbled along on the bike, now that I could ride as straight as an arrow, in full control of my machine, the cars were suddenly giving me at least a metre of clearance! Even large trucks (semi-trailers) waited patiently behind me until there was a full clear lane for over taking. At last I felt

completely safe on the roads with motorised traffic.

### **The 1990 Great Victorian Bike Ride**

In fact I got so excited about the trike, I entered in the 1990 Great Victorian Bike Ride, GVBR, which was about 600 kilometres, from Bairnsdale to Melbourne. I had never believed in exercise in my life, and had never ridden more than 10 kms at one time, so my wife predicted that I'd end up in the Sag Wagon, and asked if my life insurance was paid up. On the ride I was pleasantly surprised to find that I could do the day's riding of about 80 kms by lunch time, and that many of the 4,000 riders showed great interest in the trike.



I discovered that the main complaint from most riders was pain! Pain in their nether regions from their bike's small saddle, and pain in their hands, wrists, and shoulders from the head forward riding position. On the trike, I was happily immune from all of that. There were also many injuries from riders falling off their machines, especially on the steep, winding, gravel, downhill sections. So while the route marshals were frantically trying to warn riders to slow down on these sections, I had a ball, going at full speed, and sliding the trike around the corners with abandonment. My only regret was fitting double instead of triple chain rings to the front of the trike.

However when I got tired from the climbing, the trike seat served as a nice chair for me to relax in, and enjoy the view, until my legs recovered. Cameras followed me everywhere, and I gave test rides to countless people, who were most impressed with the trike. By the time I got back to Melbourne, I had decided to make the trikes for sale, and did a NEIS course in small business management for the unemployed with a business idea. I rode to the course office in Ringwood, 15 kms away, each day for a month. At first the hills seemed quite an effort, yet after a month, they seemed to disappear as I got fitter. Plus I found I could do more in a day...



Jeff in India

### **Early GS Trikes**

My first customer was a farmer in New Zealand, who had done the GVBR, thus Greenspeed exported trikes right from the beginning. These early trikes, the GRT 20/26, followed the UK pattern of 20" wheels on the front, and a 26" wheel on the back, but had a new type of steering, which I invented as result of the work with the sidecars, which had a unique type of hub-centre steering. Thus the trike had centre-point steering with cross over rods, which eliminated bump steer, and gave a smaller turning circle, with a good "feel" on the road.



GRT

While these trikes were faster than a typical mountain bike, due to superior aerodynamics, some people complained about the weight. So my son Paul built a lightweight racing trike with 20" wheels all round, a more reclined seat, and Reynolds 531 tubing. I was very surprised to find the performance of this trike was much better than I would have expected from the percentage reduction in weight of machine and rider. In fact I was so impressed, I designed a Sports Touring Trike (the GTS) using 20" wheels all round, and again there was a definite improvement in both weight and performance, over the 20/26 wheel tourers.

### **Small wheel advantages**

Changing to using a small wheel on the rear, had a number of advantages. First of all, they were stronger, and the wheel collapses and hub failures we had with the 26" wheels suddenly disappeared. Next we needed less frame to accommodate the smaller wheel, thus the frame could be made shorter, stiffer, lighter, and stronger. Furthermore smaller wheels feed lower twisting forces into the frame, allowing it to be made lighter still, compounding the frame advantages.

As conventional wisdom was that larger wheels rolled easier, we had to ask ourselves, "How much rolling resistance are we adding with the small rear wheel?" Roll down tests on hills were inconclusive, due to variations in wind, rider position, and a whole host of other factors. Thus during the Christmas holidays, I built a laboratory



machine to measure the rolling resistance of different size wheels and tyres. I tested 32 different tyres of different sizes and makes. What I found was surprising and unexpected.

Given the same tyre construction, tyre section, and inflation pressure, the smaller diameter wheels rolled easier! Moreover the wider section tyres of the same construction, rolled easier than the narrower tyres, at the same pressure. I also discovered that coarser the tread, the slower the tyre, thus the slick tyres were the fastest. Next were discoveries about the construction of the tyres. Most 20" and smaller tyres were made with a cheap, coarse, thick casing material that was stiff and gave poor rolling resistance. These were obviously made for kid's bikes where low price was the priority. One company made a special tyre for recumbents, after they had a number of failures. This tyre was proudly called "double density" and had the worst rolling resistance of all! The 700c tyres made for racing bikes had quite good casings which were thin and light, yet they were still slower than the few good 20" tyres that had been made for racing.

Many people I talked to about the results were skeptical. Yet when I talked to an owner of one small wheeled bike, the Moulton, he was not at all surprised. Apparently Dr Alex Moulton wondered why his 17" wheel bikes were faster than the conventional 27" wheeled racing bikes. (Which resulted in them being banned from UCI competition). Thus he did some very careful rolling resistance tests in an empty aircraft hangar to eliminate the effect of wind. He discovered that his 17" tyres rolled 6% better than 27" tyres of the same tyre construction, section size, and inflation pressure!

The final nail in the coffin of the 26" rear wheel came some time later. A retired couple, Val Wright, and Eric Butcher wanted to ride a pair of trikes, right around Australia. They expected, like most people, that the 26" rear wheel would give a better ride. But they borrowed two trikes, one with a 20" rear wheel and one with a 26" rear wheel, and tested them for two weeks. They were surprised to find they liked the 20" better, so we built them two trikes with 20" wheels all round for their epic journey. They set off the day after the trikes were finished.

The couple expected to take two years to ride the 14,000 kilometres right around, but they took only 18 months. They also came across a lot of cyclists on ordinary bikes with broken wheels and broken frames, whereas they did not even need to tighten the spokes on their wheels. The only mechanical repairs they had to do other than to the

tyres, were to replace gear and brake cables. While most cyclists found they needed to replace whole transmissions mid-tour, the Greenspeed transmissions lasted the full distance. Yet another advantage of the smaller wheel is the reduced torque loading on the rear hub gives less wear and stress on the transmission.

In 1993 we sent a Sports Tourer to the UK, to be tested against the existing UK trikes, the Trice and the Windcheetah. Writing in Open Road's first Encyclopedia, Jim McGurn said "At low speed it is laid back in all senses: you can rest, cruise, and negotiate obstacles with pinpoint steering. But put power into your legs and you rocket along. The sudden acceleration, light and positive steering, fast coming, and powerful braking, are an experience not to be missed. The Greenspeed is an electrifying ride, making my sluggish body feel like a powerful machine."



Despite Val & Eric's successful tour on their GTS trikes over some of the worst roads in Australia, we had customers who wanted a touring trike with more ground clearance, and a higher seat angle. Thus we developed the GTR Touring Trike, designed with a straight frame instead of a dropped frame, and a 35 degree seat instead of the 30 degree seat of the GTS. This trike also used the wider 20 x 1.75" wheels instead of the 20 x 1 1/8" wheels on the GTS.

Having seen the UK review of the GTS, Bob Bryant of

Recumbent Cycling News, USA, requested a GTR for testing. After receiving the trike, he said:

“The trike is beautiful. The design of your trike is the best I've seen. Boy is this thing low! And a blast to ride! I have never experienced a trike with this of good handling and super positive and light steering. The steering/front end geometry is fantastic, the best I've tried. I don't know exactly how you've done it, but I can clearly see that trikes are your specialty. The brakes are hooked up independently, but you can brake on 100% on one side with no problem. It is certainly the most well-balanced trike I've ever tried. It seems to be impossible to lift up the rear wheel, and the turning radius is super tiny. I am riding around in circles in the width of my driveway.

“As for the craftsmanship, the frame tubes are excellent, some are hand ovalized-on only one end. The boom is exquisite. There is some kind of liner tube in there (3 section boom?). The frame with integral triangulated seat (as part of the frame) is a great design. It's stiff, but very light at the same time. The stiffness and strength of the seat, handlebars and all systems together seem to offer the durability (and gorgeous simplicity) that is missing from the Trice, Windcheetah and others. I can tell that the frame is MIG welded, rather than TIG. The MIG welding is very fine and the trike looks like a high-end unit. I must say that I have seen nicer weld beads on TIG welded recumbents / trikes, but never nicer MIG beads. This is fine with me, and I the craftsmanship of the trike is overall the best I've seen on any trike. I will enjoy testing this trike!”

The GTR became our most popular trike, and exports to the USA increased as more recumbent dealers contacted us for trikes. The original 35 degree seat eventually became a 40 degree seat, as more people choose the higher angle.

### **The GTT Tandem Trike**

In 1993, a local school approached us and asked us if we could make a TANDEM trike, so they could take a severely disabled boy on the Great Victorian Bike Ride. I had already designed a tandem, but had only gotten half way though building it, due to the high demand for the solos. I had believed that it would need four wheels, to be stable enough, given its length. However, as the boy could not pedal, and it did not have to be so long, I decided to just stretch one of our Touring Trikes, to make room for the extra seat. This tandem trike was so successful, it was able to keep up with the school pack, with just one

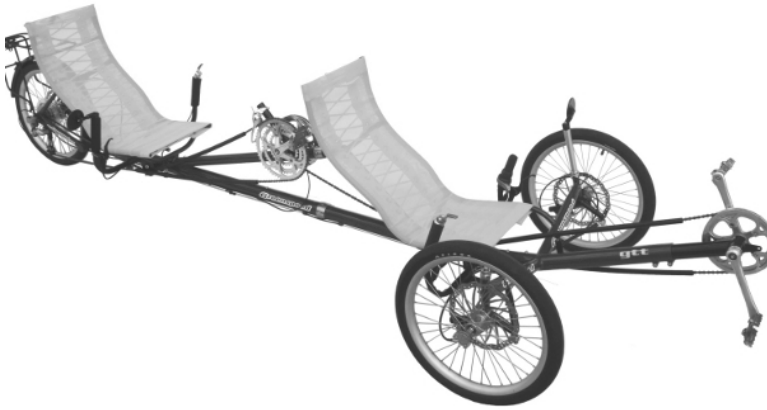
person pedaling, and it was used by the school on a number of GVBRs. As well, it allowed the father to take his disabled son out on many other rides.



The Passenger Tandem Trike was so stable than when a couple asked for a full tandem, I had no hesitation in using the same design. For the full tandem I increased the track from 800 mm to 900 mm, not to enhance the stability, but to reduce the turning circle, and I also increased the steering ratio so that it was as responsive as the solo trikes. Again, the performance of this Tandem Trike exceeded expectations. In fact ,I was so excited by the tandem, I had one built for myself. Before it was finished, I put in an entry for the 1994 Around the Bay in a Day Ride – Bicycle Victoria’s 200 kilometre ride around Port Phillip Bay. So the day after the trike was finished, I did the ride with my son Paul.

It was quite an experience. Having Paul on the back, was like having a silent motor behind me. With only one rider breaking the wind, and two pushing, it was faster again than the solo recumbent trikes. We had a lot of fun! We would come up behind pace lines of sports riders, all on their racing bikes, and clad in their Lycra gear. We would sit there for a while in their draft, and then get bored, go straight past, and leave them behind. I was surprised to see that we were able to maintain 60

kilometres per hour over some stretches of road.



Two weeks afterwards, when I was exhibiting our trikes at a show, someone came up to me and said “I thought recumbents were only novelty value, but I saw this TANDEM recumbent on the ABDR, and it was passing ordinary cyclists like they were standing still!” Yet the best was still to come. I’d discovered it was rather frustrating cycling with my wife, Christine, on separate trikes, as she could not keep up with me, and I could not bring myself to slow down to her pace. So we decided to try touring Tasmania with the Tandem Trike.

We flew into Launceston on the north coast with the trike, and cycled down the middle of the island to Hobart. From there we cycled down to Port Arthur, back to Hobart, and then flew home to Melbourne. I found we were going just as fast, if not faster, than I would have gone solo on my GTS Sports Tourer, and she found it was easier than she expected. We would ride about 60 kms in the morning, arrive at a historic township, spend the afternoon exploring the township, and stay in a cozy little bed and breakfast overnight. Then in the morning, we would cycle on the next one.

One day we were not able to find a B&B, so we just cycled on to the next town, doing over a hundred clicks that day, which was not a problem. One day while going down a steep hill at speed, I failed to avoid a rock in the middle of the road, the size of a brick! There was just a bump from the back as the rear wheel went over it, and as we stopped, the rear tyre went down. The rear wheel was bucked, but I managed to fix it by bending it back to shape between the cupboards in

the motel, and adjusting the spokes. No doubt if we had been on a bike, we would have come to grief. In fact, Christine was so confident on the tandem, that even on winding mountain descents, with a 1,000 foot drop over the side, it was yours truly who put the brakes on first! It was the best holiday we ever had.

### **S&S Couplings**

In 1995 Steve Smilanick of S&S Machine offered me the use of his frame couplings for our trikes, even though the frame was basically a monotube design for which he had not previously recommended his couplings. Steve, who makes aerospace parts, had made the couplings to enable him to put his bike in a suitcase for travel to Europe from the USA, yet a bike shop had told him it was impossible for the frame to be as strong with the couplings in it. Thus he went to the trouble to make jigs that demonstrated the couplings were actually stronger and stiffer than the tubes themselves. So we built a trike for Steve with the couplings, and sent it to him for testing. The only addition we found necessary was a longer wrench for the couplings, so that our customers could get them tight enough.



The first trike we used the couplings on was the GTC, the “C” standing for Coupling. The couplings enabled the seat to be detached, and for the frame to split in two, thus the whole trike would then fit into two standard suit cases, or one slightly over size case. The GTC used three couplings, one in the frame, and two on the seat stays.

In the case of our GTR touring trike, we found we could just bolt the seat on, and needed only the one coupling in the frame, under

the seat. This became our GTO Touring Trike. The couplings enabled the trikes to be shipped around the world much easier and more economically than the GTR, as the box measured only 32 x 25 x 14 inches. The coupling paid for itself in reduced shipping fees, and the GTO became our most popular trike.

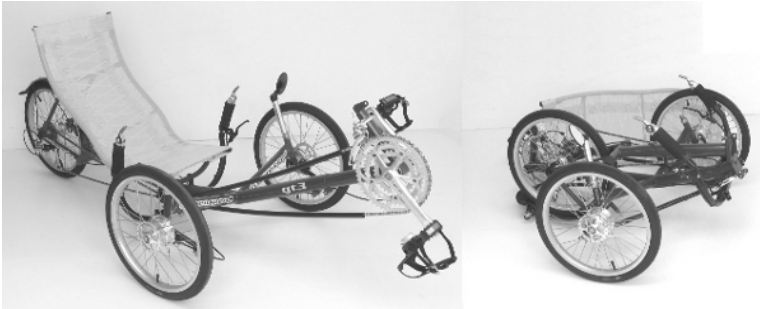


The next trike to have the S&S couplings was the GTT Tandem Trike. We make two versions. The S2 with two couplings can be separated into two halves for shipping, transport or storage. The S5 uses five couplings, allowing the seats to be removed, and the frame to be split into three pieces. The first to buy one was an English couple, who used it for touring here in Australia, and then flew back the UK with it in their back packs! We even used the couplings to make a few trikes called the GTV, which converted from a tandem to a solo. However there were a number of compromises, such as having to run the chain from the stoker to the captain, and then all the way back to the rear wheel, having to use the same steering for both tandem and solo and both machines were heavier than the dedicated machines. So we discontinued building them.

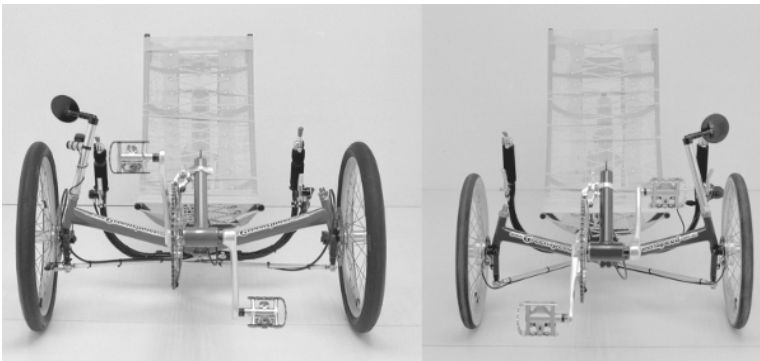
### **The USA Market**

We found that in the USA market the men were generally larger than the average Aussie male, by half a frame size, yet conversely we found the females were smaller, and we needed to scale the whole trike down to fit these customers. This led to reducing the wheel size from 20 inches, to 16 inches. This time the wheel size reduction was all round, rather than just on the rear wheel, and as before, there was a compounding of benefits with the lighter, smaller wheels, enabling the whole trike to be lighter and more compact. The lower inertia of the smaller wheels was quite noticeable, so we gained both better

acceleration, and better hill climbing, re-enforcing the old adage, that “An ounce off the wheels, is worth a pound off the frame.”



While I enjoy riding my trike, I seldom ride just for pleasure or exercise. I use my trike primarily for transport, and don't own a car. However I discovered that there seemed to be a large number of people both here and in the USA, who made a practice of putting their bikes on a car, driving to where they like to ride, ride around on some circuit, and then drive home again. As they used the bike less than riders who used trikes for commuting or touring, they were not willing pay the money for a touring trike.



GTC and GTO

Thus, we decided to build a trike that would fold, so people could just pop it in the trunk of their car, use a lower level of equipment, and then get it made in Taiwan, to reduce the cost. As the 16 inch wheels had given better performance on the small women's trikes,



we decided to use them for the GT3 folding trike, as it also meant that the trike could fold much smaller than if it had 20 inch wheels. Some people believe that because a cycle has smaller wheels it must be slower. However it is all a question of gearing, and the GT trikes use smaller cogs, giving higher gearing, and a wider range of gears for the same derailleur capacity.

In 2003, we took the first GT prototype to Interbike at Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. This is an International Bike show just for dealers, and normally has 1,000 exhibitors. They also have two “Out Door Demo Days” in the desert. Now, recumbents normally have a bad name for hill climbing, so I was very surprised when one shop rider brought the trike back and exclaimed: “This trike climbs really well!” At the end of the two days of testing, I noticed that the frame was bent, and made a mental note to strengthen it in that place. Then some time after the show, we discovered how it got bent. There, in a mountain bike magazine, was a photo of a rider on the GT3, going over a jump on the BMX track, about 2 feet up in the air! I wondered how many times it had been jumped...



Our years of research and development into tyres came to fruition about the same time as the development of the GT3. We had found out what had made the Tioga Comp Pool tyres roll so easily –

much easier than any other tyre. This led to the design of the Greenspeed Scorcher tyre. With this tyre, we took the opportunity to make it one size larger than what was available for the 16", 349 mm rim diameter, at 16 x 1 ½", instead of 16 x 1 3/8", and to make it even better than the Comp Pool, which was only available in the 20 inch, 406 rim diameter.

Thus, these tyres were fitted on the second batch of GT3s, which were built in 2005. The aim of the design was to make the tyre roll as easily as possible, and this meant that the casing had to be as supple as possible. The surprise for me was that the testers commented that the tyre also had a superior ride! David Henshaw from A to B Magazine in testing a number of tyres said :- "These three tyres have very different characteristics - the Stelvio rolls least well and is very harsh, the Primo comes somewhere in the middle, and the Greenspeed gives a comfortable ride with the lowest rolling resistance."

## **SERIES II GT Trikes**

The GT3 was so successful that we built a version with hydraulic disc brakes, and other upgraded equipment – the GT5. And then later on the GT1, at a lower price, with only 24 speeds instead of 27. In 2007 we did some more research and development into the steering geometry of the trikes, and discovered that if the kingpin inclination was increased, the steering would self-correct if one brake was applied. This was an advance over the previous centre-point geometry, which eliminated the pull on the steering, under braking, from wheel offset, with non-Greenspeed trikes. So instead of the trike moving to one side from braking on one wheel, the trike would automatically steer in the opposite direction to counteract the turning effect of braking one front wheel. The correction to the steering is so subtle that it is not noticed – all the rider observes is that the trike stops in a straight line. This is useful for bikers changing over to trikes, who normally use only the front brake of their bike, or for braking to turn at an intersection, while hand signaling with the other hand.

We also discovered with this geometry that it was possible to increase the steering ratio, and yet have the steering feel less "twitchy", thus making it feel much safer for newcomers. A side benefit of this new steering was that it gave the trike an even smaller turning circle, cutting the turning radius down to only six feet. This new steering geometry (NSR) mandated the need for new frames and new kingpins, so we took the opportunity to make the kingpins threadless, like the

forks on most modern bikes, so that the kingpin accessories, like mirror mounts and fenders, can be attached and removed with just one 5 mm Allen key, instead of two 24 mm wrenches.

### **The Anura**

In building special trikes for people with disabilities we noticed that a number of riders had problems getting in and out the low seats on our trikes. However we did not want to compromise the stability, by building trikes with higher seats. We also noticed that some of them felt timid in traffic, having no structure in front of their feet. Plus we noticed that the cross member between the front wheels hampered their approach to the seat. Thus, it seemed to me that reversing the format from low short wheelbase “tadpole” (two front wheels, one rear) to a long wheelbase “delta” or “frog” (one front wheel, two rear) might solve all these problems.



Anura SL

I test rode a number of delta trikes in the USA, but found them very heavy, and I did not like the direct, tiller type steering, which the rider had to move the opposite way to which he needed to lean, going into a corner. Plus, all the ones I saw only had one wheel drive, which

meant they would crab across the road on a steep hill, were harder to turn in one direction, and lacked traction in slippery conditions.

So, I built a prototype with a differential, and indirect steering. One of the other advantages with indirect steering is one can gear it up or down, and gearing it up with the long wheelbase, makes the trike steering more responsive, and gives a better feel to the steering. The seat height was set at 17", being the same height as a standard kitchen chair, to make it as easy as possible for people to get in and out. As many delta riders did not seem to be so interested in speed, and preferred a more upright seat, we decided to use the popular RANS seat, which has a deeply padded foam base.



Anne Marie in snow

Then I narrowed the width of the trike to 28 inches, less than the width of a standard doorway, so people could take the trike inside when they wanted to. Despite the narrow track and the high seat, it proved to be more stable than expected, due to the change in weight distribution along with the change in format from the tadpole configuration. As our preferred production company makes frames only in aluminum, we decided to build the Anura in a high strength 7005 aluminium alloy, and they built the second prototype, which was shown

at the 2006 Interbike bicycle exhibition.

It attracted a lot of attention. However, as aluminum is only 1/3 the stiffness of steel, it proved to be too flexible, so a new design was made using a specially made rectangular cross section tubing with rounded corners. This had the added advantage over the round tubing in that it keeps the front wheel in alignment, as the frame is lengthened or shortened to accommodate different sized riders. Square tubing was used for the rear axle brace, eliminating the need for multiple braces, and providing a hitching point so that a two or more trikes can be connected in tandem mode, by removing one front wheel, and connecting the forks of the rear trike to the axle brace of the front trike with a special hitch. To give superior stopping power, disc brakes are used on all three wheels. The front wheel has a standard bicycle quick release, while the rear wheels are detached with one Allen key, leaving the disc brake in place on the trike axle. One criticism leveled at trikes is that they take up more parking room than bikes. However, the Anura is capable of vertical parking, so it can take up LESS space..

The first production Anuras built in 2007 were restricted to an eight speed rear sprocket stack, as the differential would only accept a screw-on freewheel. However Paul found a way to modify the differential to accept a nine speed cassette. This extended the gear range, and from 2008 the Anura was available with 27 speeds.

An interesting and unexpected benefit of the change in format with the Anura has been its performance on ice, in snow, and in other low traction situations, like steep stretches of gravel path. Tadpole trikes only have about 33% of their weight on the driving wheel, yet the Anura, with its balanced two wheel drive, has 75% of its weight on its driving wheels. Thus the traction is over twice as good, and riders have been able to take their Anuras through places where it would have been impossible to ride a tadpole trike.

## **The Glyde**

One of the most exciting machines we have developed is the Glyde. While the bicycle is considered to be one of the most efficient forms of transport on the planet, even at only 30 kph, 80% of the rider's work is consumed in pushing the air aside, and this why it is so much harder cycling into a head wind. However if one were to enclose the rider and machine in a streamlined shape, then the efficiency can be more than doubled.



This was bought home to me by the Electrothon vehicles, when the addition of just a nose cone halved the power requirement at the same speed. And then again when I fitted a head out fairing to one of the early GTR 20/26 trikes for the NRMA Energy Challenge, in the early nineties. This trike achieved a roll down speed of 69 kph, against 45 kph for the bare trike, giving an efficiency improvement of about 360%. I was so impressed with this that I asked mileage marathon expert Don Elliott to design a body for our GTS trike. While the result looked like a million dollars, the performance was disappointing, in that it was very noisy, unstable in crosswinds, and no faster in give and take traffic than the bare trike!

Over 16 years of development by Don on his Reflex fairings, and development by Greenspeed on the NACA trike frames for Pedal Prix racing, finally culminated in the production of the first Glyde prototype, which was exhibited at the 2008 Interbike show. This machine is so efficient that if you can do 25 kph on an ordinary bike, you can do 40 kph in this machine. In fact, you can be riding into a strong head, yet it will feel like you have a tail wind behind you – a cyclists dream – a permanent tailwind! To handle the higher speeds, suspension is used on all three wheels, with disc brakes on the front wheels. Unlike the bare trikes, this machine has a space frame, to lower

the seat for better road holding, and a sliding seat for quick rider adjustment.

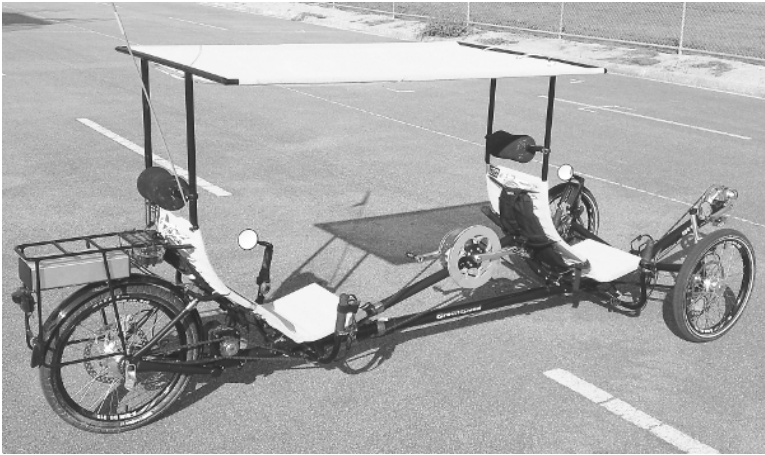


The Glydes produced in 2010 had extensive improvements over the original prototype. These include the rear floor taken over the rear wheel, to allow access to the wheel from below, and to isolate the wheel from the luggage compartment. Plus there was a mechanism for lifting the rider hatch, a windscreen, and built in boxes for the head light and tail light. All these modifications necessitated new molds, and increased assembly time, delaying production, and increasing the cost of the machine. However they enhanced the Glyde's practical use, and owners have praised its road holding over other velomobiles.

### **New Trikes**

In 2010, I toured the USA, visiting a number of trike dealers, and talking to many trike owners. The most gratifying thing was meeting a number of customers who had serious health issues, and had thought they would never be able to ride a bike again, yet the Anura trikes had them riding again, with their loved ones. I also found that there were potential riders, especially larger men, for whom we did not have suitable trikes. Plus there were recumbent bike riders who were looking for faster bare trikes. So for 2011, Greenspeed introduced three

new machines. A larger trike, with advanced features that will make it much easier to use, a faster sports trike, and new machine, based on the Anura trike.



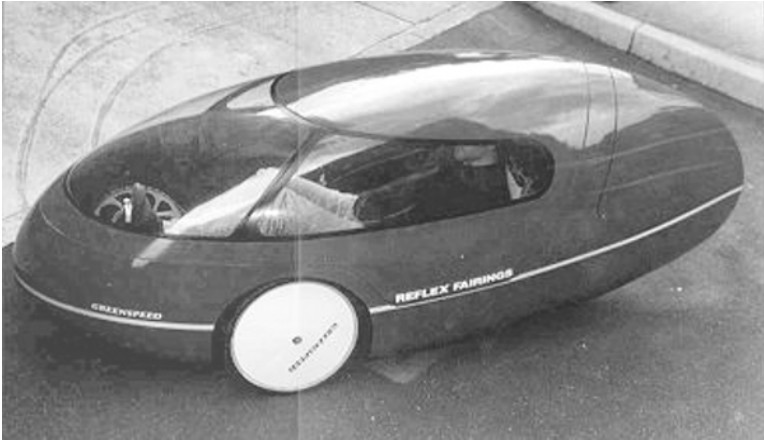




Paul's racer



Tandem with hand crank



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<http://www.greenspeed.com.au>



# ICE

## Inspired Cycle Engineering

by Peter Ross & the ICE Team

### History of the Trice (by Peter Ross)

Peter Ross was trained as an aircraft designer, and gained experience of road vehicles whilst helping Colin Chapman with some of the early Lotus racing cars.

Peter's interest in recumbents resulted from his intention to build a streamlined vehicle powered by a 50cc moped engine as the result of severe fuel shortages. Cars were being driven at 50 mph down the motorway to save fuel, but were empty except for the driver.

A photo of the 1982 Aspro Clear Human Powered Vehicle event at Brighton made Peter realise that if 59 mph could be reached on human power, these chaps must know a thing or two about streamlining, and he decided to have a go himself, on the principle that the way to learn quickly is to build something yourself.



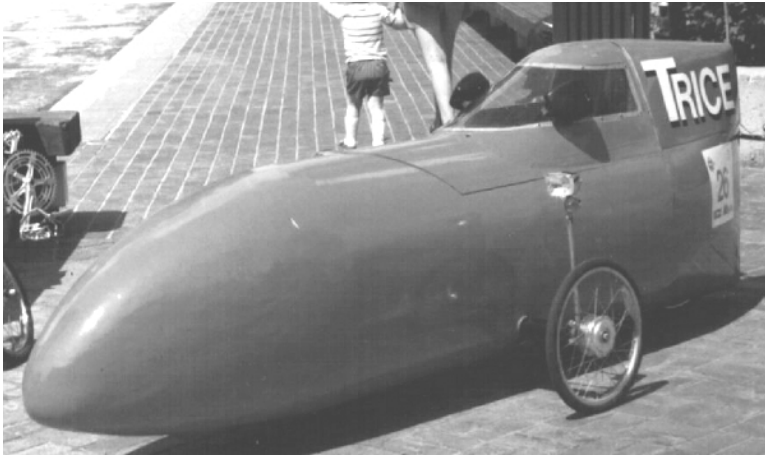
Vector on public road in UK

Peter's first recumbent tricycle, named the Breadboard, appeared in 1983. It was so named because both track, castor and seat angle could be altered in the light of experience. Electronics buffs will understand the reason for the name.



The Breadboard 1983

The first Trice was built in 1984, and competed with a streamlined body in the Hull, Quebec HPV contest in Canada.



The first Trice, fitted with streamlined body, at the Hull Quebec Canada contest in 1984

Peter used it back in the UK to commute the 20 miles to Heathrow airport from his home in Marlow, and added an electric motor to help with the hills. Despite being forced to use busy roads, and negotiate rush hour traffic through Maidenhead and Slough, Peter got his record down to a door to door average of 20 mph.

At that time there were no recumbent tricycles being made in the UK, the Windcheetah having gone out of production. Believing that there was a market for these vehicles for those unable or unwilling to build their own, Peter decided to start making them commercially.

The space frame used on the first Trice was too labour intensive to produce cheaply in production, and this led to the 1985 Trice, with a backbone frame in square tubing with a fibreglass seat. Three prototypes were made and tested on the London-Brighton run, one being very narrow track with a high seat for use in central London.

Production started in a small way in 1986, with 20 inch wheels all round, and the first examples were sold that year.



The 1986 Trice

Peter retired from his job with British Airways in late 1987, and moved to Cornwall where plans were laid to increase production. Parts for 100 of the 1988 Trice, the frames to be made by Wingrove Engineering, were made, and an initial batch of 20 produced.



The 1988 Trice

Despite being the only recumbent tricycle manufactured in the UK, sales were slow, and market research was carried out. This showed that people were looking for a recumbent trike similar to the Windcheetah, and the Trice design was changed to introduce a 700C rear wheel and 20" front wheels, with a chassis frame with round tubing, the whole thing made from aluminum alloy and called the Lightweight Trice.



The Lightweight Trice

Sales improved, but the prototype soon showed signs of cracking due to fatigue failure at the welded joints, and although production models had used aluminum brazing, which proved much stronger, steps were taken to redesign using steel tubes. This weighed no more than the aluminum model, and sales improved.

In 1989 the Ross Recumbent two wheeler entered production, and several were sold to South Africa where a customer developed a tubular aluminum seat frame with mesh cover. This was adopted for both the Trice and Ross from 1993 onwards.





The first Ross recumbent



There was even a Sociable Trice for two



1992 Trice in Tianamen Square

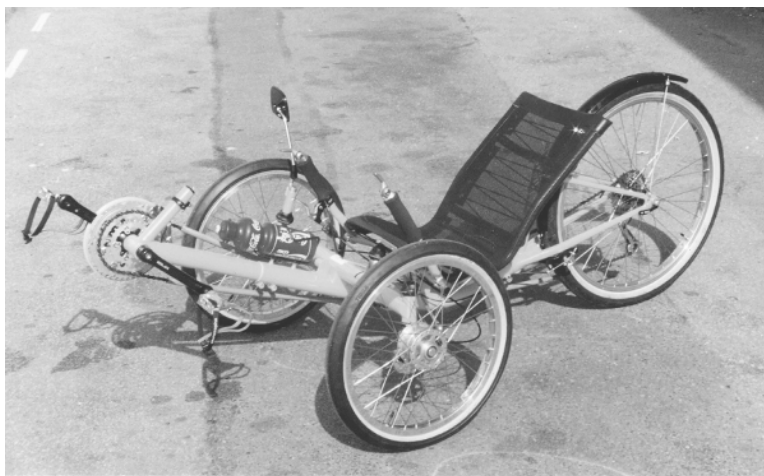
The Trice frame suffered a number of failures following the use of the new seat, and it was clear that the old fibreglass seat had been contributing to the strength of the frame. The frame was strengthened and the angle in the frame eliminated in order to make the frame free from cracks. At this time centre point steering using headset bearings was introduced, replacing the older spherical bearings for the wheel pivots.

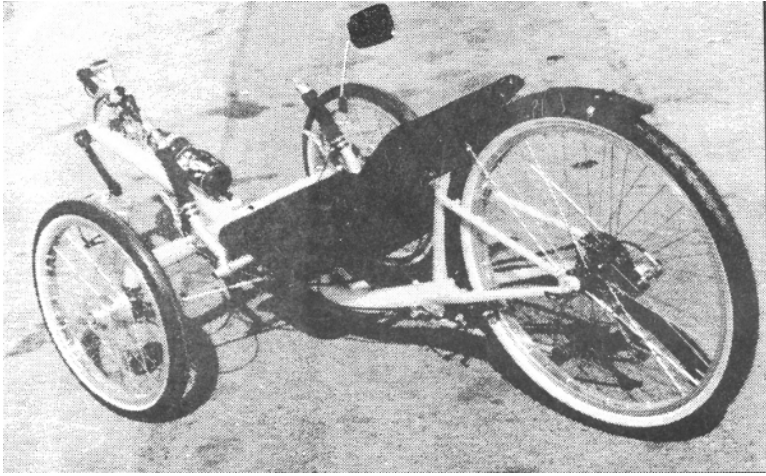


New wheel pivot

Unfortunately some of the changes introduced other problems, and the rear end was now a weakness, which was finally overcome in 1995 by the re-introduction of a kinked frame, and a new seat tube connected to the top of the seat stays to reduce rear flexure.

In 1997 the design was cleaned up and the general appearance improved. The main changes were to mount the axle tube above the main frame tube to avoid the need to cut a large hole through the main frame, and chain stays were now mitred into the main frame instead of using a Bottom Bracket. Chunky 20" front wheels and a 26" rear wheel became the standard, and the main frame tube was now bent instead of being cut and welded.

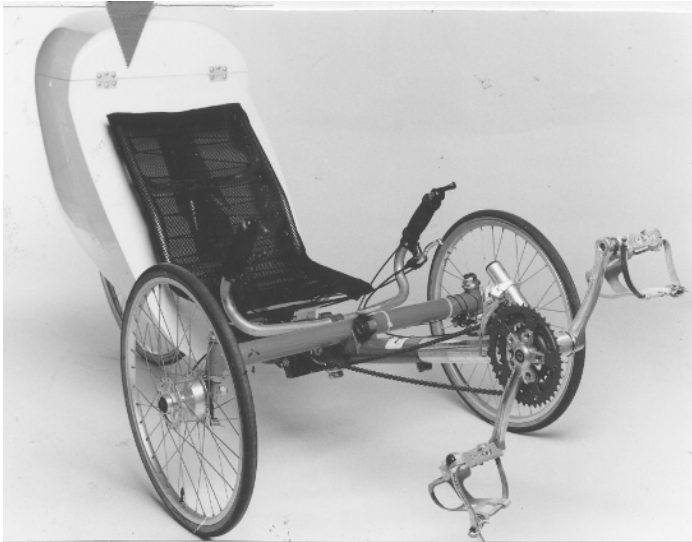




The 1998 Trice

Some weakness in the main frame joint due to poor TIG welding resulted in a number of failures and the design reverted to using bronze welding to assemble the frame.

To improve luggage carrying capacity without adding aerodynamic drag, a tailbox was designed to fit on the 1997 and later Trice.



In 1999 the design was taken over by ICE Ltd who re-designed many of the attachment brackets to reduce stress concentrations, and chassis production was for the first time (apart from a brief period in 1997) brought in-house. Reliability improved dramatically.

The rest is history.

**The rest of the story** (by the ICE Team)

Neil Selwood and Chris Parker took over manufacturer of the Trice in 1999, Chris had been working with Peter prior to buying the business in partnership with Neil.

Various other bikes and trikes soon joined the range, highlighting Peter's diverse design and building skills. The business grew and developed with Chris Parker starting to work with Peter on manufacture, design, and development in 1995.



Chris Riding and Early Home-build Recumbent Bike

Neil Selwood moved down to Cornwall and soon got to know Chris and the recumbent business. In 1998 Chris and Neil got together and took the business over with a vision to develop and manufacture the best recumbent bikes and trikes in the world.



Neil and his home built bike

Neil and Chris soon expanded the range bringing in innovation, together pushing new boundaries in trike design. This brought further sales success, which in turn allowed Ben Dickenson and John Olson to join the team and further grow the business.



John Olson on the ICE Adjustable Bike, finding perfect riding geometry



Ben Dickenson doing some Aerodynamic Experimentation

This team then went about creating some of the most iconic and desirable trikes ever made. Featuring an almost obsessional attention to detail combined with technical innovation, these machines set the ICE values of producing the most elegant and sophisticated trikes on the market.





ICE Custom Trikes – Only the Very Best Finish was Acceptable

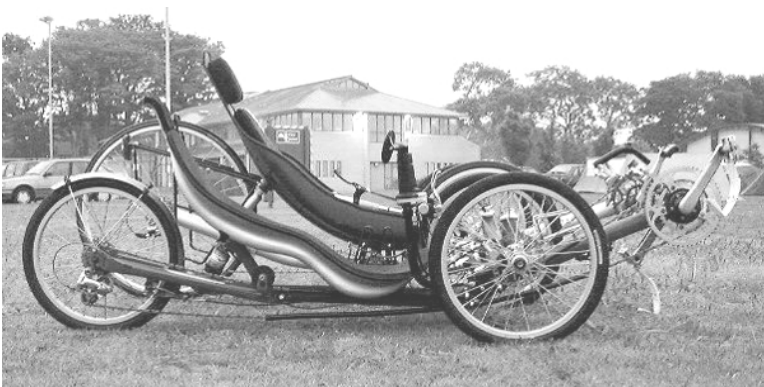


All Frames were fillet brazed by Hand in The ICE Workshops in Cornwall, England



Examples of Trikes From this Era include:

The ICE Micro



A Fantastic High Performance Rear Suspension Trike – The ICE Micro

## The ICE Monster



Arguably the Ultimate Recumbent Trike - This special edition ICE Monster weighed in at Under 22 pounds (under 23 pounds with mudguards and rack)

## The ICE Tandem



The ICE Tandem – A custom designed custom built work of art.



The ICE Back-to-Back Tandem

At this stage due to the custom nature of ICE trikes, the team did some very special one of a kind work. As the business has grown, R&D and managing operations keep the team very busy. Responding to increasing market demand, the ICE team looked for ways to bring ICE technology and ride characteristics at a more affordable price. The ICE Q and ICE T were launched to strong acclaim in 2004, the market responding strongly and delivering increased sales success for the ICE team.

Growing the Market – The ICE Q & T



The 2004 ICE Q – The Ultimate Ride for everyone



The 2004 ICE T – Opening the ICE Brand to more people

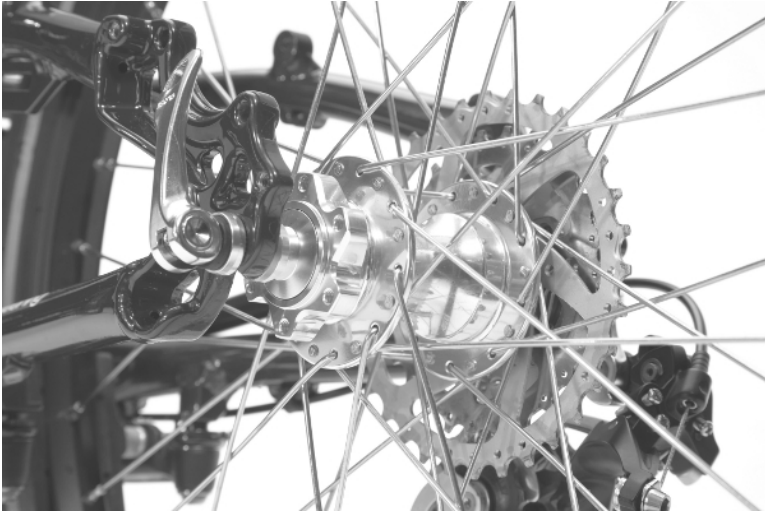


The 2008 ICE T Complete with Rear Suspension



The First Folding ICE trike

This was then followed with the ICE Custom Capreo gearing, which enabled trike riders to enjoy the ability to climb very steep hills and pedal to speeds over 30 mph without having to resort to complex hub gear systems.



ICE Custom Capreo Gearing gave a wide gear range with a 20" rear wheel fitted.

These trikes sold well and provided a solid background for some exciting new developments to the ICE trike line up.

### **Front Suspension a new fold and a new look**

During test rides, the ICE team had identified an opportunity for a front suspension system to provide increased comfort and control on bumpy surfaces. We also wanted to develop a fast folding system that enabled our trikes to be folded in under 20 seconds, and would make the trike easier to transport.

For over 24 months the team worked tirelessly to develop these technologies. Relentless cycles of testing, followed by detail modifications and improvements, were carried out until the ideal solution was found. The ICE team wanted to ensure that the world knew about the new trikes and aimed to develop a launch strategy that would engage and excite the recumbent trike community. To achieve this, the team created images, film, and a new website that reflected the essence of the product.

In January 2010 the ICE Adventure, Sprint and Vortex were launched, bringing a new level of innovation and quality to the trike market. The trikes set the standard to which others aspire. The new

website and products were launched in early 2010, all of which were enthusiastically received by media, customers, and ICE dealers. Demand was soon outstripping supply, with the ICE team working hard to help ensure that trikes got to our dealers as quickly as possible.



Vortex, Ultimate Performance Trike (top) - Adventure (below)







ICE Sprint, on the road to excitement



The Revolutionary ICE Compact Flat Twist (C.F.T) fold



ICE front Road Response Suspension (R.R.S)

## **The Market**

Since 1998, the ICE team have seen rapid change and growth in the recumbent market, from early beginnings of a few enthusiasts hand building trikes and bikes in garden sheds, to a rapidly growing part of the global cycling and leisure industry. We have seen companies start to adopt more formal production and sales promotion standards. As the market develops, we will start to see more formal product niches developing with recumbent companies providing a more tailored product better suited to individuals' riding requirements.

Dealers have also grown proportionally to the growth in the overall market; from early beginnings dominated by small enthusiast shops, we are starting to see the emergence of specialist recumbent dealers. As we look to the future, the ICE team remains focused on developing and manufacturing the ultimate in recumbent trikes. We love what we do, and feel proud to be able to serve our customers by building an developing the ultimate recumbent bikes and trikes.

# Expeditions and Adventures

ICE trikes and bikes have always appealed to those who wish to explore and ride in the far flung corners of the globe.

LANDSEND TO JOHN O. GROATS BY RECUMBENT TRIKE FOR THE R.N.L.I.



BY LOZ GENEVER

SELF SUPPORTED FOR 1,042 MLS END TO END.

TOTAL TRIP FROM FAR FOREST IN WORCESTERSHIRE To JOHN O.GROATS via LANDSEND and back again visiting ORKNEY, CAPE WRATH, ULLAPOOL, ferry to the outer Hebrides, LEWIS, HARRIS, NORTH UIST, benbecula, SOUTH UIST, BARRA, ferry to OBAN, STIRLING, AYR, PENRITH, ORMSKIRK, and home to FAR FOREST.

Had only three punctures, broke one gear cable, wore out Three tyres.

I stayed at 16 yha, hostels  
 7 bed & breakfasts  
 1 night at home,  
 3 nights at friends & relations,  
 5 nights camping under the stars.

I visited 10 R.N.L.I. lifeboat stations,  
 6 castles, 2 wildlife reserves,  
 8 high/houses, 4 churches,  
 1 boat trip, 7 ferries,  
 1 maritime museum  
 2 Cornish beam engines

I used 16 rolls of film.

I lost two and a bit stones in weight, I needed to!

In 37 days with only 4 rest days I averaged 72.46 miles a day.

THE TOTAL MILEAGE WAS,

**2,391 MILES.**

Funds are still being raised for the R.N.L.I.



Land's End

From more UK based adventures such as the Lands End to John O' Groats end-to-end ride in the UK, to the many trikers crossing the United States, or the ultimate challenge of traversing the Himalayas by trike, ICE trikes are frequently chosen as the dependable and rugged vehicle to accomplish these unique journeys.



Anne Dussert triking across the Himalaya Mountains



Himalayan Adventure



The good life on ICE Trikes

<http://www.icetrikes.co>

# Innesenti

## The Pursuit of Perfection – One man's obsession

by Mike Davidson

In the world of recumbents, one man has methodically dissected the generally held conventions related to structure and design. Unimpressed with the production recumbent trikes, Trevor Innes set out on a quest to build the ultimate sport machine. Many years were spent reviewing and testing the best the industry had to offer, only to find they were unable to meet his high expectations.



### Pushing the envelope

Some tempt fate by exploring the outer reaches of their own fears or physical abilities, others choose to expand their minds by consuming all matters of printed and electronic materials, while still others select a single topic or idea and focus all their energies on that one concept. It is that singular focus coupled with the ability to apply simple common sense logic and creative design that drives one man's desire to elevate the recumbent community to new heights.

Some might call this desire to create the best possible product without regard to cost or other arbitrary corporate constraints borderline insanity, but in fact, the world still has a few of these renegades quietly using every waking minute to push technology to the next level. Our modern economies have systematically reduced or even eliminated the dreaded free thinkers from their ranks. Radical thoughts have no place in corporations, unless of course they can be used to reduce costs.

But it takes more than wild ideas to bring a concept to reality. You need vision to set the destination, unwavering drive to stay the course and ingenuity to resolve the seemingly never ending issues. Few people possess all these traits and even fewer are willing to put their own money on the line.

In this world of mass produced cheap imitations, we are surrounded by products that lack creativeness or true advancement. We as consumers unknowingly punish the true trail blazers by spending our hard earned money on objects that are at best, hastily manufactured knock offs of products developed by real artisans; artists who rarely receive fitting reimbursement for what can only be called a labor of love.

As is often the case, manufactures are always on the lookout for savings and efficiencies. The quest for maximum profit at minimum cost is an underlining theme for all companies. Some companies will sacrifice quality or materials to keep the costs in check, while others will compromise the design, and still others will cut all the above to keep costs in check. It's a rare company that refuses to use anything but the best possible materials and remain true to the intended design.

Innesenti continues to defy standard convention.



Collette

## **Form meets Function**

The primary reason most people purchase a recumbent trike is comfort. Many other factors or conditions influence one's buying decision such as physical ability, load carrying or safety but the reclined position is by far the most appealing attribute. One does not normally associate sport riding with a three wheeled recumbent but this is the audience Innesenti is targeting. As anyone who has ridden a standard diamond framed bicycle will tell you, carving through the corners and barreling down hill is exhilarating to say the least. When you are just a few inches above the pavement however, that sense of speed is further enhanced. This is the feeling the Innesenti captures, but with a couple unique twists.

Unlike other manufactures that use widely available steel or aluminum tubing welded into a structurally sound triangulated configuration, Innesenti sought out carbon fiber as the frame material of choice. Not just any carbon fiber, but rather the same material used on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, Formula 1 and Indy cars. Unlike the old methods that require a wet layup process similar to fiberglass, Innesenti uses a dry layup with pre-preged carbon fiber. The frame is then placed in a vacuum bag and all the air is removed. A trip to the autoclave is next. The frame is subjected to controlled pressure and heat. The end result is a frame that is lighter, stronger and arguably better looking than any other 3 wheeled recumbent on the market today. This technique is the cornerstone to the INNESENTI philosophy; the end product must perform as well or better than it looks.

Developing the perfect frame goes beyond the technical world. Creating a riding experience that rewards the occupant takes the experience to the next level. The frame has to control flex, yet transfer energy to the rear wheel with the utmost efficiency. Too much flex and it feels like a sponge with no support. All the pedaling effort is absorbed into the frame and not transmitted to the rear wheel. Too little flex and the road shocks are transmitted directly to one's backside; efficient, but painful, and certainly not enjoyable. With the help of detailed structural analysis and creative thinking, a solution was found where strength and forgiveness live in harmony.

Certainly one of the biggest challenges to development was the integrated crossbow front suspension system. Not having been tried before, there was no information available as reference and structural analysis can only provide one a starting point. The only way to truly



determine how the frame would perform was to actually build one and run it through its paces. Test results were analyzed, modifications made and prototypes retested many times until the desired results were achieved. Now we have a system that absorbs the harshest road shocks, but still retains its ability to slide the front wheels in corners, without tipping. This keeps the lines sleek and avoids the extra weight of suspension systems, which tend not to work on vibration type bumps, as the friction of the suspension moving is greater than the vibration put into the suspension in the first place.



Once the front suspension development was complete, refining the rider position was next. Keeping the weight as low as possible improves the handling characteristics and improves stability. On the other hand, if the ground clearance is too low, the frame will scrape common road obstacles such as speed bumps thus leading to a high centered condition or worse yet, a damaged frame. With the combination of the 451 front wheels, a slightly higher axle height than a 406 wheel, and the crossbow front suspension, the greatest mass of a person's body weight is mounted over 100mm (4") below the front wheel axles. Even with the center of gravity so low, there is plenty of clearance under the frame to clear most road hazards.



### **Digging into the details**

With the frame design and configuration complete, Trevor turned his attention to the details. It would go against his better judgment to attach any component that failed to meet or exceed his strict standards. Advancing the recumbent world by simply using carbon fiber for the frame was not nearly enough to satisfy the underlining drive to create the best possible machine he could. Solving the many inherent issues with three wheeled recumbents was and still is the main goal of the design.

The basic configuration seems simple enough until you begin to apply real world testing to the equation. When reality meets design, reality always has the upper hand. It is here we find flaws in logic, missed calculations or incorrect basic assumptions. It is also here where we separate the true innovators from the mass reproducers. Any part of

the overall system that failed to live up to expectations was replaced, but only after a careful search for the correct solution.

Sometimes the search failed to produce a suitable candidate, and in this case, custom parts were built to Trevor's exacting standards. For example, the idler pulleys used to keep the chain on track proved to be very troublesome. Several manufacturers market replacement and OEM pulleys at a very reasonable cost however they failed to address two major design requirements: durability and noise. If the riding experience was to be second to none, then all your senses need to be catered to.

Just like an annoying squeak or rattle will diminish your appreciation of a fine automobile, the same is true for sounds that leave the rider wondering if extra effort was required to overcome those noises. Even worse is when the chain has a mind of its own and insists on jumping off the idlers or striking the frame or seat every time you hit a bump. This is hardly the mark of a truly exceptional ride.



Here again the details make the difference in the overall riding experience. After all, enjoying the rush of wind across your face and carving through the corners as if you were on rails is as much a part of riding as is the beneficial exercise. Worrying about durability or excess noise is not the most fun one can have riding. It's the last thing you want to think about. The Innesenti Sprocklys were created to address both noise and durability. It may seem odd these two traits do in fact go hand in hand. Consider the fact that if a component is creating a lot of

noise, it is also most likely hurting efficiency and causing excessive wear. The Sprocklys are built with materials that dramatically reduce chain noise and high quality sealed bearings for years of worry free service. Another unique feature is the sliding Sprockly, which allows the chain to follow a straighter path to the rear wheel by sliding horizontally thus minimizing any chance of excess chain deflection or friction.



Component manufactures want you to believe every product they make is the best the industry has to offer, and this marketing slant repeats its self year after year. They shave a few grams here and there or use different colored anodized parts to show the customer advancements are made all the time. So we pine for the latest shinny offering in hopes it will somehow make us the next tour champion or finally prove to our riding buddies we are worthy of being in their presence. Point being is the latest and greatest isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Largely unheard of in the United States, Schlumpf Innovations manufactures a unique 2 speed crank that eliminates the need for a front derailleur and the fiddly triple ring, which all recumbents otherwise need. This simple planetary gear system allows the rider to switch between 2 gear ratios even at a standstill. Another obvious benefit is the elimination of the protruding tube off the top of the bottom bracket, which is required if you choose to mount a derailleur.

By incorporating a specialist made Marchisio 10 speed cassette in the rear, you now have a wide gear range, without big steps between some gears, as on all-purpose made cassettes. Without all the hassle of a triple changing in the front, you have the added benefit of being much more able to be in the right gear when you stop. This is a fantastic

feature in around town riding where you can mostly get by with just the two gears on the front. Almost completely hassle free.

With 10 gears in the back, the spacing between gears is more even without the need to double shift to find the right RPM. As an option, the Innesenti can be configured with a 14 speed, Rolhoff rear hub and a single sprocket front crank for perfect gear spacing and trouble free sealed performance. Even with the elimination of derailleurs, the Rolhoff drive train is still a bit heavier, but for considerable reduction in maintenance, this helps to make it worthwhile, especially for long distance trouble free running.



The drive train is especially good in hill climbing, as being a sequential gear train you can fine tune the gears more easily in tune with your speed. Also it has a wider gear range as well. It is also interesting is that it doesn't seem to be any slower despite more weight. However, around town it is more cumbersome than the Schlumpf derailleur system, but as you can change two or more gears at a time, you tend to do this. Some people like twiddling, so this would be a joy to them. The downside is it's really only rideable with specialist Tufo tubular clincher tires, as the extra weight adds a sledge hammer to the rear wheel, and it is then known to be prone to breaking spokes. However with the right tire it is a brilliant piece of kit. This is a really

interesting one as when tested, firstly it was dreadful, even bigger tires, lower pressures didn't help, but a special tire transformed it. Again not cheap, but problem solved.

### **Braking news**

During the early stages of development, the decision to use disk brakes was nearly automatic. After all, what other technology would be able to bring this rocket ship to a halt quickly? So off to the local retailer to purchase the latest disk brake offerings utilizing hydraulics instead of the more common mechanical cable system. It didn't take long to determine the hydraulic brakes were more than up to the task. Actually, the brake mechanism worked too well. Brake modulation was almost completely absent and the difference between a slight slow down and complete lock up was akin to a hair trigger on a firearm. Just the slightest pressure from the hand levers generated incredible brake power, yet this didn't transmit to actual braking, as wheel lock up occurred before the wheel had a chance to bite on the road.



The solution was to run a mechanical disc Avid bb7's on one side and a hydraulic on the other. There was no comparison: the mechanical worked better every time. It would bite and allow much more braking to occur before lock up. Unfortunately, in their wisdom, Avid changed the pad material with the new "2008" models, and the pads simply glazed the discs, resulting in inferior braking and squealing like hell in the wet. So you have to throw the pads away on your brand

new set of brakes! Also, some of the third-party replacements are absolutely abysmal. You can lose 40% of your braking depending on what pads you install.

Without a doubt, the disk brakes looked the part and using a drum brake was out of the question. Initial testing concluded drum brakes simply didn't have the stopping power, especially when the drums or brake shoes became glazed, which they can do quite quickly, thus losing their braking bite. Disk brakes have proven themselves worthy in all kinds of conditions, but the touchy nature of the latest offerings caused a fundamental shift in thinking. It's not the latest component that makes the difference, but rather locating the right component to get the job done. In this case, a simple shift to a mechanical based disk system with the correct brake pads proved to be the final solution that achieved maximum braking power on the disc without lockup.



Feeling the road without becoming victim to it is a delicate balance between stiffness and forgiveness, but also in how the rider directs the machine to follow the intended path. This fact is not lost on almost every modern day manufacturer as each has their own unique way of steering. The term "Ackerman" is used as a way to describe what happens when you turn the wheels into a corner and the effect it

has on the front wheels as they now have to take two different paths relative to the radius of the turn. You will find thousands of articles about the Ackerman steering principles on the internet, which will be far more comprehensive than the simple explanation given above. However, the intent of this article is about how the rider interacts with the recumbent rather than diving into the technical details.

Most 3 wheeled trikes use a complex set of tie rods and ball joints to make sure the wheels track correctly when you enter a corner. This successfully addresses the Ackerman condition mentioned above, but adds a layer of isolation, and over the long term, unwanted play into the steering system. Innesenti chose a simpler route by attaching a handle bar to the top of each headset, which is directly connected to the front wheel. Each wheel in turn is connected by a simple tie rod and two aircraft ball joints. Why don't others use the same system? Simple: this configuration does not address the Ackerman effect without incorporating a carefully thought-out front geometry. Let's just say the research department spent a good many hours developing the correct setup, and is unwilling to give up the details anytime soon.

The net result of this direct type steering is immediate and accurate feedback from the road without the numbness normally found on more complex systems. For everyday riding and touring any configuration will work, but for really spirited riding where you are pushing tire adhesion to the edge in a corner, the direct attached steering provides the best communication back to the rider.

### **Comfortable yet?**

Speaking of comfort, the handle bars are just the beginning of how Trevor made riding an Innesenti even more relaxed. A simple yet highly effective solution to common arm strain was the inclusion of small, padded extensions to the end of the handlebars where your hands can rest comfortably. Now you have an effective arm support that reduces arm and shoulder fatigue.

Discussing comfort would not be complete without covering the seat. A common practice is to use a nylon fabric suspended within a metal frame. Usually a simple metal grommet is attached to the fabric edges and a cord is laced through the grommets much like tennis shoe and finally tied together around the frame. Some designs use a bungee cord to provide additional flex but is not seen as frequently due to excess flex. While decidedly low tech, it does provide an inexpensive



and breathable seating arrangement that also helps keep the costs lower.

In keeping with the design principals, Innesenti chose a simple yet elegant solution to properly support the rider. Utilizing the same carbon fiber and manufacturing techniques found in the frame, a seat shell is molded to follow the same curve as the frame. The seat is attached to the frame via 6 rubber bushings. Adjusting the seat to the individual rider is accomplished by loosening the bolts that hold the seat to the frame brackets, and sliding the seat fore and aft in the slots cut into the seat pan. Further adjustments can be accommodated with additional bushings. The rider also has the option to use different bushing densities to provide for a firmer or softer ride. The combination of carbon fiber frame, seat pan and the rubber bushings all work together to create an efficient energy transfer systems with the added benefit of vibration isolation.



Another reason for using a solid seat pan allows the designer to increase the lateral support. It's not uncommon for the rider to slide side to side during spirited cornering which will upset the center of gravity and increase the likelihood of lifting an inside wheel or worse, a rollover. Currently, Sparco racing seat cushions are used for seat padding, as standard, but individually molded seats can be made and a new system of adjustable body molded seats is under development. An individual body molded seat is the only complete solution to rider comfort.



### **Perfection achieved?**

Turning to a more practical view of how the Innesenti would be ridden, a small built in toolbox is included for the storage of a tire patch kit for punctures, keys or other basic items you might need. As an added bonus, the bottle cage mounts to the toolbox and helps keep it out of the way aerodynamically by tucking it behind the frame.

Nothing is ever perfect and if you look hard enough, you will always find a flaw. Sometimes perfection is simply finding the best compromise for a given situation. In other words, there is no “right” or perfect answer that will cover all the conditions, but rather a carefully thought out design that does its best to support the intended use of the product. In the human powered world, even the most subtle of changes can have drastic consequences to the intended use of the machine. It’s no wonder the world is filled with so many different variations of the same basic model yet when each is used within their designed purpose, the light of ingenuity shines brightly.

Recumbents are different only from the perspective of how each of us was trained to view human power machines. History has burned a very strong image of a diamond frame design into our heads and any design that fails to meet that basic configuration is quickly tossed aside as too radical and different. For all who are tired of being held prisoner by history and stereotypes, the recumbent revolution marches forward with a fresh look at transportation. Innesenti sets the bar high with a beautiful design, the latest materials, and attention to detail unlike anything else on the market today.

\* \* \* \* \*

**<http://innesenti.com>**



# Kerrel Cycles

## Engineering the SK3 Mountain Trike

*(company now inactive)*

by Sean Kerrel

As a kid, I tinkered with bikes, rebuilding internal gear hubs at age 10. I spent a few years as a handy man and doing house restoration. My longest career was as an auto mechanic, mostly British sports cars, including running my own small shop. I spent a year as a sailboat mechanic. I rebuilt a 36' fiberglass sailboat after a major fire destroyed half the deck. For six years, I was a produce worker in health food stores, becoming a radical health food enthusiast. Three years were spent as a mechanical designer, designing innovative lever powered wheelchairs. Currently, I'm a student of math and sciences.



I had built a two wheel recumbent, and I liked to ride the famous fire trails of Marin County California, where I could get away from the car exhaust. But it was difficult to balance while riding on steep dirt fire trails at low speed. So one day as I was teetering along up the mountain, I thought, "Well, how hard can it be to put a third wheel on this thing, and while we're at it, why not a taller narrower trike, with

weather protection too?” (for traffic visibility, and narrow roads)

Well, thousands of dollars and several years later, I have some answers... fortunately in the process I also became a mechanical designer, a CAD drafter, a machinist, and a pretty good TIG welder. I even learned to like math and engineering.

Now the third wheel part is not too hard, but the question of making a tall and narrow trike that is reliably stable is a serious challenge. It is going to have to shift a lot of weight on corners as speed increases. There are several ways to shift the weight, but the real problem is how to control that weight shifting.



Originally, to help center the frame, I had springs on the suspension. I found that if the springs were strong enough to really help center, they also interfered with tight turns. In a tight turn the mind and body are already doing a lot of intuitive calculation to maintain a balance; but with the introduction of springs, which make leaning progressively stiffer, it was just too much. The tighter I was turning the more I was fighting the spring. Centering springs can serve as a good aid for a newbie to learn, but only at very low speed. Also, roads are rarely level, so centering is not going to keep us vertical; furthermore, in a turn we don't even want vertical. So, the name of the game is control, not centering.

My first version had a single under-seat handle bar. It steered as usual, but via cables. Lean was controlled via more cables by pushing down on the grip. The problem here was that as I was pushing on the handlebar, I was putting weight on the wrong side of the trike. If instead

I pulled up on the other grip, that was lifting up the wrong side of the trike.

I tried reversing the cables, but when I was in a lean, pushing down on either side only tended to make the vehicle lean more. The only way to get any real control was to carefully push on one side as much as I pulled on the other. Again, just too much for the brain.

Trying to describe this principle makes it sound more complex than it is, so perhaps an analogy is best. On an ordinary bike, when you come to a stop and grab a pole, say a stop sign, you have great control. The pole is not moving. Now imagine that as you push on the pole, the pole is flimsy and moves away from you. Now your control is not so good.

All of these versions were rideable on the street but on the trail there was no advantage at all. So I realized that I would have to use separate “side sticks”. (Side sticks are vertical levers that are pushed forward and pulled backward.)



So as it is now, the lean lever pivots on the frame and is connected via a bell crank linkage to the suspension. With this arrangement I can push hard without getting pushed around in the seat or putting weight on the wrong side. The force of my hand is all applied to control the angle of the suspension to the frame. Then the tire is just

like a foot on the ground that I can push off with. The bell crank provides leverage so we get a lot of good control force. (My plan is to have a full fairing so this is important.)



But now the control system is not symmetrical. One grip controls steering and the other controls leaning. The lean control lever is on the right since most of us are stronger and dominant on that side. This sounds very challenging but it has a pattern we can get used to. In a left turn, looking down the road, we naturally turn our head slightly to the left. We just let both hands follow. Left hand comes back, right hand goes forward. Imagine twisting the whole torso slightly. It's not unlike skiing. Occasionally there is a tight turn that is banked way too much. Then the pattern gets reversed. And this is where independent lean control has a big advantage over a single pivot type lean-steer trike.

When riding at slow speed, the lean lever is held fairly fixed and one concentrates on steering. However, the art of riding at faster speeds is to only use the lever sparingly for very minor corrections as necessary. Here one just lets the hand float on the grip as the suspension naturally tracks the camber of the road, and then just giving the grip a mere nudge now and then. The vehicle leans into the turn naturally as you steer at higher speeds.

It was just fabulous to find that after only a few hours it all became very natural. I could ride along without even thinking about balancing; my body just did it automatically. I didn't have to pay

attention to every rut and pothole. In fact I could even run up on small curbs at almost parallel. Running over a 4 inch piece of lumber was hardly noticeable. We are always admonished to ride by counter-steering, and not just by throwing our weight around, right? First we setup a lean, then we catch ourselves with the steering. With this trike you actually have three choices, counter steer, tip your head and shoulders, or pull the lever. After years of riding the trike I got pretty lazy with the counter steer.

Much of that great handling is due to the complete separation between steering and leaning. In other words the trike can lean to any angle and this does not affect the steering angle regardless of the steering angle. If it did, that would be known as bump steer, which nearly every multi-wheel vehicle has. This is why you see the complex steering system in my design. It does work, but it also costs weight and money. I would never do it again. It was interesting to discover how much heavier movable joints are compared to frame members. Next time, I would use a single tie rod like every other multi-wheel vehicle. With careful calculation, one can get acceptable steering accuracy at high speed where it counts. (The maximum lean angle is about 23 degrees.)





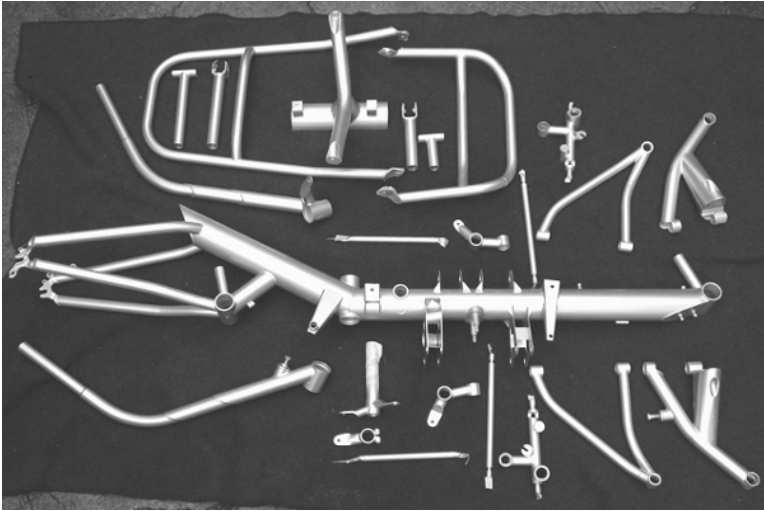
When riding at higher speeds I found that the frame tended to rise up on cornering. At 15 MPH in a turn, I looked down at the rubber suspension block and saw it expanding. If I had exceeded the limit of the suspension's lean travel, this would be just like any fixed trike lifting up in a turn. But of course, the inside wheel is going to get light long before it lifts. And a springy suspension is going to help it lift. At his point it's really too late. Once steering has dumped me to the outside, it's going to take a lot of force to rebalance. I could counter steer, but the problem just reoccurs.



My solution was a single floating bolt, which allowed the suspension to move up to absorb bumps but not allow the wheels to drop, relative to the suspension that is. This worked out well. The vehicle now hugged the ground in turns. It felt tighter. When tearing downhill, and I went over steps, I could see air under the tire.

I really should not mention that I once achieved a beautiful 3-wheel drift in loose dirt. I was just lucky. This vehicle is not safe at speed on bumpy or even wavy conditions. I have also been bounced halfway out of the seat, sometimes quite unexpectedly, even at low speed, by drainage dips that were fairly smooth. This happens because with side-stick controls one cannot push forward on both grips. The consequence of this action would be a hard right turn with a hard left

lean, resulting in an immediate dump to the outside. Clipless pedals could be a partial answer for this problem.



The falling over mode is not good. One is likely to get a handlebar across the ribs, as I did once. As I got up with a slightly cracked rib, my thought was, “I’m going to sue the guy that built this thing...oh yeah, right.”

The lower pedals force the seat to be more upright, which unfortunately contributes to the problem of getting bounced forward out of the seat. However, I chose to position the pedals lower to get a stronger ride. My experience, like that of many others, was that the legs have less strength in a full recumbent position. This proved to be somewhat true for me. But my back did not like the position and I decided I would rather work harder and go slower than get backaches. I actually went back to riding my earlier prototype with the higher pedals. Our bodies are all different, but a “heads up” here: This is something to figure out before you plunk down a lot of money on a vehicle. I designed my first recumbent bike by arranging boards on the floor and pushing hard against a heavy table leg. I just looked for where my back felt the best. That same measurement has worked well for me on five vehicles ever since.

The highly sculpted A-arms are to gain heel clearance while maintaining strength and light weight. I had moved the seat farther back than normal to get traction on the rear wheel in the dirt. This is another

problem with mountain trikes. By the time you have traction on the rear wheel you are at a narrower part of the stability triangle formed by the three wheels.



The track is very narrow. The vehicle is only 28 inch overall with mountain tires. I found this is a good width in terms of being able to go where I wanted. This, together with the low pedals does make for some heel interference with the tires in tight turns. Fortunately there is a symmetrical pattern that one learns to use. The left foot should follow the left hand, both moving forward or back that is. The right works the same way.

The main frame tubes were formed by repeatedly pressing sheet cro-mo steel over a heavy steel pipe, and then seam welding along the top. A heavy fixture was used to hold the tube in multiple ways from the inside and out during welding. This was necessary to keep the edges aligned since the thin sheet metal would warp from the heat creating a gap too wide to weld.

I built a few types of drive side chain idlers. I was very pleased with a hard urethane with nylon sides, silent and tough enough for me.

There was a telescoping strut that could be locked for lunch etc.

## General design lessons I have learned:

In designing a human powered vehicle, you can do almost anything, but if you do too many things it's going to get heavy and expensive in time and money. Even though each part was fairly low tech, there were so many parts to my trike that I never figured out how to get the total price down. And no one wanted to pay that much to carry around that much weight, not even me.



As long as I can develop a skill, I would rather do that than carry around a lot of expensive weight. Currently, I ride a two wheel low racer. If I want to rest, I put my feet down, and that's not a lot different than holding a lever.

I would hesitate to use independent suspension again. I experimented with a block of wood instead of the rubber and could barely tell the difference. These days we have tires that are almost as good as suspension and still have low rolling resistance.

It's not so bad to have to stand up and walk now and then if traffic is too tight. (If you have a rope to steer with). Cambered roads are not as bad as carrying extra weight.

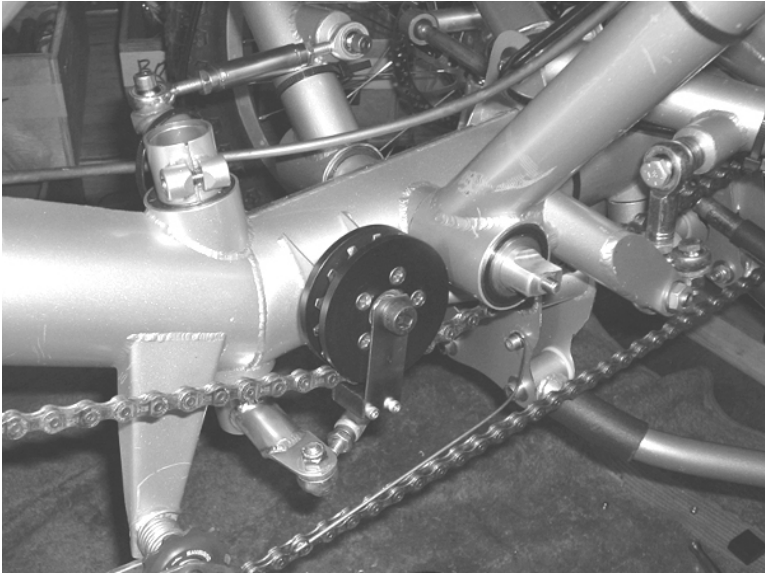
Leaning trikes are fun on smooth roads if they are low and wide enough to be safe, or if you are a very conservative rider and really

need the visibility for constant heavy traffic.

Some leaning trikes use a simpler control system. These simply mount the handle bar head tube bearing on the suspension. The rider then is pushing directly on the suspension, which pushes on the ground. This provides less control force but may be good enough. And good enough is just the right amount of weight. These trikes can be very elegant in design.

There is only so much one can do to accommodate the traffic, we simply need more bike lanes and more bike lockers.









\* \* \* \* \*

<http://kerrelcycles.com>





## **Sidewinder: Front Drive – Rear Steer**

*by Michael Newhouse*

In 1995, while working on an innovative redesign for a pedicab company, metallurgical engineer, Jim Nunes, had a mental "flight of fancy" and a new concept for a recumbent tricycle took shape. Many people did not know what to call the bike, some names used were: Adult tricycle, recumbent exercise bike, recumbent fitness machine, trike recumbent – so we just decided to call it the ProCruiser.



After numerous prototypes were built and hours spent researching patents, the Sidewinder's drive system was developed. With the patent secured, the first model was born, the Sidewinder ProCruiser.

In 1996, the ProCruiser was officially introduced to the public with a skeptical but comfortable reaction. The skeptics questioned the front wheel drive system, but thoroughly enjoyed the seating comfort and many other options. To test what kind of "abuse" the Sidewinder ProCruiser could handle in the "real world", the first 30 recumbents were sold into the rental market in the Santa Barbara and Ventura County area. After months of heavy "use and abuse" in the rental

market, which resulted in record rental sales, the Sidewinders proved their durability and high customer satisfaction rating.

The rental market test results came back with high marks and little improvements needed. With the development of the Sidewinder ProCruiser, the Sidewinder Cycle Company was established. With positive test results and enthusiastic comments from riders, the Sidewinder ProCruiser ventured out and has established itself among the top rated recumbents in the United States.



1997-2003, brought frustrations and false starts as the company experienced "growing pains" and changes within the corporate structure. Along with the growing pains, we began to discover our niche and get involved with bicycle shows and community events that exposed the Sidewinder to the general public, as well as retailers. Slowly, customers started to recognize the value that Sidewinder ProCruisers offered, and started switching from other recumbents or bikes to the Sidewinder. Our customer base spanned across the United States and beyond. Our competitors took notice of our arrival.

2003 puts in place the current management team, and a new era is born. Product evaluation has matured, new partners in manufacturing have been secured, and the time to start designing a new model has begun. Current market and competition assessments develop a solid marketing and sales plan.

2006 ends with the introduction of a new model (Sport Z) at Interbike with rave reviews and Dealer appreciation. Our dealer

network gives the new model "two thumbs up" rating. Sidewinder Cycle enjoys 300% growth and doubles the amount of Dealers.

2007 New accessories are introduced at Interbike, once again demonstrating the fact that the Sidewinder team listens to their customers and dealers. The new accessories include a Head Rest, Car rack and branded clothing. The slogan, "Bent for Health" is born.

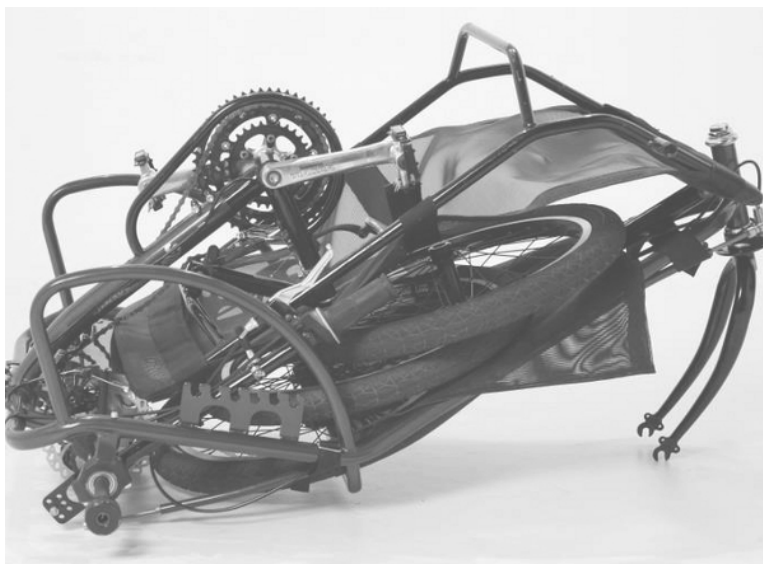
2008 The third model in the Sidewinder line is introduced at Interbike, along with new branded company colors. Another new accessory is also introduced, an indoor stationary trainer.



Sidewinder Cycle is featured in a newly released book, *Pedal Against Diabetes*, written by noted Podiatrist, Dr. Guy Del Prince. The book is available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and promotes behavioral changes with a God connection for renewed health and vitality. Sidewinder Cycles begin to be utilized for a program to assist the legally blind in the state of Idaho. Sidewinder Dealer, Gary Dagastine, of NorthWest Recumbents, was successful in initiating the contact through many hours of communication and demonstrations with Idaho's Commission for the Blind members. The program chose Sidewinder Cycles for its record of safety, durability and function to assist Idaho's blind consumers for their transportation and independence needs.

2009 Bent for Health! New website! New Dealers! More Events and Demos!

2010 This was the year of the electric (trike models). Sidewinder Cycle recumbent trike with its patented drive system easily incorporates a variety of electric assist motors.



Folded for storage or transport



Partially folded for storage (left), easily walkable (right)

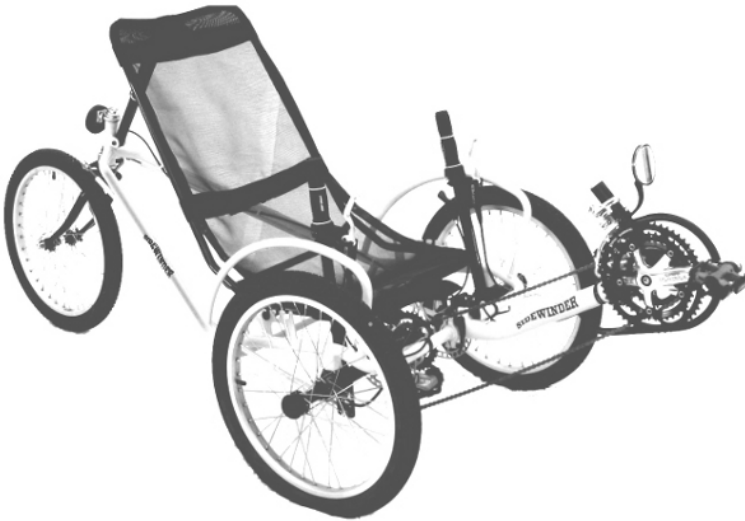
## **Sidewinder Cycle Recumbent Trike Models:**

### **SportZ**

The most popular trike in the fleet of recumbents by Sidewinder Cycle is the SportZ.

#### **SportZ recumbent bike Features:**

- Ultra comfort seat (fully adjustable and ventilated mesh)
- 14 inch seat height from ground (easy entry and dismount)
- Folding for storage and transportation
- 21 speed
- Durable steel frame (last a lifetime, weight limit 400lbs)
- 3 colors available
- Mechanical Disc Brakes



With the highest sitting position in the recumbent industry at 14 inches, the SportZ allows for easy of entry and exit. A quick adjust for seating incline in addition to adjustable lumbar support make this mesh seat almost as comfortable as your favorite chair.

The durable steel frame will last a lifetime and can hold up to 400lbs. The SportZ features a mechanical disc brake that provides

ultimate safety in braking. Hills become no problem with a 21 gear drive and the downhill is all you.

The SportZ is available in three eye catching colors: Candy Apple Red, Viper Yellow and Mercedes Silver. Transporting and storing your recumbent is simple with quick release wheels, folding recumbent frame and easy to remove seat: No tools needed, just 5 minutes!

The SportZ recumbent trike has a record of being safe, reliable and easy to operate. And of course, ultimate in comfort. The SportZ can be used for your daily commute, exercise activity or just to have pure fun anywhere, even in the snow.

### **SportZ eHub**

The Hub Motor can be added to any Sidewinder. The motor replaces the rear wheel and give a 600 watt 36 volt system which will take the Sidewinder to 20 mph with a range of 10 to 15 miles. A Li-ion battery up grad is also available.

### **ProCruiser**

The first recumbent model ever manufactured by Sidewinder Cycle is the ProCruiser. A model of extreme comfort, performance and reliability.



### **ProCruiser recumbent trike Features:**

- Ultra comfort seat (fully adjustable and ventilated mesh)
- 14 inch seat height from ground (easy entry and dismount)
- Folding for storage and transportation
- 21 speed Shimano
- Durable steel frame (last a lifetime, weight limit 400lbs)
- 3 colors available
- Hydraulic Disc Brakes



A) headrest B) cargo bag C) cycling computer

Having the proud distinction as being the first recumbent bike model ever built by Sidewinder Cycle, the ProCruiser is the leader in performance. Using Shimano components and Hydraulic disc brakes,

the ProCruiser has all the options that will exceed your expectations.

Superior seating comfort, smooth ride and folding recumbent frame allows this trike to take you wherever you want. Weight here is not an issue, the ProCruiser can handle up to 400lbs and has a wide seat. Rest your arms on the hand rails as you cruise down the bike path then use them to exit the trike.

The Sidewinder ProCruiser has been called the Cadillac of recumbents. No other recumbent can compete with Style, Performance and Comfort of a ProCruiser.



Two Sidewinders on rear van rack

### **ProCruiser eHub**

ProCruiser with Wilderness Energy Hub motor. 36 volt 10 amp hr battery pack and controller mount under seat. The Motor and peddles may be used at the same time, or alone. Range with peddling is 15 to 20 miles. A Lithium Ion battery pack is available.





Touring Yosemite National Park on Sidewinders



A modified Sidewinder with canopy and trailer

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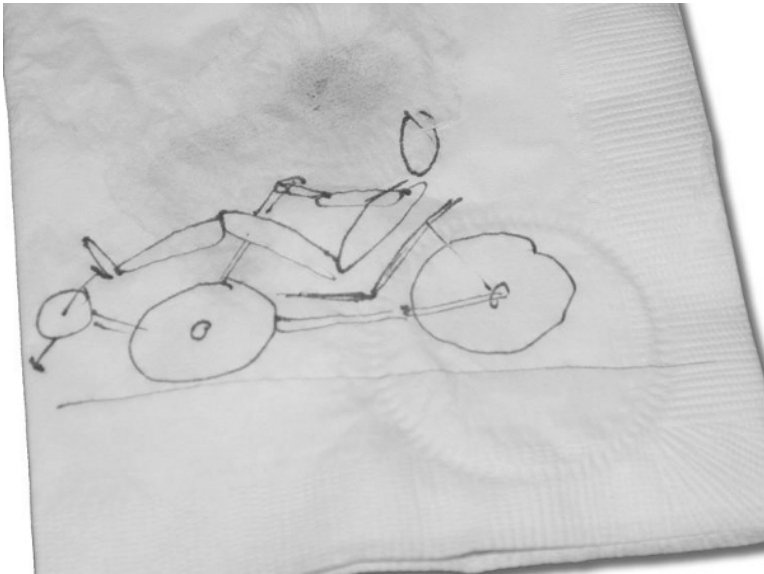
<http://sidewindercycle.com>



## **TerraTrike: Part Of The Solution**

*by Jeff Yonker*

It was a cold day in December 1995, the winter solstice, when Jack Wiswell ran into an old high school buddy, Wayne Oom, at a Christmas party in Hastings Michigan where they both had grown up. Wayne was back in town for the holidays when Jack showed him an idea he'd sketched up on a cocktail napkin.



The crude sketch would be the start of what is now TerraTrike.

The following June, Jack and Wayne joined together as partners to bring the TerraTrike to life under the business name of WizWheelz Inc., an adaptation of Jack's surname. This meeting coincidentally happened on the summer solstice. Being that the two meetings both happened during important cosmic events, the two took this as a sign that the planets were properly aligned for the TerraTrike revolution – or something like that.

The two founders scraped together their personal savings of \$1000 and decided to see just how far they could take this radical idea. They had no investors, venture capitalists, bank credit, deep-pocketed

relatives or even a mentor to point them in the right direction. They agreed early on that they would not sell out shares of the company or beg family and friends for money. They did not want to burden any of them if the business failed, and odds were good that it would. Who in their right mind would start a company that built tricycles for adults?



Some of the friendly and helpful TerraTrike folks:  
TOP: Jack Wiswell, Wayne Oom, Mike Kessenich  
MIDDLE: Lori Wiswell, Jeff Yonker, Jessica Kessenich  
LOWER: Ben Williams, Kelli Brueker, Steve DeJonge

So Wayne and Jack started without acquiring any debt and figuring out things as they went along even though it meant that their limited cash flow and experience forced them to take things very slowly.

They were four years away from drawing their first paycheck at this time, and everyone in their small hometown thought they were crazy. However, with the unconditional support of their wives Lori and Kate, they kept moving forward. It took a tremendous leap of faith from their wives when they encouraged their husbands to quit their careers and follow this crazy dream. Lori and Kate supported their families through some very lean years and are in no small part just as responsible for the success of TerraTrike as anyone.

Eventually, necessity forced WizWheelz to seek small bank loans for the cash flow needed to fund larger production batches, but the modest initial investment and a used napkin, which constituted the total assets of WizWheelz, Inc in 1996, were enough to kick-start this business.

Jack and Wayne welded the first two prototypes in Jacks garage. It didn't take long to realize that welding was not one of their strong points and they quickly found a local professional to help with the fabrication.



By April 1997 the first batch of TerraTrikes was complete, and the very first one went to a happy home in Olympia, Washington. TerraTrike was on its way.

The next four years had TerraTrike expanding from Jack's garage to a small industrial incubator in Hastings Michigan and quadrupling their production. It was also at this time that Jack and Wayne were able to draw their first paychecks – a mere \$300 a month.



Along the way there were several setbacks that almost fatally crippled the company. They had a seat manufacturer go out of business – running away with a large deposit check and the materials, a welder who tried to hold their frames hostage for more money, and a machinist who, after three months of delays, simply decided not to deliver parts that were promised. Despite these setbacks, WizWheelz was able to overcome and move forward every time.



But the toughest hurdle occurred when production was running smooth and the sales outlook was its brightest. Even though business

was solid and WizWheelz was doubling its production, the local bank chose not to grow with them. Jack and Wayne soon learned that this wasn't the only bank unwilling to lend money to an internet based company. After the dotcom bust of the late 90's it was difficult to blame them. Jack and Wayne had a plan and an excessive amount of confidence, but with no real collateral assets, the risk was too great for most banks at this time. Now they were left without cash to fund their largest production run ever. Components were already on the way and bills were coming due.



Jack and Wayne were frustrated because they were convinced that they had a breakthrough product but they couldn't get it to market without the proper funding. The company was in a crisis - the business needed working capital immediately or it would die and leave Jack and Wayne with huge unpaid bills. They were in too deep to easily back out so the only solution was to solve the problem and move forward.

After a desperate and unsuccessful search of banks, government programs, venture capitalists, and individual investors, they finally convinced someone to take a chance on their crazy, internet-based, tricycle business. Jack, Lori, Wayne, and Kate put their houses up as collateral and a small local bank, Comerica gave them the boost that WizWheelz needed. Once Jack and Wayne had the credit line to work

with, parts were purchased, welders were paid, orders came in and were filled, and the bank was paid off earlier than planned. That relationship endures to this day.

Jack and Wayne found out the hard way why the business textbooks say “cash is king”! Without enough working capital, a company with a successful product can be stopped dead in its tracks.

By December of 2003 the business was in full gear, and the hiring of Mike Kessenich as Chief Operating Officer allowed the company to streamline their manufacturing process. By this time, there were 3 different TerraTrike models available and the complexity of the production of these made Mike’s expertise and years experience all the more welcome.



Over the next three years, the company grew including adding new employees. During this time Ben Williams was hired for assembly as was Jack’s wife Lori to handle the accounting. The newest TerraTrike was also added to the lineup during this time. It was named the Cruiser.

With the Cruiser model, WizWheelz had come out with an affordable, value rich trike. It revolutionized the industry and they sold very well, propelling it as the company’s best selling trike to date. It won the 2006 Trike of the Year award by Bentrider Online Magazine.

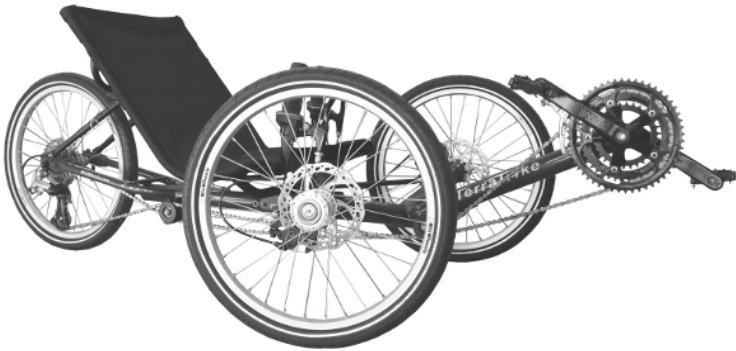
Later that year, they moved operations to a nicer facility in Kentwood, MI. The larger warehouse and production area, as well as much needed office space allowed room for the business to yet again grow – but that extra room was short lived. Just over a year later



WizWheelz rented an adjacent warehouse space which more than doubled their footprint.



Not comfortable in relaxing on the success of the Cruiser, the company saw a flurry of new models introduced over the next few years. By 2007, the line had grown to include 8 different trikes – The Cruiser, Tour, Zoomer, Zoomer Elite, Sport, Race, Edge and Tandem. However, a new model that would again revolutionize the industry was on the horizon.



To prepare for the next genesis of WizWheelz, Jeff Yonker was hired in 2007 as the Marketing Manager. His years experience with brand marketing as well as his digital advertising background was essential in once again moving the company to the next level.



It was also at this time that “TerraTrike” was officially established as the brand name while WizWheelz would become the parent company name. “Part of the Solution” was also introduced as TerraTrike’s tag line and a large re-branding campaign followed including the launch of a new website.

In the Fall of 2007, TerraTrike introduced the new Path model. The trike once again stunned people with its simple 3-speed internally geared hub, high level of components and unheard of price tag of \$999. Never before had a trike of this quality been available for under a thousand dollars. It once again took the industry by storm, and shortly thereafter an 8-speed version was introduced to the demand of customers.

Again, the next couple years were heavy growth times and TerraTrike added several new employees including Jessica Kessenich, Steve DeJonge and Kelli Brueker.

Then it happened again.

In the spring of 2010, TerraTrike released its newest model –

The Rover. This model featured a “one size fits all” frame, quick disassemble, tighter turning radius and a much higher seat – and AGAIN at an unheard of price of \$799. The higher seat allowed for a new segment of people to enjoy triking.



TerraTrike had brought triking to the masses. The Rover was a huge success and has cemented TerraTrike as the world’s largest manufacturer of trikes.

With a vision of constant innovation, TerraTrike is poised to release yet more revolutionary products in the future, while continuing to give their customers value and superior customer service. They’ve never considered themselves part of the biking industry, and it in turn has shaped the direction of their marketing. While others try to put out the most expensive, high-end trike available, TerraTrike continues to bring value to their line through competitive prices and quality features.

Over the years, Jack and Wayne have learned a lot - the most important piece of advice is “believe in what you're doing and don't quit!” There have been many frustrating times where it would have been easy to give up but they fully believed in their products and had tenacity, vision, and a passion to make it work, and along the way developed a company mantra that carried them through those tough times: “Failure Is NOT an Option”.

They agree that the best moves they've made have been in the hiring of employees. Jack and Wayne are very cautious and deliberate in

this area, but they also consider themselves lucky. Each one of their employees has been an exceptional addition to this project and the founders regularly say that these people are the company's most valuable assets. This group of talented individuals makes working at TerraTrike headquarters a fun and exciting experience every day.

The employees of WizWheelz have strived to develop this company in harmony with the planet, the community, and their own lifestyles. They believe that simplicity in design is paramount whether it's a physical object like the TerraTrike or an idea like a business plan. Team members strive to take a corporate retreat every year and set out to tackle a new adventure each time. They have hiked and camped in deserts and canyons in Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon and California, climbed a 14,000 foot mountain in Colorado, hiked the slot canyons of Death Valley, tent-camped on a freezing snow-covered mountain, surfed in the Pacific Ocean, and hiked into the Grand Canyon where Wayne narrowly dodged a rattlesnake bite (don't tell Kate).



Future plans include repelling into deeper slot canyons, sea kayaking, whitewater rafting, spelunking, sailing the open seas, and whatever else sounds interesting. The trips are an effective team building tool and creative outlet as it takes people away from their daily tasks and frees their minds to dream up the next model, product, or

direction for the company. Several of the TerraTrike models have been developed around a campfire in some remote region of the Utah desert while gazing at constellations and listening to coyotes.

WizWheelz is committed to producing the most innovative, comfortable and earth friendly human powered vehicles in the world. We try to give back more than we take from the planet and humanity in general. That's how we are Part of the Solution.



#### About the Author of this chapter:

Jeff “Chonk” Yonker has been creating cutting edge digital media and strategies since 1994. He has worked with Fortune 500 companies like Kellogg, Pfizer, Sea Ray and DuPont before coming to TerraTrike in 2007. His work has been featured in magazines and books including Communication Arts and have won several awards including several ADDY's and WEBBY's.

He taught digital multimedia and web programming as an adjunct professor at KVCC for five years and helped define their new digital curriculum.

His position as Marketing Manager at TerraTrike allows him to not only direct the path of all marketing ideas, but also to create and

implement them as well. A typical day will have him concepting, designing, writing copy, taking photos, shooting/editing video, writing code for the website, talking to printers and negotiating print advertisement rates.

In his spare time, Jeff is an accomplished musician currently playing in local band SilentBark. He has produced 5 albums and toured the US with seminal Kalamazoo punk band FAQ as a founding member.

Jeff currently lives in Kentwood Michigan with his wife and twin sons.













<http://terratrike.com>

**Part Four:**

**High Adventure On A Low Trike**



**FREE on THREE**



# FREE ON THREE

*Only those who risk going too far  
will discover how far they can go.*

# Slaying The Ataxian Dragon

by Kyle Bryant

I don't wear a suit of armor, ride a horse, or carry a sword. My nemesis is not the classical fire breathing dragon of ancient dark mythology. Yet it is an evil beast nonetheless, having attacked me and thousands of other innocent people who are currently fighting it alone around the world. The dragon I have to slay will not be fought astride a horse, but from the cockpit of a human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle. By taking up this challenge, I hope to bring power to the powerless, while spreading the word of this seemingly insurmountable battle across the kingdom.



It is safe to say that my life would be a lot different if it weren't for my trike. My trike has been a vehicle of change for my life, and the lives of many people. It is said that necessity is the mother of creation. My love for my trike started as a necessity.

It was necessary for me to remain active despite my progressive disability. It is perhaps more important for me to remain active in order to fight the effects of an insidious disease called Friedreich's ataxia (FA). With FA, the first thing to go is muscle coordination and balance. This prevents a person from performing in sports or any movement that requires muscle control or coordination. The lack of use causes the body to become weak and less useful, and it turns into a vicious cycle.

Therefore staying active requires more effort but is much more important for someone with FA.



I had just graduated college and was living with a couple friends. I had done all the things I was supposed to do for 23 years. I got

decent grades, went to a good school, struggled for 4 years to barely pass all the right classes to obtain a degree in engineering, got a good job paying a generous salary and was beginning to support myself. But there was something missing. I needed to follow my passion now and do the things I wanted instead of the things I was supposed to do. But there was a problem ... I didn't know what I wanted. All I knew was that this disease was gaining on me, progressing more every day and I needed to do something now before it was too late.

Each time I had an opportunity to take a trip or experience something new, I was strongly compelled to go for it because there may not be another opportunity once FA takes over. In college I studied abroad in New Zealand for a summer, and as I was considering the decision to go or not, I thought of how difficult it would be to haul my bags around the airport and how awkward I would look as I stumbled around the tourist destinations. But I thought "O well, it's only going to get worse so I had better do it now." This feeling of urgency drove many decisions after the New Zealand trip because I took the leap and went for it, and had the time of my life. The "nothing to lose" mentality had worked – maybe I could use it again.

My first real ride on my trike was supposed to be 14 miles. At the time it blew my mind that I might be able to travel that far under my own power. I went 7 miles to my turnaround point and I got a flat tire. Of course I was not carrying a tube, so I called my roommate to come pick me up in his truck. Even though it was only 7 miles away I was pretty proud when I told him where I was. He drove out and picked me up, and on the drive home all I could think about was how much farther I would go next time. I no longer had to think about trying to stop and falling over at a stop sign as I would on a regular bicycle. Those thoughts drained my energy at times, and now I could spend that energy on going farther and faster.

FA took away my freedom. Instead of feeling confident to ride my bike to class or across town, I was constantly thinking about stopping at a stop sign or stoplight and falling over. My trike took care of all those concerns because I could clip my feet onto the pedals and not worry about ever having to get off when crossing a busy street and falling over in front of passersby. It is always so awkward and embarrassing to walk into a public place and stumble around like a drunk person. That's what FA does. All I want to do is get a Jamba Juice or some bananas for the morning and I must struggle to stay upright like I just came off a 3 day bender. When I am on my trike, I am worry-free,

and not only that, I feel powerful like I could take over the world. I feel so empowered and confident that this spirit is what drove me across the country twice and up and down the west coast. That feeling of empowerment established the Kyle Bryant Translational Research Award, which has funded \$960,000 of research in 4 short years.

I remember my first 35 miler. It was 95 degrees on the cycling trail that day and I completed it on nothing but a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a banana, and one bottle of water. I started to bonk at about mile 30, and by the time I reached the truck I was barely moving. I mustered my last drops of remaining energy and loaded the trike into the bed and drove down the street to 7-11. I stumbled into the store and bought two 32 oz bottles of Gatorade. I pounded one in the driver's seat before I started the engine and I swigged the other one on the way home. It was not pretty, but I finished. Thirty-five miles! I couldn't believe it! I knew that if I fueled myself correctly I could finish the 35 miles much more easily. I knew I could do more and I felt an urgency to keep pushing as FA kept progressing.



So I signed up for a century ride, the monster 100 mile kind. I had about a month to train and nothing to lose. I was not an athlete. I had no idea how to train. So I just rode a lot and I rode hard. I rode until my legs ached and my lungs burned. One week before the century, I went on a 60 mile ride, my longest yet. It was the first real sunny day of



the season and I forgot to put on sunscreen. My fueling and hydration techniques had developed to the point that I finished much stronger than that first 35 miler. However with about 10 miles left, I knew I was going to be hurting from sunburn by the time I was finished. On a trike, the fronts of the legs are constantly facing the sky and that day my shins got about 5 hours of direct sunlight. That night it was difficult to move without pain and in the morning it was even worse. The burn was so bad that I called in sick to work and stayed in bed (on top of the covers) with the lights off trying not to move.



The next Saturday I packed my trike into the back of my truck and went to spend the night with a friend who lived near where the 100 mile ride would take place. I did this on my own. It was time to prove something to myself. It was “me” time. I had to push myself to find out how much I had in me. Was I ready for the next step (not that I knew what the next step was going to be)? I would find out this weekend.

I wore tights that day and it was supposed to get hot in the afternoon, but I needed to guard my week-old burns from the sun so I left them on even in the heat.

The first 20 miles were a breeze: it was flat and there was a nice rest stop at mile 15. After mile 20, it started to get a little hilly and that’s when I had to gear down and just crank it out. That’s when the crowds

of riders started thinning. That's one of the extreme disadvantages of a trike. Climbing is very slow compared to a traditional bike. However, I was not there to win ... I was there to survive. When I reached the top of the hilly section as I was looping around to start my descent, there was nobody in sight and I missed a turn. I went three miles off course before I ran into someone who was also off course and was finding their way back. So after a six mile detour I was back on track and cooking on the descent. That's one of the advantages with a trike. The descents are way more fun ... and FAST!

As I was cruising by mile 55 I noticed that the right side of my trike dropped a bit and the bumps became very rigid. Flat tire! No problem, I came prepared this time. So I pulled out my spare 20 inch tube and went to work. However, when I put the new one on there was way too much slack, it was too big! I had never bought a 20 inch tube before and the guy at the bike shop apparently did not know that there are two different 20 inch tubes, a metric size (in cm I guess) and an English size (in inches). So I was stuck. Flat tire and no spare. To add to the misery, there was nobody in sight and with every passing minute my chances of finishing the century were not getting any better. I waited for 25 minutes trying to figure out what I was going to do when a follow-up vehicle came by. It was a local bike shop that had volunteered to do SAG. The ride benefited the American Diabetes Association and the guy driving the truck was diabetic. That day he was playing a very important role in the search for a cure for diabetes. It was a huge surprise that he did not have any 20 inch tubes! However, he did have a patch kit! So we sat on the tailgate and shot the breeze as the glue dried, and then he sent me on my way.

That flat had wasted about 45 minutes, and for the rest of the day I had the drag vehicle right behind me and I had to catch the rest stop volunteers before they packed up all the orange slices and pretzels. By the time I rolled into the parking lot near the finish there were hardly any vehicles left. All the riders had finished their ride, eaten dinner and were driving home. As I crossed the finish line I heard a few cheers from remaining volunteers who were just a fraction as excited as I was. I could not believe what I had done! I had this feeling of extreme pride and empowerment. I could hardly stand it. I was going to explode with pride! I had ridden a tricycle 100 miles, all on my own and under my own power!

After that, I started thinking huge. I had started digging myself out of this hole, I could start to see the first rays of sunshine, and I just

had to keep pedaling my way out. I knew it was time to go huge. To do something amazing for myself and many other people. I decided that I was going to ride my tadpole trike to the meeting of the National Ataxia Foundation (NAF). That year, the meeting was in Memphis Tennessee and I live in California. What a crazy idea. But I had a taste of victory and I wanted more, a lot more.

We had no idea what we were doing during our first ride. My family and I just knew that we were backed against a corner and were willing to tap into our survival instinct to fight our way out. We were not cyclists. I had been riding pretty consistently for about 6 months, and my dad bought a road bike about 3 months before the trip because he did not think it was a good idea to put on all those miles on a mountain bike. I had ridden a century event and we had a couple 50 milers under our belt, but we had not done any back to back rides. We had no idea what we were getting into; we just knew that we had to do something.



So on January 22, 2007, Ride Ataxia was born as we left from San Diego California. For the first time since our diagnosis we were fighting back. We were taking action to improve our situation. In the process we contributed greatly to the changing research climate for Friedreich's ataxia. At that time, there were several people who thought we could actually beat this thing. During our cross country trip we made it clear that anything is possible and many other people began to think that we could actually cure this disease if we just got more people

involved and raised more money.

Twenty-five hundred miles later we rolled by Graceland...WE RODE OUR CYCLES TO ELVIS' HOUSE! We had accomplished an amazing feat and in the process we had raised \$40,000 for FA research. When we reached the National Ataxia Foundation (NAF) Annual Meeting, we found out that NAF and the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) had decided to work together for FA research, and they each contributed matching funds to bring our total to \$100,000. Thus, we established the first Kyle Bryant Translational Research Award.

We were taking action and turning heads. When we decided to ride again the next year we got a few more cyclists involved and we rode from Sacramento to Las Vegas in a group of about 20 riders. We had started a movement and when we reached Las Vegas, we had raised \$140,000 during that trip. We had something to build on, and the next year we took a ride from Portland, Oregon to Seattle, Washington with a group of 75 riders who wanted to change the outlook on research for FA. All of the riders tapped their own networks and we pulled together \$260,000 for FA research!

During those three trips, my family and I created a movement that had raised \$440,000 and together with FARA and NAF we had funded 5 research grants for a total of \$710,000 for research for a disease that has no treatment, no cure, no hope...until now.

At this point, I had made a significant impact, I had tasted victory and started a movement that was building momentum, and I had turned my situation around. I had an urge to feel satisfied to feel finished, complete. But I realized that this fight is not over until we have a cure for FA, and even after that we can never quit; the work is never done, and that's one of the great things about life. There are endless possibilities because you can never be done.

I wanted to make this my life's purpose to fight this disease and to inspire others to squeeze every drop out of life no matter what the circumstance. So after a year of trying to figure out how to make it happen, I became a full time employee of the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance. My job was to raise awareness and funds for research and to inspire others to do the same. To that end, I decided to do the most challenging cycling event in the world. I decided to assemble a four-man team for the Race Across America (RAAM).



I had learned that perhaps the most effective way to raise awareness was to go huge and do something that most people would call crazy. A 3,005 mile course starting in Oceanside, California and ending in Annapolis, Maryland. Coast to coast! Through the desert, over the mountains and straight through America's amber waves of grain.

But here's the kicker: the team had to finish the ride in less than 9 days to be considered an "official finisher". This meant that we would have to maintain an average speed of no less than 14 miles per hour for 24 hours a day on a cross country route that included 100,000 feet of climbing.

This was truly a crazy stunt for a full team of able bodied riders. Add to it the fact that two of the four of my team had Friedreich's ataxia and that I would be on a tadpole trike and you have one insane adventure. However, we were fueled by the movement that we had started. It had come full circle. We started this movement for research and the support was coming from the folks we had inspired in the first place. We felt it all the way across the country. At least once a day we would get a burst of energy from a fan of team FARA. People drove for hours just to chat with us for a couple minutes because they knew that we represented hope for a cure for their son, daughter, mother, father, friend or themselves.



When we entered Kansas I read a text message from a friend that said "Welcome to Kansas, Dorothy! Haul butt, we have a disease to cure!" and to this day my eyes well up thinking about the emotion I was feeling after 5 days of the most intense cycling I had ever experienced. RAAM was an all-out sprint across the United States. There were 4 riders on our team (Me, Sean Baumstark, Mike Mellott, John

Lockwood) and we split into sub teams of two (team A and B). Team A would be on the road for four hours while team B was “resting” in the RV. During this time, Team A would be switching riders every half hour and at the end of the four hour period the sub teams would switch and Team B would be on the road while Team A “rested” in the RV.

Since you were only ever on the road for a half hour at a time, you could leave it all on the road every pull because you knew you were going to get a half hour rest at the end of the pull and a 4 hour rest at the end of each shift. The sprinting led to severely sore muscles, aches and pains like I would never have imagined but we were picked up by the FA community each day. One day, two guys with FA (Marty and Bill) sat at a gas station and waited for us for over 6 hours just to share their gratitude and cheer us on. The great thing was that Marty and Bill lived in the same town and neither of them had ever met anyone else with FA before. By the end of their time together they were talking of plans for a fundraiser.

One night at about 2 AM on day seven, I was riding as hard as I could and I saw headlights in the other lane coming our direction. As the car got closer, it pulled off the road and a woman jumped out and yelled “Go Team FARA! Do it for Kaela!” It was Kaela’s aunt and she had been driving around for hours trying to find us. When she did, it gave us a huge boost as we kept sprinting.

On the last day of the race, we pulled into a time station and there was a family there to meet us. I rolled around the corner into the parking lot of the time station and I saw Jack with his leg braces and his tiny walker. Jack has FA like me but was affected way earlier, diagnosed at 9 years old. When I saw him, my heart sank and I immediately started feeling sorry for him. But then he came up to me, looked me squarely in the eyes and said:

“Hi I’m Jack. I have a trike too, and your team has inspired me to ride 5 miles in my neighborhood this summer to raise funds for research.” At that point, there were no more aches, pains or need for sleep. With the boost provided by the FA community, we finished strong in 8 days, 8 hours and 14 minutes, which was 19 hours ahead of the cutoff time. We averaged a speed of 15 mph across the United States.



YES, it is indeed safe to say that my life would be a WHOLE lot different if it weren't for my trike. My trike has been a triangular vehicle of change for my life and the lives of many people. I will keep riding and pushing the limits of my abilities and my perception of what is possible with the help of my trike. And hopefully, this trike will be the mythical sword in slaying the ataxian dragon!

Every tomorrow is a new beginning ...

**<http://www.rideataxia.org>**  
**<http://www.theataxian.com>**



# Chasing The Dream

by Janet Buckwalter

81 days – 4,051 miles  
(10 weeks over 3 summers)

*“An hour ago I was swimming in the motel pool, smiling at the friends and memories of this trip. Tomorrow marks 10 weeks of tricycle pedaling (spread out over 3 summers). The dream was born in May 1990 when I first read about people actually riding their bicycles across the US. 'How foolish' was my first thought. But that was soon replaced with 'I wanna go too'. Now, 19 years later, I'm just a few miles from completion. What a celebration of touching America.”*

– excerpt from Chasing the Dream



Gear inventory prior to departure

## Phase I

May 22 - June 23, 2006

24 days - 1,036 miles

“My little sister rides a tricycle too. She’s four years old. How old are you?” This fascination with a spandex clad gray haired lady inching along the backroads of America continued throughout my trek up and over the mountains of Virginia and Kentucky.

This journey was about discovering America. Had I simply wanted to see the country, I would’ve driven my car, cranked up the AC and turned on the tunes. But my mission was to defy the gloomy picture painted by the media and see for myself that the United States of America overflows with loving and gentle people: Strong families that have barbecues on Sunday, and play bluegrass music and dance. Drivers that stop to give directions and strangers that offer water and a sandwich. Churches that leave the doors unlocked, welcoming travelers to come in and find rest for their weary body and soul.

My husband and son shuttled me to Yorktown, Virginia to begin the adventure of my dreams. They had agreed to pedal the first two days with me. A Coast Guard guesthouse provided a room for us, but it was a fitful night for me, wondering if I could really trike solo across America ... what would I eat and where would I sleep?



The following morning I was reminded of riding on the “road less traveled” when the restaurant hostess whispered that I wouldn’t be allowed to enter wearing spandex. Off to Subway we went and from there to the Atlantic Ocean to christen the back tire for the journey ahead.

A 26 mile ride took us to Jamestown, with a lunch stop in Yorktown. We carefully selected a quiet camping spot on the banks of the James River to call home. Imagine our surprise when a charter bus deposited a group of rowdy 10 year old boys and their camping gear! Moments later one of the chaperons sheepishly introduced herself, saying “Hi. I’m your worst nightmare.” She explained they were on a school field trip from Philadelphia and would try their best to be good neighbors, which they were.

Waving goodbye to John and Hans the next day brought mixed feelings. I looked forward to meeting new friends and testing my own survival skills. But I was also a bit nervous, wondering if I could really do this. I grew stronger and more confident as the days passed. Even the tiniest market could provide my next meal, with canned beans and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches quickly becoming the mainstay of my diet. On the one occasion when I ran out of water all I had to do was knock on a lady’s door. Not only did she fill my Camelback with water, but also offered to make a sandwich for me.

One hot afternoon near Bumpass, Virginia I ducked into a little country store. There I met Susan, mother of seven children, with a passion for homeschooling and writing. We had a great time sharing these common interests while I ate the scrumptious turkey sandwich she’d created for me. Her pet goat enjoyed butting me and I decided to move on to the next town to sleep at the fire station.

Little did I realize that the small community of Mineral, Virginia was hosting a carnival right behind the fire station. Finding a café that served awesome hamburgers, I splurged with a hot fudge sundae. Six other eastbound bikers joined me and the fire chief gave us free reign of the kitchen, bathroom and upstairs sleeping area. For breakfast we dug through our packs, putting together a smorgasbord of sorts and enjoyed sharing food and advice for the road ahead.



### Beginning at the Atlantic Ocean

What better way to spend my 51st birthday than conquering the first major climb into the Appalachian mountains. And what a climb it was! With 45 pounds of gear on my trike, it was a struggle at times to keep going forward. I ached to coast back where I'd come from, tuck my tail and go home. But June Curry, the infamous Cookie Lady, buoyed my spirits with her warmth and encouragement (and maybe just one or two cookies). I spent the night in the bike touring museum/hostel that she's created for vagabond bikers. The makeshift shower was made of 2 x 4s and a tarp, with a garden hose to supply water. I heated water on the stove and almost swooned with the luxury of a hot rinse. By morning I was inspired to chase my dream for one more day.

The Blue Ridge Parkway made my leg muscles scream. I'd climb to 3,200 feet and then down...and back up to 3,200 and down. One scenic overlook in particular was simply breathtaking and I stopped to soak it in. Sitting in the grass enjoying his breakfast was a man who was also on a bike...a Harley Davidson. I generally don't hang with the motorcycle crowd but the more we talked the more connected I felt. Having just learned that he was going to be a father, he was both elated and pensive. As I shared bits about my own sons he asked how to help his child avoid making the mistakes he'd fallen into.

Mark wanted to rearrange the priorities in his life and as I turned to leave, this burly tattooed biker gave me a heartfelt hug.

So many people had warned me about renegade dogs along the route that found great pleasure in scaring the beejeebies out of unsuspecting bikers. With pepper spray onboard, I was ready for the snarling little critters. In reality, the dogs were no threat at all. A few enjoyed a lively race with me, barking all the way, with tails wagging. Imagine my surprise when a horse gave chase! I was minding my own business, pedaling through the countryside with nary a house in sight for miles. Around a corner I came face to face with a horse in the middle of the road. I cautiously went around, not wanting to startle or provoke him. When I looked in my rearview mirror he was trotting right behind me. I stopped....he stopped. "Bad horsey. Go home." I commanded in my most authoritative voice. I pedaled away again only to be followed. We went through this same routine for several cycles until a cute little mare whinnied for him to come home and off he trotted.



Triking through the Catawba Valley on a sleepy Sunday evening, I happened upon a little white church. You can imagine the expressions as I rolled to a stop right in front of these gentle folks, smeared

with dirt, sweat and bugs. "Would it be OK if I camp on your grass tonight?" The bidding war began instantly over who would get to take me home. One lady offered her front yard, while another had a spare bedroom. The winner had a complete apartment to offer, including a roast beef sandwich if I was hungry. When the pastor invited me to stay for church I hemmed and hawed about my appearance but it wasn't a barrier. I was touched by the hearty singing and sharing of this farming community that lived its faith. I awoke in a gorgeous home nestled at

the foot of the Appalachian mountains with one of the warmest families I've ever met.

Some days it was a huge challenge to keep moving. In order to complete the 1,000 miles in three weeks I had to maintain a 50 mile per day pace. Wytheville, Virginia was a wonderful stop, staying with a family that I'd met four years earlier on another bike ride. Between the friendship, great food and heavenly bed I could have stayed for a week.

Was I hallucinating on that hot afternoon or was that really a café out in the middle of nowhere? Oh my gosh, and the daily special was a huge trough of spaghetti for \$4.99. Troutville, Virginia will always have a tender spot in my heart after that meal.

Onward to Damascus, my first experience sleeping at a hostel. At the junction of the Appalachian Trail (hikers) and the TransAmerica Route (bikers) it offered a blend of personalities. Did you know that an average hiking day covers 20 miles at 3 mph and that their favorite food to pack is Cheerios? I was very content to pedal along the next day at 10 mph and eat more beans and PB & J.



The local folks call this Walker Mountain. For five miles she teased me with “just one more hill” but when I rounded one hairpin curve another one stretched out in front of me It took an hour and forty minutes to slay this dragon but it didn't beat me! After a white knuckle

descent, a torrential rain storm tried to dampen my spirits, and coal trucks nearly blew me off the road. Sleep came quickly that night.



It was time for a day off and Breaks Interstate Park was the perfect spot. I heard lively bluegrass music and followed it to a covered pavilion where 5 or 6 families had gathered for a peaceful Saturday afternoon picnic. They invited me to stay for lunch and fiddling.

That evening two local bluegrass bands played in the park amphitheater. Midway through the concert an elderly couple hobbled to their chairs near the front. She was the spitting image of Granny from the “Beverly Hillbillies”. Toes started tapping, hands clapping and then Granny was up and dancing! Her steam ran out before the song was over and she could do little more than sway. I felt the vibrant love and life that flowed from her proud American heart.

Kentucky welcomed me the next morning and I met Al, a biochemist from the Netherlands. His 60 year old legs were too fast for me to keep up with but we spent parts of the next two days together. I traded him a carton of chocolate milk for a gingersnap cookie and that night we pitched our tents on the same campsite, splitting the cost.

Another hostel awaited me at Pippa Passes. Here a generous family had converted their garage into a bunkhouse. A huge pile of fur (I suspect it was the family dog but since it never moved I never was

quite sure) posted guard duty. A frisky black cat served as the official welcoming committee, going so far as to lick my toes! As long as I responded by scratching her ears, things were fine. But when I neglected my end of the deal she would bite my toes as a stern reminder.

Though the sheer size of the coal trucks scared me to death, the drivers usually gave me plenty of room. I spent much of one day riding on the shoulder of a busy 4 lane highway, dodging chunks of coal, rumble strips and road kill. A gentle evening camped beside a river in Buckhorn soothed away the abuses of the day.

After all the jostling from the rumble strips, my derailleur (gear shifter thingy) went caput, calling for another day off in Berea to work on it. Alongside the bike route was a Holiday Inn Express and I indulged myself with a hot bath, good book, and even shaved my legs. Oh sweet bliss....life was good.

By now I was into Amish country. The stark contrast between their long dresses and bonnets to my spandex and trike helmet was quite obvious. We both had chosen the road less traveled and there was actually a sense of camaraderie. It tickled me when I saw a mule train trod by, with one team pulling an outhouse. Now why didn't I think of that?

Maintaining proper bathroom etiquette while trike touring proved to be a monumental task. On one of my stops I discreetly wandered down a deserted dirt road only to have a school bus full of children come careening around the corner at the worst possible moment. Another time I crouched behind a large stone pillar at the head of a driveway but was caught off guard by a car driving up the driveway. And then there was the wannabe disaster of my trike nearly rolling into a creek bed while I was otherwise occupied. With shorts hugging my knees I made a last minute lunge to grab it before toppling over the bank.

Critters were abundant at Rough River State Park. A tent neighbor had killed a water moccasin just before my arrival (of course I didn't know that until the next morning). At 2:00 AM, I woke to the sound of something scratching and ripping the bag of trash left on the picnic table ... bigger than a cat, smaller than a moose. As I left the park the next morning the ranger mentioned that they have problems with bears visiting at night.





The fire station in Utica was a wonderful stop. I washed clothes and shared the evening with three other riders that stayed for the night. Knowing my ride would end in a few more days, I was compelled to pass on my trusty harmonica to Chris, a young college guy. I entrusted him to carry on my tradition of playing “Taps” for the variety of roadkill that he would encounter on his way to the Atlantic Ocean. One of the fire volunteers told us that part of our responsibility, in the event of a fire call, would be to jump on our bikes and race at lightening speed to the scene and douse the fire with our water bottles.

An old fashioned soda fountain in Sebree, Kentucky made a scrumptious cookie dough flavored malt. The town was reminiscent of “Mayberry RFD” and I found myself looking for Floyd at the old barber shop. A group of children whooped and hollered as they escorted me through town on their bikes.

The final twelve miles to the Ohio River meandered through another peaceful section of Amish country. I wanted to linger, to make the ride slow down but the water was quickly coming into view. In my rearview mirror I caught a glimpse of the land I had touched for the past 1,036 miles. My “State of the Union” address bears witness that our country is overflowing with love and goodwill and I’m so proud to be an American.

## **Phase II**

June 30 – July 25, 2008

26 days – 1,246 miles

7 flat tires

After a 23 hour drive from my home in Alabama, I was teetering on the edge of yet another section of my trike ride across America. And I mean that quite literally. Perched on top of Hoosier Pass, Colorado, with an elevation of 11,542 feet, the road simply disappeared in either direction. I felt a kinship with the early explorers that believed the world was flat, and if they ventured too close to the edge, they would fall to their death. Realizing that I had to ride this unseen road down the Rocky Mountains, I was gripped with stomach spasms.

The ride didn't disappoint. I wish I could share with you the beauty along the way, but the reality was that I went white-knuckled, screaming all the way down! At 38 miles per hour, it only took a moment before leveling out into a luscious valley. Stopping to celebrate my survival, all was quiet except for the birds protesting my rude arrival into their world and the ragged sound of my breathing. I was humbled and exhilarated at the same time, and I celebrated the gift of life.

Friendly waves and thumbs up were offered from the few cars that ventured along this lonely stretch of highway. The gorgeous resort cabins of Breckenridge gave way to sprawling ranches with cowboys lassoing their horses, dogs, fence posts or anything else that got in their way.

As the cowboys placed their brand on each cow, the mountain branded me. Careening down the road, I had to brake hard for the hairpin turns. With hands weary from my death grip, I rolled to a stop. The searing pain on my left calf reminded me of how hot the disc brakes became on the descent. I had mindlessly leaned my leg against the brake disc and was rewarded with a crescent shaped welt that instantly blistered.



Hmm, what's this guy saying about road construction ahead, with one-lane traffic for several miles and I can't ride my trike? He gave two options for my forward progress. I could turn around and find an alternate route or they could toss me and my gear onto the back of a flatbed truck and haul me to the other side. Well, duh, no choice here. I felt like a parade marshal perched upon my float, leading a long line of cars, waving to the cheering crowd of prairie dogs, horses and cattle. After a few dusty miles I was dethroned and back on the road.

The mountainsides were dotted with antelope and buffalo and my harmonica filled the air with my rendition of "Home, home on the range". My legs were strong, my determination stronger. Any fears lurking in the shadows disappeared as I renewed my commitment to live simply, laugh often, love deeply.

Starting the day at 40 degrees (long johns, Goretex socks, etc) it was soon warm enough for bare arms and legs. As the miles sped past, I peeled off layers of clothing. Stopping to apply sunscreen at a small convenience store, I was reminded of the importance of never, ever passing up a restroom. Eight wiggling people waited in line for the bathroom, but I wasn't in a hurry. After a few minutes an adorable blond haired little girl came bouncing out of the bathroom with her mommy. The girl announced to her captive audience, "I went pee pee all by myself". Spontaneously we all burst out in a hearty round of applause

and high fives! Of course, this only egged her on and her next comment was, "I only went pee pee, not poo poo". At this her scarlet faced mother pulled her out the door and the entire store erupted in laughter.

All my well laid itinerary plans went out the window as a seasonal thunderstorm chased me toward the safety of a tiny mountain town of about 40 people. I spent the night in a rustic cabin. I was grateful to be dry and wasn't about to fuss about the lack of indoor plumbing.

Two days into the ride, after a drop of 6,000 feet in elevation, I neared Pueblo, Colorado. Pedaling at lightning speed, I was startled to see something rolling directly toward me. Should I dart left, right or hold my course? With an eminent head on collision, I ducked as the tumbleweed bounced over my head.

Here in the flat lands I said goodbye to coasting down miles of downhill and began the real work of pedaling across America. The roads were wide and smooth, with a generous shoulder for my travels. The occasional stick was easy to dodge but I was caught off guard when one "stick" started to wiggle. Too late to swerve around it, I skimmed by a 4 foot long rattlesnake warming itself on the asphalt. For the next three miles you would have sworn I was competing in the Tour de France.

The people I met along the way were fascinating. There was a general store run by a Vietnam veteran whose goal was to offer support to riders along the Trans America route. I spent several days in the company of a young man sporting a Mohawk haircut. He was a special education teacher with a passion for being a strong role model for children.

There's a different code of conduct for cycling tourists. Upon meeting an oncoming group of bikers one of them called out, "How far to the next bathroom?". There wasn't time for the usual pleasantry of "How are you?". Meeting other cyclists along the route was always a treat. This was a time of sharing good places to eat or sleep, hazards to watch for or alternate routes. There was also a communication system. It was common for someone to ask if you'd seen so & so about 50 miles back or ask you to watch for someone and give them a message.

Life was simple. Some towns had one motel, one café. That made choices easy. I found a great cheeseburger in an antique store, and ice cream in a small pharmacy. One town was celebrating the 4th of July with a parade and potluck dinner. They used big tractor tires, lined with tarps for makeshift wading pools for the kids.

In eastern Colorado I met the sweat bees, tiny little fellows that pack a wallop of a sting. This provided great motivation to keep on moving. After a long day of riding I met up with eight riders one night. A local diner opened up just to serve dinner to us (normally closed on Sunday evening). Most towns had a library with internet access. That was my link to the outside world.



As expected, western Kansas was hot and windy. One day I struggled with a 25mph headwind for 20 miles. I would have happily boarded the next bus heading toward Alabama and tossed my trike, except that there wasn't a bus anywhere for 100 miles. The temperature hovered around 100 degrees and I shook my fist into the wind. At one point, I stopped while going downhill. When I let off the brakes the wind actually pushed me back up the hill. It was a monster wind.

I played a variety of mind games to maintain my sanity. Such as trying to remember everyone in my first grade class. One strong gust of wind actually sent a tiny bug up my nose. I stayed entertained the next ten minutes trying to coax him out!

Despite lathering my body with sunscreen throughout the day, my nose got a bit sunburned. To prevent more damage I covered it with zinc oxide. What I didn't think of was all the little gnats getting stuck in the goo. At the end of one day I looked in the mirror to discover a black fuzzy looking nose, covered with bugs.



I stopped for lunch at a tiny café in Rosalia, Kansas. The barbecued beef had simmered all night and the french fries were homemade. Top this off with a generous serving of “fresh from the oven” peach cobbler, ice cream and 4 glasses of ice water and I was a happy camper.

With a full tummy, I headed out the door, where I met Sam, the young son of the café owner, along with their new puppy, Rocky. Soon Sam's friends came to check out the lady in funny clothes riding a trike! One of the boys crawled onto my lap and we rode around in the parking lot together. They asked if I could come back that night to watch their baseball game. Hmm ... 20 miles each way by bicycle? I didn't think so but they sure did lift my spirits.

The countryside of eastern Kansas was gorgeous. One morning I had a pleasant conversation with a herd of cows. As I pedaled away they began to trot along the fence line, mooing all the way. I was the leader of the pack.

Due to a family reunion in one town, there weren't any motel rooms available. I wandered around town (fire station, churches, library, etc) looking pitiful, hoping someone would take me home with them. Despite all the charm I could muster, no one offered to take me home (could it have been my BO or bugs in my teeth?). So I found a shady spot at the city park and set up my bag lady camp. Around 5:00 PM lots of cars began to arrive, carrying happy people with food! The Methodist church was having their annual picnic and I was invited. The burger was great, and chips, and watermelon, and brownies.

Several other bikers camped there also and it was a very pleasant evening. With my teeth brushed and all my gear laid out for the next day, I tried to find a comfortable position to sleep in. Just as I started to drift asleep, the first piercing howl of a coyote broke the silence. Then his friends joined in. Wide awake now, I checked to make sure the tent zipper was snug (as if that would make me safe - duh!). Eventually I slept, with intermittent coyote choruses throughout the night.

One of the many blessings of this adventure was the reminder to look at a person's heart, not appearance. I met a wide assortment of scruffy looking people but as we shared bits of our lives I saw the common thread of love for America. After all, that's the main reason we were out there. Besides, how could I judge anyone's appearance after looking into a mirror and seeing a wild woman stare back at me, sunburned and dirty, salt crust around her lips?

One sultry afternoon I was pedaling down a country road, when this racy little Jack Russell terrier with a small dog complex approached in attack mode. He ran a circle around me, sizing up his prey and choosing his plan of attack. I picked up the pace but even at 20 miles per hour, he was still by my side. Just for the fun of it I slammed on my brakes, came to a complete halt and said "boo". The little guy tried to stop, did two complete somersaults, yelped and ran home in sheer terror of the creature on three wheels.

And then there was the grasshopper waltz. He landed on my sunglasses while I was talking on the phone. One hand on the handlebar grip, one on the phone...hmm, no way to swat the critter away. He walked across the lens and down my nose. I wiggled and squirmed and

blew, horrified that his next move would be up my nose! But with a violent shake of my head he jumped to safety.

A county fair! I watched the goat judging contest, saw a giant cucumber and had my ears cleared by the roaring engines of a demolition derby. The crowd grew silent for the singing of our national anthem. I watched farmers and policemen, boy scouts and ruffians come together as one nation for a moment of silence to remember our troops.

Nearing the end of the journey, what could be more perfect than to have two of my children show up to cheer me on. Erich and Kelly spent a night with me and we shared the joy of welcoming home a National Guard unit, after spending a year in Iraq. At 9:00 PM, the main street was lined with hometown folks, waving flags and having tailgate parties. The words of Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA" filled the air.

Two hours later the intersection near us was blocked as a group of motorcycle riders came through with flags. Next came the proud fleet of police cars with lights and sirens, followed by two busloads of American soldiers, fresh from the battlefield. My eyes locked on one young man on the first bus. His face was radiant as he gazed upon his friends, family, home. Fire trucks and law enforcement vehicles from surrounding towns had their back as they made their way to the armory, where they would at last hold their loved ones.

After 26 days of pedaling, my trike rolled to a stop on the banks of the Ohio River. I remembered being at that exact spot two years ago, finishing my journey across Virginia and Kentucky. Now I could add Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado to the growing list of places discovered in this quest to trike across America... land of the free because of the brave.

### **Phase III**

July 18 – August 17, 2009

1,746 miles – 3 flat tires

Tuesday July 14, 2009

I love the challenge of living the austere life for a SHORT time. Like savoring the shade of a huge oak tree, cold water on my face, a gentle breeze and the luxury of a pillow at night. I like to push myself to my limits, and beyond. I like the feel of sweat pouring down my face as



I struggle up another mountain and the complete exhilaration of cresting the top and flying down the other side. I'm ready.

Wednesday July 15, 2009

Turn up the AC. Close all doors. Empty the trash. Lock the door and step into the phone booth.

During the next 2 days of car travel I will be transformed into Wonder Woman! No mountain can stop me. Cars won't deter me. Dogs and snakes will hold no power over me. I am strong. The Pacific Ocean calls me. Strangers will become my friends. America awaits discovery.

Thursday July 16, 2009

After driving lots of miles I spent the evening in Dodge City with Miss Kitty and a host of unruly hooligans at the Long Branch Saloon. Tomorrow will arrive at Hoosier Pass, Colorado ... and continue on my quest to touch America, up close and personal.



Friday July 17, 2009

After 3 days of driving I'm here, standing at the doorstep of Hoosier Pass. The Rockies are gorgeous, framed with snow. It's 68 degrees right now, with wind gusts up to 23 mph. Predicted low is 41 degrees tonight. That means I'll get decked out in the morning with my finest cold weather gear, i.e. wool long johns accented with plastic bags

on my hands and feet. How's that for a fashion statement?

I'll fly downhill to Kremmling for 62 miles (from 11,000 feet elevation to 7,500 feet) then climb back up to Muddy Creek Pass for 47 miles to 9,600 feet.

Time to get my ride ready ... air the tires, final brake check, prepare fluids and food, go over the map again, charge camera and phone, etc. I need to practice a few songs on my harmonica (like "taps" for the roadkill).

So very eager to touch America. Scenery in the Rockies is indescribable. Watched buffalo calves romping today, and antelope...and tiny little prairie dogs scampering in the distance. But from the van I caught only a glimpse....I want to go slow. Linger and savor. Tomorrow.

### **Kremmling, Colorado**

Saturday July 18, 2009, 64 miles

How hard can it be to ride a trike down the Rockies, from 11,000 feet down to 7,500? There were several complications, such as a strong headwind and getting lost. Ended up on a bike path heading toward Vail, but in the process met lots of nice people. I even rode a few miles in the midst of a bike race.

I was very entertained watching eagles, one on a nest and the other was fishing. The scenery in Colorado is absolutely breathtaking.

### **Walden, Colorado**

Sunday July 19, 2009, 63 miles

Enjoyed the wildlife of the mountains today, with elk and antelope being my favorite. Quiet backroads and lots of friendly waves. Mosquitoes had a feast on me today.

The day started off at a little country cafe, with terrific food. The local folks wanted to talk and it was hard to leave. Lunch was equally scrumptious, and I was tickled to see a real live cowboy, complete with hat and spurs.

The wind picked up about 35 miles into the day and it couldn't make up it's mind which way to blow. Seemed like every time the road turned the wind did it's best to blow me back home.

Came across about 10 other cyclists today. Really fun to hear them whine about sore butts and ask me if I want to trade machines! Not a chance.

Neither rain, nor wind, nor mountains can deter me. In a few

short weeks I will touch the Pacific Ocean

### **Saratoga, Wyoming**

Monday July 20, 2009, 68 miles

I was determined to find a reason to welcome the wind into my world today ... you know, the old "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. I noticed that the mosquitoes couldn't bite me today because the wind chased them off. Small blessings?

Got to see real cowboys at work today. Chaps, boots, spurs, lasso and the whole works. Wyoming is huge and open...makes the soul feel free.

My game of the day was to try to sneak up on the prairie dogs and then call out "hello" to them. Scared them every time. Bad Janet!

Antelope are everywhere. As I broke into a hearty rendition of "Home, Home on the Range..." a nasty little bug flew into my mouth. End of song.

Did you know it takes 27 bolts to hold a road sign onto its post? The wind never stops.

Met several cyclists today, including the second father/son team. It was so refreshing to meet another cyclist, recently switched from a computer career to a medical career. Reason? He wants to do more than make money ... he wants to help others to live healthy lives. Was fun to share snacks with various riders.

### **Rawlins, Wyoming**

Tuesday July 21, 2009, 47 miles

Just when I made peace with the wind, it disappeared. Hardly a whisper today.

Indulged myself with a quick stop at the Saratoga hot springs on my way out of town this morning. Water temperature was 108, with pools tiered down to the river offering a variety of water temperatures. I only meant to dip my toes...oh well!

Again there were lots of antelope along the way to cheer me on. Was an easy ride, great lunch at Su Casa's in Sinclair and an early evening. I have some mountain climbing to do over the next week as I head toward Yellowstone.

### **Lander, Wyoming**

Wednesday July 22, 2009, 115 miles

Can you believe I had an antelope loping beside me this

morning? I actually placed second in our race!

After riding 13 miles along Interstate 80 yesterday I picked up a steel thread in one of my tires. I pulled it out, expecting a flat. Still holding air this morning but about 25 miles into the ride it went flat ... first one for this ride. I replaced the tube and was back on the road in 15 minutes.

The afternoon was growing hot and I was looking for something to eat, other than granola bars and Sport gel blocks. Imagine my frustration at seeing an empty Snickers wrapper on the road ... when I saw actual Cheetos scattered like breadcrumbs I almost succumbed to picking them up from the pavement for an afternoon snack (to go with my warm sports drink - yummy)!!!

Met a group of 8 bikers (motorcycles) from Norway. They took lots of pictures of the lady on the funny trike.

A hitch-hiker and his dog wanted a ride to Yellowstone. I told him only if he and the dog would help pedal.

Had a blast going down a 5 mile mountain with 6% grade. Squealed the whole way down. Bunches of grasshoppers jumped on board for a free ride down. I was going so fast I didn't dare flick them off. At the bottom of the ride there were critters on my legs, shirt, shorts...crawling all over.

I really enjoyed crossing over the Oregon Trail, envisioning their campsite along the river. Mothers cooking, children laughing, dad's fighting hard to survive and take their families west. What irony to have 2 RVs pass by during this contemplation.

Came across a rancher herding sheep on his ATV ... no spurs needed. Can see the Tetons now. About 12 cyclists in town tonight.

I had only planned on a 61 mile day...but the host town didn't exist. It was only a skeleton of a town, so I opted to ride another 50 miles or so.



## **Dubois, Wyoming**

Thursday July 23, 2009, 77 miles

Woke up feeling strong and headed out for another day of adventure. Saw several herds of wild horses grazing on the open pasture land. The Tetons stand tall and proud, beckoning me to make the climb.

I spent most of the day riding on the Wind River Indian Reservation. It was a bonanza day for finding treasures along the way. I claimed a hot pink pom pom, a plastic dinosaur (with hinged jaws that snap open and shut - maybe it's a snap dragon?), a roll of medical tape and a feather.

I spent several miles today convinced that Wyoming had been smitten with a plague of grasshoppers. They were everywhere - dead and alive. They danced and fluttered. On my legs, arms, pelting my face. After several on my lips I rode with my hand over my mouth!

Another day of gentle living...pedaling along the backroads of America. Planning a short day tomorrow.

## **Day off in Dubois**

Friday July 24, 2009

Most incredible scenery around this little town in Wyoming. Lots of red rock cliffs and canyons, clear rivers and cowboys. My favorite view was of the red rock cliffs, green meadow below, river and waterfall in the middle...with wild horses playing.

A woman invited me to the rodeo....so off I went. You should have seen the "Mutton Busting" contest, with kids 5 and under attempting to ride a sheep! There was barrel racing and bronc riding and calf roping. Nights are cold. Today I go up and over the Tetons. Lots of climbing. Sure hope the bears are well fed!

### **Colter Bay, Wyoming (kinda)**

Saturday July 25, 2009, 69 miles

Enjoyed the most awesome morning triking up and over the Tetons. Wildflowers and waterfalls, blue sky and happy bird songs. Struggling up ... flying down.

Due to road construction I had to be shuttled about 5 miles ... would have been a great downhill section. Seeing the "Beware of Bears" signs got my attention.

Soon after entering Teton National Forest there was a sign announcing road construction in 17 miles ... end of pavement. Not a good thing.

About the same time the pavement turned to bumpy mush, the clouds opened up. Time for plan B ... if only I knew what that was! I retreated to the lobby of a nearby resort to check room prices and apply my schmoozing skills.

Not gonna happen. Plan C. Overhearing my plight, a kind family said they had room for me and my gear and would happily drive me through the park to West Yellowstone.

So off I went, sloshing through the mud, waiting on construction, sighting elk along the way ... and 95 easy miles later I was in West Yellowstone.

My plan to trike back into Yellowstone tomorrow to see Old Faithful (and appease my guilty conscience at not triking the miles I meant to). This will be at least 65 miles, so it will almost make up the miles. Once again I have been touched by the goodness of people in America.

### **West Yellowstone, Montana**

Sunday July 26, 2009, 67 miles

Enjoyed pristine waterfalls, powerful geysers and wild critters. Eagles on their nest, elk grazing along the river, antelope chowing down and buffalo mommies and babies strolling down the highway. Old Faithful blew her top and I met so many wonderful people. Great day.



## **Ennis, Montana**

Monday July 27, 2009, 71 miles

Something didn't look right as I was loading up the trike this morning ... uh oh, flat tire. An hour later I had refit the rim strip, replaced the tube, lubed the chain and given the trike a once over.

Got on the road at 8:30, with the temperature hovering around 51 degrees. The first few hours were in the mountains in the rugged back country of Montana. Fly fishermen waded in the rivers, deer grazed in the meadows.

I'm convinced that the local mosquitoes are watching for me. The moment I head to the woods for a comfort stop, the bugler mosquito announces "Lunch is served" and they all swarm me.

Riding a trike presents a few additional challenges. The 4 foot wide shoulder skirting the road was awesome today ... except for the occasional horse droppings I had to dodge (with all 3 wheels coming through clean). For the last 20 miles the rumble strip was exactly in the middle of the shoulder, meaning 1 tire was always on the rumble. My solution was to ride on the road unless there was traffic coming in both directions. Then I would put one tire on the shoulder, one in the grass and the other somewhere in-between.



The temperature never got above 70 today, which made the potato soup I had for dinner wonderful. I got caught in a downpour around noon but was near a park visitors center. I snoozed and talked with people until the roads were dry again. Found about 30 other cyclists today. Hoping for less wind tomorrow.

### **Dillon, Montana**

Tuesday July 28, 2009, 72 miles

Today started with a 10 mile climb and a wildly fun downhill



for a reward. I had to smile when I saw the “Runaway Truck” signs. I wondered if they meant “Trike” runaway.

The old mining towns of Virginia City and Nevada City took me to another era. I read about a man in the mid 1800's who walked from Denver to Virginia City with everything he owned on his back. Made me feel very fortunate to have three wheels and a paved road to follow.

Met great folks along the way. Michael was such an inspiration ... just enjoying the ride, loving life, taking it slow, letting life unfold. Took extra time today to visit with local people. The kids always smile at the gray haired lady in spandex riding a trike.

After the brutal winds of yesterday I had a terrific tailwind the last 20 miles of today's ride. I was smoking ... 18 MPH without effort!

### **Wisdom, Montana**

Wednesday July 29, 2009, 68 miles

....population 100! Only wireless internet in town appears to be at the Big Hole Crossing Restaurant. I've had very limited internet for past 3 days so am enjoying the evening, though it could get expensive since I keep ordering more food to justify my being here so long!!!

Two HUGE mountain passes tried to discourage me....and they did! The hardest part was being so cold on the descents. It was 44 degrees when I started and only warmed up to 64 this afternoon.

I've got to focus more on recovery food at the end of each ride, to reload my weary muscles. My muscles were limp and mushy today. So I've just enjoyed a steak dinner and waiting for homemade peach cobbler with ice cream. That should give me oomph for tomorrow's ride.

I'm staying at a little lodge in town. I was washing out my water bottle and noticed an AWFUL smell. The place has sulfur water and it reeks! Took a shower and smelled worse when I got out. But I'm so thankful to have a bed and shower.

Again I was overwhelmed with the beauty of this land. Montana is so open and huge and strong. I love watching the cowboys herding cattle.

Today I felt so grateful to all the people that have helped make this dream my reality.

## **Hamilton, Montana**

Thursday July 30, 2009, 76 miles

The 38 degree morning was invigorating, and once again I found my hands and feet bundled in plastic bags. The panniers were nearly empty since almost every stitch of clothing was on ME. The day was pretty much a strip tease on wheels, since it ended at 84 degrees. I ended up with shorts, shirt and sandals ... covered in sweat and road grime. Ah, the good life!

The first 26 miles took me up a mountain, with the final 6 mile climb plummeting to a dismal 3 mile per hour pace! The mountain streams and thick forests were the stuff postcards are made of – gorgeous. You should have seen my speed pick up when I heard noises rustling in the underbrush. The only wildlife I saw was an itty bitty bat warming himself on the pavement.

I've really enjoyed intersecting the route of Lewis and Clark and envisioning their journey. Once I hauled my sorry butt to the top of the mountain, I faced the sheer terror of 8 miles of downhill. And then I enjoyed a gentle downhill for the next 20 miles. I occupied my mind thinking of things/people that I'm thankful for. I've decided that being grateful/thankful is one of the healthiest characteristics we can cultivate. More thoughts on this later.



Need to clean up on a trike odyssey? Lakes: perfect & free solution!

## **Missoula, Montana**

Friday July 31, 2009, 55 miles

The first 17 miles kept me on my toes, with no shoulder and lots of traffic. But I was rewarded with about 15 miles of smooth trike path later in the day.

The morning temperature was 62! Quite a welcome change from the past week. I suspect that very soon I'll be wishing I had some of that cold air back.

It was really fun to tour the Adventure Cycling Headquarters in Missoula. After 20 years of devouring their magazine I'm finally realizing the dream that they fostered. It was my mecca. Cycling has become one of the greatest passions of my life.

Missoula is full of life and energy ... and bicycles everywhere. I enjoyed dinner at an Irish pub and now planning a layover day tomorrow. A warm bath, good book ... maybe even shave my legs!

## **Missoula Play Day**

Saturday August 1, 2009

What an invigorating city, so full of life and energy. Trike paths are everywhere, with cyclists of every type. The Farmers Market was bustling with local folks, buying and selling, and meeting with friends. I found a gorgeous oak end table but for the life of me couldn't figure out how to tote it across two states onboard my trike. Reluctantly I left it behind (along with a moving pencil sketch of a mommy and baby wolf). It's time for a warm bath, good book and nap ... zzz. In the morning I'll be heading for the mountains of eastern Idaho and several days of rugged living.

So many people have been a part of this ride. My husband, John, has supported me in every way. He constantly encourages me to follow my heart, to chase my dreams, to be all I can be. Mom and dad have encouraged me to embrace today ... don't wait until it's "convenient". Brother Larry has taught me to be tough, to endure and persevere, to chase what you really want and make it happen. My sons have encouraged me to practice what I taught them for years - "You can do whatever you put your mind to". My daughters energize me and fill me with enthusiasm for life. George has hauled me and my gear around the country making the logistics work out perfectly. Best friend Joan points me down the path of love and gentleness and always seeking ways to show kindness.

So many bike shops have supported me along the way. Dick

taught me to fix flat tires, and Art taught me about spinning and fielded my phone calls for help even on the golf course! Jim provided step by step instructions for fixing a variety of trike aches and pains, and first introduced me to the happy butt world of recumbent trikes.

Travelers along the way have been awesome, from friendly waves, to offering cold water, to inviting me home for the night. Fellow cyclists have become my family. America is my home, from Virginia to Oregon. I have seen her up close and personal. I have smelled the pine forests, felt the foaming waters of the Atlantic Ocean, seen miles and miles of rolling Kentucky hills, heard the roaring waterfalls in Yellowstone and felt the strong and sweaty hand of Michael as we high fived each other in celebration of life in America.

Several days ago the tailwind blew me into Dillon, Montana and I found myself thanking the wind. When I was parched I thanked the water. When I was hot, the tall oak shaded me. I've spent the past week in Nez Perce territory and read so many accounts of their culture. I understand their desire to give thanks for the blessings of life.



**Powell, Idaho**

Sunday August 2, 2009, 61 miles

I've discovered some of the most gorgeous country here in Idaho. Lolo Pass has huge mountains, tall pine trees, creeks and

waterfalls.

So here I was, minding my own business, cruising down the highway. Time for a comfort stop but nothing civilized in site. Time for plan B ... look for an uncivilized option! A secluded driveway, complete with a tall hedge, looked like the perfect spot. There I was, politely with my bare butt facing away from traffic...when I heard an engine and gravel spinning. Yep, the home owner had spied me and was bearing down on this intruder on her 4 wheeler. I glanced in her direction long enough to say "I'll be with you in just a moment". As I stood I removed my helmet, revealing my silver hair and tried to look as innocent as possible (go figure). She busted up laughing when she discovered that the evil trespasser was just little ole me. We talked for 5 minutes and I pedaled away, with a new friend.

After a few miles my back tire went flat but I was quickly back on the road. The mountain views were breathtaking. Found a wonderful lodge to spend the evening at in Powell, Idaho. A band was playing a lively assortment of songs, folks were dancing under a shade tree, and a rustic log cabin to sleep in. Very nice day.

### **Syringa, Idaho**

Monday August 3, 2009, 73 miles

Today was just about the most glorious day of my entire triking career. No way for a camera to capture the beauty and serenity. Feel so very blessed.

### **Grangeville, Idaho**

Tuesday August 4, 2009, 43 miles

Another killer climb this morning, but the view was gorgeous. Who would have thought that after an 11 mile ascent I would find the Camas Prairie, wheat and hay as far as the eye can see.

I meant to pedal more today but a decision had to be made. I could trike on in the 101 degree afternoon heat ... or I could swim in the motel pool, do my nails and slurp a chocolate malt. No brainer ... see you tomorrow. Should be miles of downhill.

### **New Meadows, Idaho**

Wednesday August 5, 2009, 83 miles

Whee! What a downhill, something like 6 miles of a 7% grade. Then reliving the Nez Perce history, visualizing them traipsing over the hills in search of food. The greatest treasure was discovering a white

sandy beach along the Salmon River. It called ... I answered. The swim revived me and off I went in dripping clothes (which were dry 15 minutes later).

Had a blast entertaining myself with my harmonica. It sure brought some smiles and laughs from passing motorists. Riggins is a rafting town bustling with energy. I stopped for lunch but didn't indulge in water play. My mission is to get to Cambridge tomorrow afternoon and wait for Hans and Analisa to pick me up. We'll have the weekend together ... then off to the Pacific Ocean.

### **Cambridge, Idaho**

Thursday August 6, 2009, 48 miles

Woke up to rain today, so happily pulled the covers up and snoozed an extra few hours. Eventually I had to venture out and the roads stayed dry for most of the day's journey.

Discovered more ranch land, with hay, horses and cattle. I enjoy so much the small towns that feel like home. Today's lunch stop was right out of Mayberry RFD. Everyone knew each other. Conversations were about the crops, and the broken combine and the barbecue after church.

Hans and Analisa will make a 125 mile trip to pick me up in the morning for a luxurious weekend at their house. Then they'll tote me back on Sunday so I can continue this adventure across America

### **Halfway, Oregon**

Monday August 10, 2009, 58 miles

The day began with a 15 mile climb and was rewarded with a 7 mile descent. What fun! Enjoyed talking with a cowboy, decked out in boots and spurs and hat and chaps ... riding his 4 wheeler! The Snake River provided gorgeous scenery and a great place to swim. Crossing into Oregon was a moment of jubilation, of coming home, of nearing the completion of this journey.

### **Baker City, Oregon**

Tuesday August 11, 2009, 54 miles

Perspective is a fascinating thing. I heard accounts of the desolate country of eastern Oregon ... and I heard the same stories about Wyoming and Kansas. For the most part I've been intrigued with the different types of terrain and lifestyles along the way.

I've really enjoyed the solitude of miles and miles of sagebrush. My harmonica skills have vastly improved in this setting. Today I amused myself with "Oh Susanna".

The closer I get to the ocean, the more I find myself wanting to slow down (any slower and I'll be going backwards!). This is a dream I've had for 20 years, to cross America on a trike. So, what will be next? Much of the fun of any dream is in the planning and longing. Loving the journey.

### **John Day, Oregon**

Wednesday August 12, 2009, 82 miles

"Now be sure to watch for rattlesnakes. We've killed three so far just 2 blocks from here." This is how the motel clerk greeted me tonight! Yikes ... no more heading for the bushes for me! Today's ride was beautiful. The mountain passes were cloaked with tall pine trees, deer everywhere. The last 25 miles into town were downhill, smooth pavement, wide shoulder. The temperature never rose above 75 degrees, the sky was overcast. Perfect day for a trike ride.

### **Mitchell, Oregon**

Thursday August 13, 2009, 71 miles

Another day in paradise (after a several hour rain delay). Mountains and rivers and cows. Came across more cyclists today. Always fun to share information, tips and encouragement. The long downhills are so much fun. I actually had chill bumps from the sub-70 degree day. Four days to go. Weary tonight ... but happy.

### **Redmond, Oregon**

Friday August 14, 2009, 72 miles (116 km) - Total so far: 1,557 miles (2,506 km)

Motorists cheering me on. A cow giving birth in the pasture. A real city after days in rugged America. It's been a good day. Within a 5 minute span I came across an animal skull (empty and lifeless) and a newborn calf. Made me think of life and death, and the story we write between these two events. No rough drafts or editing allowed, every page is final copy.

Today the realization of this journey grabbed me and I could barely contain my excitement. Maybe I was afraid to get too excited before now in case I couldn't really finish this summer. But I'm 3 days away from the ocean ... I can almost smell it. My legs are strong and the forward momentum is growing.



An hour ago I was swimming in the motel pool, smiling at the friends and memories of this trip. Tomorrow marks 10 weeks of tricycle pedaling (spread out over 3 summers). The dream was born in May 1990 when I first read about people actually riding their bicycles across the US. “How foolish” was my first thought. But that was soon replaced with “I wanna go too”. Now, 19 years later, I’m just a few miles from completion. What a celebration of touching America.

### **McKenzie Bridge, Oregon**

Saturday August 15, 2009, 61 miles

Climbed 2000 feet in 15 miles...the last mountain pass to the ocean. I’m elated. Felt raw power as I pedaled up, up, up into the clouds. Invincible, nothing can stop me.

### **Eugene, Oregon**

Sunday August 16, 2009, 57 miles

I forgot to mention yesterday the motorcycle rider that saluted me just as I crested the long climb. Felt good. I always enjoy the shock factor of removing my helmet and revealing my head of silver hair!

I awoke at 2:30 AM with my innards on fire. My evil twin tried to convince me to stay in bed this morning instead of ride ... but once



again good triumphed over evil and I made it to Eugene.

**Florence, Oregon: Mission Complete**

Monday August 17, 2009, 71 miles

Another day in paradise...donned my uniform (spandex and dayglo neon green) and clocked in to work (hey, triking across the US is hard work!). At a little country store I came upon 2 cyclists from Hawaii scarfing down M&Ms and other performance enhancing substances. I amused them with a song on my harmonica and they offered M&Ms.

The Pacific Ocean tugged on me the last 15 miles. Heart was racing, I played "America the Beautiful" and I thanked everyone in my life that I could think of. Friends met me at the ocean and helped drag my trike the quarter mile to the water for the photo op. Enjoyed an awesome bowl of clam chowder and a cold beer at Mo's in Florence, and celebrating life. Perfect celebration!

**THE END**



The Pacific Ocean, on the central Oregon coast ... success!

**more >**

Janet Buckwalter -  
Additional Details & Biographical Information:

I rode the first 3500 miles across America on a Catrike Road. I made the journey over 3 summers, 3 weeks each summer.

I rode the final 1500 miles on a Greenspeed X5 and loved it. Better fit, more comfortable, nimble and responsive. Smoother components, including better brakes. That was critical to me as I came screaming down the Rockies fully loaded!

Used Ortleib panniers. Each section I brought less gear. Started out at 50 pounds of gear and was down to about 35 by the end. Less is definitely more in cycle touring.

One section I camped and stayed at fire stations and hostels. Another I stayed in motels. Both had advantages.

I rode 3500 miles with a faring and 1500 without. I don't believe it made any performance difference at my low speed of ~12 mph.

I swapped my small chainring in the front for an even smaller one on the Catrike. I did not notice a difference when I switched to the Greenspeed.

I have an additional note to add to my reasons for switching to the Greenspeed. Tubes. On the second section of my journey across the United States, I had 7 flat tires. I ended up laying over 2 days in Springfield, Missouri waiting for some 20 x 1.5 Presta valve tubes were sent to me. No shop in town had tubes to fit and I had used all of my spare tubes.

That was the Catrike Road. The Greenspeed X5 uses 16 x 1.5 Schrader valve. You can buy these at any Walmart, Target, etc. This is the standard size for children's bikes. Makes life much easier.

My triking career began at the tender age of 18 months, on the back of my brother's delta trike. Wheels of every type remained a big part of my life until I discovered boys in Junior High. Ten years later, I came to my senses, returning to my passion for biking. I haven't looked back.

My husband is also an avid cyclist. He's a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army. We have two adult sons. Cycling is something that binds us together as a family.

These are a few of my adventures:

RAGBRAI twice

Bike Virginia

Bike Safari

Bike Across Magnificent Alabama (BAMA)

Bike Ride Across Georgia (BRAG)

KATY trail (Missouri)

Worked at bike shop 3 years

Organized a 100+ member bike club, with weekly rides

Organized a community bike ride

Staff member of BRAG, BAMA and Bike Safari (all organized state bike rides)

Written book about Tour de France

Natchez Trace self-contained ride (500 miles)

TransAmerica route (4200 miles) self-contained

Cycling is a way of life for me. I drive a minivan, expressly so I can have my trike with me at all times. I've worked for the American Red Cross for the past 8 years doing disaster relief work. I write for several magazines, and am currently collaborating with Greenspeed trike company in Australia on their upcoming revised website.

Life is full. I am blessed.

- Janet

\* \* \* \* \*

<http://BikeWriterUSA.com>

*and*

<http://www.crazyguyonabike.com>

then search "Janet Buckwalter"



## Blazing A New Trail

by Denise Lanier

I am Denise Lanier, a teacher, reviewer of books, and a writer. I am a former literary magazine editor and actor (who misses the stage and hopes to someday be steady enough in body to do shows again; or find a role that welcomes weaving and stumbling, or a service dog by my side). I am also someone with a complex set of health issues who finally found exactly the right recumbent trike to get me cycling again. A 2006 ICE Qnt has changed my life.

Not since being partnered with a mobility assistance service dog has my life been so dramatically transformed. After Luke came into my life, I gained back a large measure of independence, safety, and freedom. The dog allowed me to be an active part of my own life, to be social again, to become of service in my community, to return to teaching, to travel for work, education, and pleasure.



Starbuck, the name I bestowed upon my ICE Qnt recumbent tricycle, has accomplished something equally significant. Before the symptoms of multiple sclerosis (MS) intersected with my life, I was always training for one triathlon or another; then I became someone

who might as well have been Velcro-ed to a couch, a chair, or a bed. For a long time I had no choice about my inactivity because of the severity of my illness. When the remissions began to last longer in between relapses, I still didn't see the point of throwing myself into any kind of modified exercise program because I knew all the progress would be lost in a matter of weeks or months when a relapse would hit, and I'd have to begin all over again.

I eventually made some choices that helped me to grow stronger and be more active, such as making Pilates and swimming a daily priority whenever I'm feeling well enough. Still, I never imagined I'd be able to do anything more than cheer on other athletes once the limitations of MS became evident. Now, that's changed. Starbucks provided much more than another way for me to be active and get exercise, she gave me something I never expected — the means by which to reclaim the label of "athlete," to compete in mainstream athletic events, and to be a valued, contributing member of a team.

I hope to make a real difference with my efforts, to raise awareness about recumbent trikes, to encourage all those with illness, injury, and disability to engage in physical activity to the highest level they are capable of — not only for the health benefits to their bodies, but for the way mind and spirit can be transformed, as well. My fondest hope is that someone seeing me pedaling across a finish line will take hold of the idea that if I can do it, she can too.

I've started a blog about my discovery of recumbent trikes and how that led me to one of the most unlikely adventures I could have ever have imagined for myself: becoming the first challenged athlete to be granted permission by the New York City Marathon to use a recumbent trike as reasonable accommodation for a disability. The blog is about how a recumbent tadpole trike led me — a woman who ambulates with the help of a mobility assistance service dog — to become an entrant in the 2010 New York City Marathon as a member of Team Leary Firefighters Foundation. The blog is about living with multiple sclerosis, living life to the fullest in spite of multiple sclerosis. The blog is about how an awful, painful and terrifying disease has been an agent of change for so many wonderful things and people and opportunities and adventures in my life. I hope you'll pay the blog a visit, maybe even subscribe and pass the link along to your cycle-loving friends. The online address is:

[wonkybent.wordpress.com](http://wonkybent.wordpress.com)

## Trike Search

So let me now tell a bit of my story about the trike, and how it took me to and through the New York City Marathon. It all started with riding a Sun EZ trike at Workshop Houston where I was volunteering. I only rode it down the block and back but that was enough for me to know that I was capable of riding, capable of the physical mechanics.



I launched into full-steam-ahead research mode. As small as the world of recumbent triking is, it's also rife with choices: makes and models, delta (1 wheel in front and 2 in back) or tadpole (2 wheels in front and 1 in back), folding frames or not, above or under-seat steering. There's suspended front or rear, or both. There are hard shell seats and webbed seats; there are fixed position seats and adjustable position seats. The diameter between the two wheels matters to stability, as well as transporting, getting through doorways. The ground clearance varies, so if you're staying on paved roads you'll be okay with lower, but if you plan to be on trails with rocks and sticks and debris, you're probably better off with higher clearance. Tires, smoother and narrower for faster, knobbier and wider for gripping on slippery pavement and off-road conditions. Bar end or twist shifters? And don't even get me started with the options for gearing.

Those are just some of the basics. Then you have an entire new set of decisions, though the latter can be much more fun and exciting to ponder over. The big wide world of accessories! But don't let that last word fool you into thinking that some of what many trike-makers categorize as accessories are actually things you can ride without. Fenders and racks you can do without, sure. But a water bottle holder? Lights? A safety flag for visibility? Those are important.

Before you get too far into deciding what you want and need, keep in mind that there are still only a handful of recumbent trike manufacturers. The low supply means high demand. I'm sure you remember what that translates into from your economics class. If you're anything like me, you have to factor cost into what you buy. And recumbent trikes are not even close to being cheap. Worth every penny? To me, absolutely. But still, affordable to the average person or family the way bicycles are: far from it.

Try to imagine what a creative writing teacher at your local university or an English composition teacher at the community college earns. Cut that in half and then you're probably close to the actual paycheck. Now, take into consideration that my husband and I just relocated back to our home state of Texas, our hometown of Houston, mid-semester, which means I missed all the application dates. Teaching, unlike most other jobs, is bound to the semester calendar; you can't jump into the interviewing process anytime you want or need. Most college and university positions are hired only at the beginning of the school year — when, if, they're hiring at all. Also consider that prior to Gary's new position at a credit union here, there were nine long months of job-hunting after his former credit union laid him off. Hence, savings depleted, living on credit cards. Can you say Financial Picture Not Rosy?

Now imagine that you're my husband Gary and your wife, who has MS and goes about her everyday life with a mobility assistance dog, suddenly says to you that she'd like to purchase a recumbent trike. How much? Oh, they run about \$1500 to upwards of \$5000 new, and about \$700 to \$3000+ if you can find one used. "Oh, and by the way, honey, I'm thinking of petitioning the New York City Marathon to let me ride in the handcycle division if I get a trike in time to train for the race. What do you think?" What do you think he thought?

There was a great deal of pointed silence if I remember correctly (cue the cricket-song), while Gary's brain attempted to juggle the ideas of cost, the rigors of marathon training, the feasibility of my

being able to endure the regular riding of a trike or even being able to manhandle one. How would I transport it or, heck, how was I going to manage to get it up and down the 4 steps to our house? Did I have a plan? I did.



My plan was to save up. To scour classified ads and cycling forums. My plan was to get my hands on a used recumbent trike as soon as I could. My plan was to begin petitioning the New York City Marathon race officials immediately, as if I already had a trike and was prepared to race with it. My plan was to act as if, and to make it so. My plan was to keep riding the recumbent stationary bike at the YMCA near our house and imagine myself on my eventual recumbent trike, passing up runners with New York City Marathon numbered bibs pinned to their shirts.

I ramped up my swimming laps, increased my Pilates workouts, created a log for my cycling miles and swimming laps. I started lifting light (1 lb and then 2lb) hand weights to improve my upper body strength. All of my former triathlon training experience was helpful, but the truth was that this body is barely recognizable in so many ways as being part and parcel of that former body. My body with MS seems to bear no relation at all to its pre-MS incarnation. Except perhaps in that my face is still attached to it, and therefore must be mine. Right?



Sometimes even that fact — what should be indisputable proof — is irreconcilable with the way my body feels.

The truth is that I had no good, logical reason to believe that I'd be able to ride a recumbent trike beyond anything more than recreational use. Yet I believed it completely. When Gary and many friends asked how I could be sure, why it was that I felt suddenly convicted that I could embark upon and maintain a training regimen rigorous enough to participate in the NYC Marathon, all I could offer was that I knew I could. Their expressions, the calm, careful tones of their voices, communicated to me that they believed that I believed, but they remained unconvinced.

Some people might label my unfounded belief in myself and my trike riding-and-training abilities—my NYC Marathon goal—as optimism. But in my case it's probably much more akin to bullheadedness. Something my Scotch—Irish heritage is rather famous for, I might point out.

A couple of friends in particular were, as usual, as faithful about my aspirations as I was. And, in truth, it's because of friends like these that I've grown to a place where I'm able to possess a level of unwavering belief in myself that defies logic, facts, reasonable expectation. My husband Gary is chief among these friends, I should point out. Thing is, he's also the one most worried that I might be let down, or, worse, that I might hurt myself. He's very well aware of the toll that day-to-day life takes on me. He's here with me, witnessing the pain, the exhaustion, the frustration and disappointment. He's the one driving me to countless doctors and physical therapy appointments; he's often the one going to pick up the prescriptions from the drug store. He accompanies me to medical supply stores as I look for just the right knee or wrist brace or reusable ice packs, and to shoe stores for the “miracle” pair that will offer the perfect combo of stability and cushion to ease knee and hip pain. How many shoe inserts have I tried? How many brands of athletic shoe and hiking shoe and street shoe and clogs with ergonomic fit and design? (If you need comfortable shoes, ask me, I'm an unofficial expert!)

Gary knows better than anybody in my life what it's like for me to be on a never-ending quest to find products—from clothing to furniture to cars to electronics to medical supplies—that will ease the symptoms of MS (or its treatment) to bring the slightest bit more comfort, or simply stave off the detriments of pain and fatigue just a mite longer. You never realize how expensive it is to be unhealthy until

you are. And I'm not even talking about the medical bills or the medications themselves, right now. I'm talking about all the rest of it. If you are unaware what I mean by "all the rest of it," it's a fair bet that you've not spent any great amount time with an illness or disability.

The purchase of a recumbent trike was another in a long line of things sought out to cater to an MS-laden lifestyle. Could I get by, live my life just fine and dandy without it? Of course. But how much of a difference might it make? And would that difference be worth the expense? Those are the real questions of consideration. Gary and I have had to contemplate those questions often over the last decade. Let me give you some points of reference, a handful of examples—in explanation for why life with a sick and/or broken body is a costly enterprise. Let me also say, right up front, that I'm incredibly blessed to have these choices to make.

As rough as our financial picture has been at various points (mostly due to my not being able to work and Gary's career working in the nonprofit world of credit unions) Gary has always been of the belief that we should make it a priority to have whatever we can afford—within relative reason, of course—that would make my life easier, more comfortable. Even without him thinking this way in regard to making my life less painful, I was—am—the luckiest wife on the planet. The fact that he believes in investing in products that hold the promise to make my life with MS better makes me so fortunate that I'm humbled by his devotion over and over again.

Except for the nine months Gary was unemployed while job-hunting last year, he's always had a good, steady job. So while many partners, I'm sure, are of the belief that their significant others deserve to have what might make a difference to their pain-level (which affects everything), we have been blessed in that we're able to afford a lot of what we decide to try. I'm of the firm conviction that the reason many sick and/or disabled suffer with depression, are prone to addictions to alcohol and pain meds and other substances, and the chief cause many others resort to suicide – is because to be ill and/or disabled with little-to-no financial resources that might alleviate the symptoms of one's illness and/or disability is the most helpless, powerless, hopeless situation one can experience. Being held hostage, physically and psychologically and spiritually abused by your own body—by your own self—is a misery I wouldn't wish on anyone.

Gary and I had a good deal of experience saving up and spending more for items of better quality that would make life better

and easier. The idea of buying a recumbent trike was a little different, in that I obviously don't need a three-wheeled recreation device. I swim and do Pilates, ride the recumbent stationary bike at the neighborhood YMCA. So the issue, really, was about how much of a difference this trike might make to my life. Exercise is important. And exercise that doesn't cause this body more pain is always of interest. No, I didn't require a trike, obviously. But my desire was great. I just needed to divine whether it would be worth the price, given our financial state. Given past experience, I knew that if I absolutely believed a recumbent trike would make a positive difference to my life, that it would enhance my health and contribute largely to my happiness—Gary would be on board. After all, he's the one who created in me the knowledge that I deserve whatever we can afford (within reason) to lessen the effects of MS.

Self worth is an area I've always struggled with, and it became an even more fraught battle with MS in the picture. There's something about being ill, tired, in pain, often unemployed, etc. that tends to makes you feel less-than. So if you already felt less-than before the sick, tired and so forth, it can be hard to imagine that you're worth the \$100 shoes or \$1000 chair or \$2000 recumbent trike. Especially if you've not yet ridden a trike more than a lap up the street and back!

My goddaughter was visiting us this summer, so we packed up and made a road trip from Houston to Austin, where the closest dealer of recumbents lives. Mike at Easy Street Recumbents (if you live in driving distance, Easy Street is THE place for recumbents; if you don't live in driving distance, I say it's worth the trip!) asked me lots of questions, gave me the low-down on different models and set me off to test drive. The first trike that I rode was my favorite of what they had for me to try—a Catrike Expedition. I piloted it around the parking lot of the shopping center and warehouses where the bike shop was located, got brave and trekked across the street to a neighborhood and took a few spins up and down the hilly streets. I'm not quite sure at what point it began, but I was flying on the downslope of a tree-lined road when I suddenly became aware that I was crying. From happiness!

Utter, unrestrained joy. Freedom of movement. Powering myself, my own body, through space. Going really fast. Like, zoom fast. Like, Speed Racer racecar vrooming noises inside my head fast. In fact it took a concentrated effort to not make the vroom-vroom noises out loud. It was that tempting. I was having that much fun. Might I remind you that fun, in my life, doesn't happen in terms of fast, quick or zippy.

I cannot even walk briskly without the help of my mobility assistance service dog Luke. Scenery hadn't passed me by at that pace without my being in a motorized vehicle in, well, I can't remember how long. I was flying, people, yes ...

### FLYING!

My body hadn't suddenly become healed or unbroken. I was still experiencing pain and fatigue. But not so much that I couldn't still pedal—push one foot forward and then the next—making the wheels spin and cover ground at a lively clip. The movement, the speed itself—and knowing that I was generating that speed—allowed the notions of myself as sick, disabled, slow, damaged, left behind and far-from-athletic, to fall away, back by the cement curb I'd bumped down to take to the quiet streets of that neighborhood. I'll never forget that first real ride on a recumbent trike or the neighborhood I cycled through, because I felt healthy and whole and unbroken—I felt **ABLE** and **STRONG**—for the first time in over ten long years.



The recumbent trike I ended up with is an ICE trike, a 2006 Qnt—chosen because it has a folding rear-section to make transport easier, adjustable seat for changing up pressure points during longer rides, and

rear suspension. In general, ICE products are far easier to upgrade, and that was important to me. But the adjustable seat, the folding mechanism making for easier transport, and the blessed rear-suspension—along with the incomparable reputation and customer service—are the highlights of why I went with ICE. I have chosen well, my friends, if I do say so myself!



### THE BIG DAY

I couldn't sleep the night before the marathon. Insomnia and related sleep disorders are part and parcel of MS, but I've also got this "kid before Christmas morning" anxiety thing. Forget about sleep at the times when it matters most. Good or bad, I'm not sleeping the night before, and that's just my life.

So I lay there in the too-firm hotel bed, Gary snoring to my left and Luke snoring on the carpeted floor to my right. The room glowed green from outside light filtered through the drapes. I heard the NYC traffic on the streets below and the hotel bumps and blunted TV noises and elevator dings and people being much too loud for the middle of the night, the wee hours of the morning. I got up and quietly stretched, did a little bit of Pilates on the floor without waking Luke (some watchdog). I drank my Airborn and Vitamin C concoctions.

I checked my Active.com site to see if anyone else had donated to my charity team, Leary Firefighters Foundation. I felt guilty, again,

that most of my physical, mental and spiritual energy had gone to the training – and recovery from each day’s training – for the marathon. I’d meant to raise more money. A lot more money. I had envisioned myself as some sort of one-woman trike-ridin’ superhero of funds and awareness raiser for this cause, this foundation whose mission matters greatly, personally, to me.

I used up everything to make it to this point, to be physically able to do the race, capable of not just participating, but completing it. If I came this far and didn’t cross the finish line it would not be okay. Gary, my friends, even acquaintances voiced the opinion that all I needed to do was my best. Even if that meant I needed to pull out of the race at any point for any reason. I appreciated their support, the reassurances and sentiment. But, no, that was not going to be good enough.

I also had it in my head that if I didn’t finish the race, I would be letting down not just myself but everybody who believed in me, and, significantly, those that had believed enough to donate money to Leary Firefighters Foundation through my race day efforts. I made a vow that predawn morning, sitting in the emerald-tinged near-darkness. It was two-fold. First, that I would push past whatever pain or fatigue or obstacle that might try to come between the finish line and me; second, that my fundraising efforts for LFF would continue long after the NYC Marathon. There are other rides, races, events during which I could wear the Team LFF jersey, shout the praises of the nonprofit I wanted to champion in order to garner awareness and donations for this foundation that serves firefighters and their families. With that vow, that promise and a plan in place, I felt a bit better, easier.

I lay back down and listened to my favorite playlist on my iPod. I concentrated on contracting and releasing all the muscles from my toes to the top of head, even the ends of strands of hair, with slow and even breaths. I envisioned the finish line. I knew what it looked like because Luke and I had passed it on our walk the day before. I fixed the blue, orange and white banner in my mind’s eye, saw myself swooshing past in my red and gold jersey at recumbent trike height.

I must have slept for a little while because I awoke to Luke’s chin resting on my chest, his warm breath making shushing sounds. We went to bed early, 7ish, so that I could get much-needed rest. Luke’s clock was out of whack. It was barely 4AM, but I can never refuse him. I dressed quietly and warmly, took Luke to the closest thing resembling grass (a sandy patch about 2 feet x 3 feet with sparse weeds and

cigarette butts surrounding the base of a tree in front of a condo building a block away) and then headed back to our hotel to get ready for the race. The lobby was already teeming with runners and their family members, hotel employees, travelers leaving on early flights who probably wondered about all the athletic-garbed folks up and about, somehow looking sleepy and antsy, hungry and nauseous, excited and scared all at once.

Training for your first marathon on a recumbent trike and want some advice? Good luck with that. The first person to be granted reasonable accommodation of a recumbent trike for a disability in the NYC Marathon—great privilege, yes, no doubt about that. But I was pretty much on my own in terms of information and assistance specific to my health condition paired with the equipment I was using. I'd done smaller distance races in the past (prior to MS) and triathlons as well, but never anything like this. I researched training routines and schedules for every kind of event you can imagine. Neither bike nor running training/nutrition fits what I do, what I was preparing for. The closest I came was information geared toward those training for the MS 150 (an eventual goal of mine). But even with that, I had to make severe alterations to accommodate my pain and fatigue levels, and to take into consideration my gut as it relates to nutrition. What you eat, when, how much, the quality of what you eat, is a major part of any training process. But for me, what I eat on any given day has consequences far beyond nutrition.

MS is a tricky, fickle, sadistic nemesis. MS is also different in each individual; none of us has the same set of symptoms or variations or severities. One of the things I get to contend with is a motility disorder called gastroparesis. The vagus nerve (which controls the digestive process) is damaged, partially paralyzed. I'll try to spare you the details (don't want to venture any further than absolutely necessary into the land of Too Much Information), save to say that having this condition involves a great deal of abdominal bloating and cramping. Which might not sound too awful at face value. When I say cramping, what I mean is anything from the average twinges and tightness you probably experience with a bad stomachache, to the worst pain you may have experienced with the stomach flu. And then some. I'm talking pain you cannot remain standing in the presence of; pain that doubles, folds you to the extent that you have to pull over immediately if you happen to be driving; pain that sends you to your knees, to the floor if there's no chair or bed nearby.

This pain brings along waves of heat similar to hot flashes – complete with drenching sweats, flushed face and neck. And nausea that sweeps in like a tide with no respect for the barriers of flesh and bone. Nausea that behaves more like whirlpools and riptides. Now imagine causing an episode of this pain and attendant sweeps of heat and nausea while riding a recumbent trike. In the NYC Marathon. Where you must cross the finish line. I have to be extremely careful about what I eat, how much, and when. Any given day with gastroparesis is a challenge, a day when you're doing the NYC Marathon and need to be fueled with food for energy? Talk about a complicated scenario.



So I had a banana, a half of a breakfast sandwich made out of a plain white bagel, scrambled egg and veggie sausage. I took a Luna bar to nibble at on the bus ride to the start of the race. I packed energy gels. I drank Performance Gatorade after the required morning cappuccino. I prayed to the gods of all things Athlete and Wheeled and Race Day and Human Being Trying To Make A Dream Come True that my gut wouldn't take me out of the race. I just needed my intestines to behave, for the most part, for about four hours, I figured. Had that ever happened for that length of time in real day-to-day life? No. But it was already a miracle that I was in New York City with a race number assigned to me for an event I'd given up on the day I was diagnosed



with MS, 12 years ago to the very week.

I pulled on two pairs of tights. I couldn't decide between the CW-X Ventilator Capri length or the Insulator full length. MS symptoms are exacerbated by heat, whether core body temperature or outside temperature. The warmer I get, the worse my fatigue is. And balance and other things, too, but today I wasn't worried about balance because I'd be safe from falling in the reclined seat of the trike. So I put on both pairs of tights, because it was in the 50s with strong winds predicted. I was prepared to stop and use a porta-potty to peel off the heavier/warmer tights if I started to feel like my fatigue level was being sabotaged.

Another thing that probably falls under the category of Too Much Information, but nonetheless is relevant to MS and to this race, is an urgent bladder condition. Safe to say I'd be seeing the inside of a porta-potty at least twice, if not more, during the length of the 26.2 miles. Especially since I needed to keep hydrated to perform as well as possible and keep cool.

The top layers were easy; three Icebreaker long-sleeved shirts and a wind and water resistant jacket. It wasn't supposed to rain, but better safe than sorry. I slipped my red Team Leary Firefighters singlet over the Icebreakers, pinned my number, H398, to the front, and Gary, Luke and I headed down to the lobby where my team, as well as the FDNY and NYPD teams, were gathering to depart together.

Waiting for the elevator on our floor, another runner came to join us. He looked at me, then at Luke in his mobility assistance dog leather harness, wearing his patches that say Certified Service Dog. Then the guy looked back to me again, down at my numbered bib. He leaned his head in Luke's direction. "Is he running the marathon too?" This question was directed to Gary, rather than me.

That happens a lot, people asking questions about Luke to the person I happen to be with. When this scenario plays out, each time, I'm not sure the best way to respond. Sometimes I answer the question myself. Sometimes I let my companion answer. It can be an odd and off-putting thing, to be treated as invisible, but I always try to be as upbeat and friendly as possible. Luke and I are ambassadors for assistance dogs; it's most likely that Luke's the only service dog someone will meet. I want people to come away knowing a little bit more about what service dogs do, the difference they make. I want these people we encounter to go off and tell others about the woman and the cute service dog they came across that day. I want everyone who needs

a service dog to have one, which begins with knowing that you might be helped by one.

It's important for the public to know the worth of service dogs, to appreciate the difference they make to the people they're partnered with for another reason too. So that when a story appears in the news about yet another person being denied entry or accommodation because of their service dog's presence, everyone understands that a federal law is being broken, that rights guaranteed by the Americans With Disabilities Act are being denied, that someone is, in essence, discriminating against an ill and/or disabled person because they're partnered with a service dog.

I'm very passionate about this—raising awareness in terms of access and accommodation for service dogs—because when you're first partnered with an assistance dog you think your life will change and the whole world will open to you. That's true in many ways. But the unfortunate reality is that many people and establishments are ignorant about service dogs and the rights and privileges granted to them by virtue of the Americans With Disabilities Act. In short, a service dog is allowed to go anywhere, everywhere, that the person he's assisting is welcomed. And yet I've been denied entry to restaurants, stores, movie theaters. I've been refused accommodation by rental car agencies, airlines, hotels. I've even been given a ticket by a Hollywood, Florida police officer for walking with Luke on the Broadwalk along Hollywood Beach.

The confusion and querying regarding the curious pair of Luke and me—a woman wearing a race number with a service dog at her side—continued as I made my way through the throngs of folks in the lobby and waited among the members of Team LFF. I'd never met any of these people before, so it's understandable that I felt more “a part from” than a standard team's definition, “a part of.” LFF's marathon team organizer (and the director of Leary Firefighters Foundation) is Mardi Grant and we'd emailed and spoken on the phone a few times. I'd met her the previous day when Luke and I traveled to the foundation's office to pick up my race jersey. When I saw her smile across the sea of unfamiliar faces I was relieved.



Sharon, Denise, and Mardi

Right there, surrounded by over a hundred expensive-running-shoe-clad men and women, it was like I was soaking up all of their pre-race jitters and doubts and worries, adding them to my own already substantial and expanding ones.

I almost missed the start of the race. Even though my team was Leary Firefighters Foundation I was really not going to be racing with them. Since I was riding a recumbent trike, I was put in the Handcycle Division, which had an earlier starting time by about an hour. Had everything gone according to schedule the difference in start times wouldn't have been an issue. But of course things did not go according to plan.

Several emails and phone calls (okay, dozens, is more accurate) had gone back and forth prior to the marathon in attempts to figure out the logistics of what had never been done before, at least by Team LFF—how to get a woman and her trike and her 80 pound service dog comfortably and safely transported to the start of the race. Would the trike even fit on the bus? Not to mention, who would care for said service dog while said woman was participating in said race?

Gary would be there to root for me and hopefully get some photos, rushing from place to place for sightings, but the crowds and subway would be potentially dangerous for Luke. Luke and I have trouble navigating around the tourists and citizens of NYC on a good day; marathon day would be prohibitive in the extreme. In large groups of moving people sightlines are usually just that, at eye level. People, in general, aren't expecting there to be something or someone traveling at knee or waist height. Which means that poor Luke gets bumped into and stepped on by accident. And often that translates into me stumbling or falling as well. NYC folks are fast and focused on their destinations. Many of them are talking on their cell phones or listening to iPods so they don't hear when I try to warn them about an impending collision with my furry companion. The teeming clusters waiting to get on and off the subway seem in some kind of hypnotic zone, paying even less attention. Guess I don't have to tell you that a fall on the stairs or the train platform is decidedly more dangerous. Suffice it to say that Luke + NYC Marathon crowds = Not a good idea.

At long last it was determined by Mardi and Sharon (from LFF) that the trike would indeed fit on the bus, a kind firefighter or teammate would help manhandle the trike on and off for me, and a volunteer would take Luke back to the hotel where the after-parties for NYPD and FDNY were being held. I would meet up with Gary after the race near the finish line and he would accompany me back to the hotel. If I were too fatigued to ride any farther, then Gary would put me in a cab to the hotel and drag the trike back. If for some reason Gary and I could not find one another after the race in all the crowds and celebration and confusion, I would find an NYPD or FDNY volunteer and someone would radio for another marathon volunteer to help me out.

A plan was in place, so on race day morning as we began to board the buses to Staten Island for the start of the race, Mardi Grant introduced me to Lucas, an LFF teammate, who'd be helping me with the trike and then take Luke when I got to my starting area and deliver him back to Mardi or someone else who would get him to her. I was a little concerned—not that Lucas or Mardi wouldn't take excellent care of my boy—but that perhaps Luke might be anxious. The only people he's ever been handed over to the care of are Gary or the vet. Luke and I do everything together. So I worried a bit, like a mother dropping her kid off with a sitter, I suppose, that Luke might miss me or be anxious. I worried that he might be worried about me, which he so often seems to do on the few times that we are very rarely apart from one another.

Sitting on the bus next to Lucas was a good thing because it gave us a chance to visit and get to know one another a little; it also gave Luke some time to get used to Lucas' voice and smell and touch. It gave me the opportunity to witness their interactions, all of which reassured me completely that Luke would be fine. Besides, I figured the name Lucas was a good sign. That just so happens to be one of Luke's nicknames.

Lucas and I discussed why we'd chosen to be a part of LFF and how we'd first come to know of the foundation. He learned about LFF from an annual comedy fundraiser that Denis Leary does with Cam Neely ([camneelyfoundation.org](http://camneelyfoundation.org)) of hockey fame. I learned about LFF through following Michael J Fox, who'd been a guest star on Rescue Me. Some media piece about that role linked to Denis Leary and that led me to a benefit that both Fox and Leary had done for LFF.

Our bus full of Team LFF and other FDNY racers was still sitting in front of the hotel. In fact hadn't budged a foot. A little trickle of sweat edged along my spine, joined by the first niggles of electrified fear that I might not get to my starting area in time if we didn't depart for Staten Island very soon. Like, now.

Lucas and I talked more about LFF and Denis Leary and Michael J Fox and Achilles Foundation and hockey (he was surprised someone from Texas was a hockey fan and knew of Cam Neely, which sent me off on fond memories of Houston Aeros games and my crushes on Gordie Howe and Wayne Gretzky). Then it seemed a natural segue to go from hockey, to injuries. Both of us had managed to hurt ourselves in the days prior to the marathon. Hearing our tales, the young woman sitting next to us chimed in with her injury story too. Then, as if on cue, each of us reached for the part of our body that was afflicted!

A couple days before leaving for NY I was putting my trike into the back of Gary's SUV and lost my balance as I bumped the front end of the trike against the front seat. The tires bounced and the trike rolled back out and onto me, trapping me there on the asphalt of my street. (a very humbling and embarrassing moment) I finally managed to maneuver from under the trike, but I pulled groin muscles on both sides in the struggle.

Finally the bus began to move and get us going to Staten Island. It was pretty heavy traffic and a lot of detours were necessary because of road and bridge closures due to the marathon route. By the time we finally pulled into the long line of buses carrying other teams and racers on the island, I was 15 minutes away from my start time for the

handcycle division and I could actually see handcyclists warming up, doing some test runs on the bridge. We were far enough away that getting off the bus and trying to trike there wasn't really an option, especially since I had no idea where to go. The people directing everyone to their start areas were up at the drop-off area—several lengths of buses were ahead of us with other vehicles staggered in between and masses of racers crossing at intervals.

Lucas attempted to calm me down and help problem solve the situation. I tried to reach Mardi—who was riding on another bus with the rest of our group—to ask for her advice, but I didn't get an answer. Lucas and I decided that as soon as the bus stopped we'd get off with Luke and the trike, stop the first FDNY or NYPD member with a walkie-talkie and beg them to find out from someone where we needed to be and the fastest way to get there. Which is exactly what we did when the door finally hissed open and let us free.

We followed the directions we were given, Lucas dragging the trike and Luke and I trucking alongside. I finally took the lead and starting hollering Pardon me! Excuse me! in my best Southern-girl drawl, hoping to sound less-rude with the Southern twang. I needed people to pay attention and make way—fast—but didn't want to offend. Between Luke and I walking in tandem and Lucas manhandling the trike, we were definitely a wide-load attempting to move swiftly against the current of feet and bodies—all of them seeming to be headed anywhere but the direction we were aiming. My pulse was pounding in my ears and my nerves were a jangling mess; adrenaline was humming and buzzing and zipping through my bloodstream like race cars at the Indy 500.

We stopped to ask another police officer with a walkie-talkie if we were headed in the right direction, but before I got the words out of my mouth a line of handcyclists began to go by about 20 feet away, headed for the ramp to the bridge. They were going to the starting line. Without me!

## AFTERMATH

My official time for the race was 3:36:46 – not bad for my first marathon, I'm thinkin'. I promise to get some written material on my [wonkybent.wordpress.com](http://wonkybent.wordpress.com) blog with all the race day goings-on soon.

Please be patient and check the blog for the rest of the story. And more photos, too, of course. At this writing, I'm still in the

recovery phase and trying to gain back some sense of normalcy (or as close as this body gets to “normal”) post-race. I’m in a state of exhilaration and exhaustion, and trying to keep the physical pain as much under control as possible. Everything is in a hazy, glittery wash of disbelief, trying to take it all in, celebration and gratitude and relief.



Passing an elite runner

Our departure from NYC was delayed by 4+ hours because of the winds over NY, which meant Gary, Luke and I jockeying for floor space at Lagaardia with hundreds of other stranded people. Then the last flight out of Chicago – our connecting city – left minutes before we got there, necessitating a motel stay and catching the first available flight out of Midway the next morning. So, yeah, did I mention that I really need sleep? That, and I woke up the morning after race day with a wicked sore throat (which I attributed to the fact that I was smiling so big for most of the race that I was sucking in huge amounts of chilly NYC air!), soon followed by head and chest congestion and now a cough that seems to be exacting the revenge of somebody or something done a severe injustice.

A big thanks goes to my beloved husband Gary, who didn’t faint when I said I wanted to spend X-amount of money on a recumbent tadpole trike and that I planned to ride it in the NYC Marathon in less

than 4 months, who drove me and the trike to various training spots at the crack of dawn on his precious few days off, who kept telling me I could do this thing when the physical toll began to feel like an obstacle I couldn't overcome, who helped me keep my cool with the overwhelming task of travel logistics for a disabled woman + service dog + recumbent trike in tow, who took off work to meet me in NYC for the marathon, who ran around the city catching cabs and subways trying to get as many sightings and photos of me during the race as possible, who is my biggest, surest, dearest champion: Thank you, baby, I love you – I couldn't have done any of this without you!



#### ICE Qnt Trike:

Following is the letter I wrote to Inspired Cycle Engineering (ICE) in England, expressing my gratitude for their trikes:

Howdy ICE folks,

You might remember me from previous correspondence asking (many) questions in order to purchase my first trike. I have a complicated set of needs because of health issues and your information/advice was incredibly helpful, your extreme patience much appreciated. So much so that I wished more than anything to buy a new trike from you. Not just because I was convinced of the superior quality and perfect match for my needs, but because of your incredible



kindness and service. In the end though, I was so excited and eager to get riding that I purchased a used Qnt so that I could have a trike sooner rather than later.

I'm writing to let you know that I'm going to be riding my 2006 ICE Qnt in the New York City Marathon on November 7th of this year. I'm the first challenged athlete granted permission to utilize a recumbent trike as "reasonable accommodation" for a disability (MS) in the history of the marathon. I suppose you may already have disabled athletes using your trikes in marathons there in the UK, but over here – and with the large, prestigious marathons most especially – race directors still aren't too keen on anybody but runners (and elite ones at that) in their races. And while there are events specific to disabled athletes, I believe very much in, and desire, inclusion. Which is why I consider the opportunity to be a part of the NYC Marathon an incredible privilege.

I will be a member of Team LFF, the Leary Firefighters Foundation – an organization I'm very passionate about ([learyfirefighters.org/about-us/foundation-history](http://learyfirefighters.org/about-us/foundation-history))

They have done tremendous work, such as rebuilding 11 firehouses in New Orleans in the aftermath of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, providing much-needed equipment and training to firehouses all over the US, responding to the events of September 11, raising \$1.9 million in funds that went directly to the families of 343 firefighters who perished in the line of duty. I couldn't be more thrilled to be a part of Team LFF and to have a chance at my lifelong dream of crossing the finish line of the NYC Marathon. A dream I thought I'd given up forever when I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis over a decade ago.

I hope you know how much the fine trikes you build mean to people like me who no longer have the option of riding a bike. In fact I cannot even ambulate without the help of my (adorable and devoted) mobility assistance service dog, Luke. When I'm out riding, I feel the glorious independence and freedom and adventure of cycling that I haven't been able to enjoy in over 12 years. This trike has changed my life dramatically. I can hardly believe how I feel: strong and capable and decidedly NOT disabled. When I'm flying down the bike path with the breeze whooshing past, the wheels powered by my own ability and endurance, I feel healthy and unbroken, triumphant. A drastic difference from how I usually feel as part and parcel of going about life with MS.

I'm sure every owner of a recumbent trike takes great pleasure

in it, but the owners of ICE trikes have to be the happiest of the lot, no doubt. I thank you for creating such stellar pieces of wheeled artwork. These masterpieces of 3 wheels and chromoly, bits of anodized aluminum and chain – that you’ve spent 25 years engineering into the ultimate design – have given me back so much, not the least of which is the title of “athlete” – something I never imagined I’d be able to reclaim. I’ll ride Starbuck with the utmost pride on race day. I’m sure there will be a lot of attention paid to her and you can rest assured that I will be saying “ICE” as loudly and clearly as possible. I wish you could be there to see her cross the finish line of one of the most prestigious marathons in the world!

With humble gratitude and great reverence for your craft,

*Denise Janier*  
Houston, TX



The watchful and lovable eyes of Luke

<http://wonkybent.wordpress.com>

Dan's story appears in its entirety. A few images from Dan's Moonlight Chronicles books also appear at the end of his story, to provide you the flavor of his means of enlightening others about his way of life and travels. The three issues covered here document his epic trike journey across the USA. Onward, into the epic trike ride of hobo artist d. price:

~

## The Great American Trike Tour

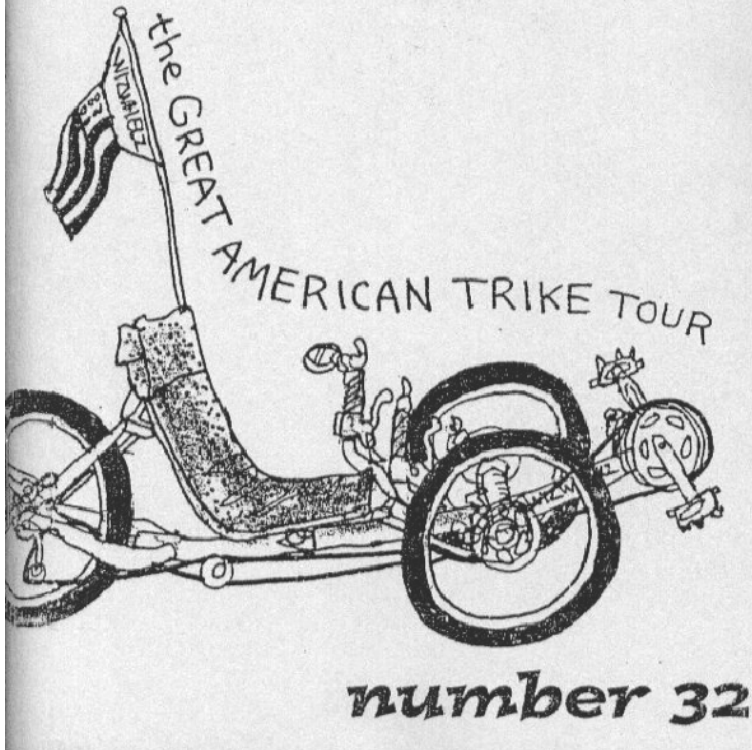
by Dan Price  
author of Radical Simplicity

*(as found in Dan's journals: Moonlight Chronicles)*



Dan piloting his TerraTrike on his Trans America trek

# **moonlight chronicles**



## **ISSUE NUMBER 32**

(September 14, 2002 through December 03, 2002)

Sea and sky, roads curving to every horizon, tiny hobo guy pedaling  
into his future...

## **14 September 2002:**

This is a big weekend. After 18 years of living at home, our daughter Shilo is moving out to attend college. We are taking a load of her stuff down to the west side town of Corvallis, Oregon. She will be living with her grandmother for a few months. Lynne is sad. Feels those motherly separation anxieties. I have some thoughts about Shilo leaving too, but they aren't sad ones. Guess I'm still smarting from all the problems we had. Being parents of teenagers in these crazy times is mighty perplexing. I'm sure we will be close again some day.

Lynne and mom are in the Corvallis Fred Meyer store. I stayed outside to draw stuff. An old scruffy couple drove up in this snazzy new Mini Cooper. They truly are awesome and makes me have visions of throwing a tent, sleeping bag and books in the back of one and zooming off for some high adventure.

My sister and her family also live here so we went by the food co-op to pick her up and went for beer and a bite at the Old World Deli. Just across the street are two bicycle shops that sold some recumbent style bikes. For the first time ever I got to ride them. One in particular was very nice. It is made by Easy Racers. They have comfortable seats and ride like a dream. Imagine yourself in your favorite beach chair. Now imagine pedaling around town in that chair, with a full view of everything in front of you.

This last month I have been negotiating with a recumbent trike company in the mid-west. The plan was for me to pedal one of their 3 wheelers from Joseph, in the northeast corner of Oregon, to their business in Illinois. I would be promoting the trike as I rode along, thereby creating new sales for them and a greatly discounted trike for me in the end. Now the company owners aren't so sure they want to send out a \$3,000 model to someone they don't know.

## **15 September 2002:**

Last day in Corvallis. Cloudy. A mostly kind of odd smell in the air. Lynne has an upset stomach. She says it's because of "us", meaning her and I. And grandma gets sad when our departure time draws near. "I always wish I had spent more time with all you kids and now you're so far away." We drove out into the country to have a breakfast of buckwheat pancakes at my sister's house. It's always nice to visit their small farm. Mostly everything they eat is fresh and organic. The

chickens lay eggs that would make a city person swoon. Very dark, yellow yolks and when fried actually have flavor! Then we had to head for home. More sadness. I guess it was a sad weekend.

## **20 September 2002:**

Well that first trike company did bow out of our negotiations to have me ride across the USA. But I didn't waste any time before contacting another called TerraTrike (TerraTrike.com) and they seem to like the idea a lot. In fact, I'm going to meet the owners down in Las Vegas on October 7<sup>th</sup> to solidify our plans!

The idea is to have me meandering through the southern (warmer) states this fall, handing out brochures about the trike and doing Moonlight Chronicle issues about the ride. I hope to get a bicycle magazine to also buy the story. And through all the publicity, I hope to end up somehow with a trike of my own. Now that I'm staying out of cars as much as possible, I need a better form of transportation than the old mountain bike.

Way back in Moonlight Chronicle issue #12 there's a little story about getting to test ride a trike. And I've wanted one ever since. They drive like a race car, go faster than bikes, and you get to look up and see the view! Maybe you want to exercise more this year. Maybe you're tired of polluting the planet on your way to work. Maybe you want to enjoy the view when you ride. Maybe you want to live out a dream. Maybe you only have 20 good summers left.

Go to the TerraTrike website and check it out, but be forewarned: YOU MAY GET HOOKED! and find yourself out pedaling one yourself. I like the idea of lots more folks pedaling instead of polluting. I'm sort of even becoming a bike nut these days, so bear with me ... Maybe your back is starting to hurt.

If you ride freight trains you're going to get dirty. The dirtier the better. If you want to stay clean, take Amtrak or run with the jet set. Rich folks love their showers and their flowers and their tiny pickles and their soft beds. I wouldn't deny anyone these luxuries, but if you really want to have a good time, you've got to spill a little wine, sleep in the dirt, get pissed off and sad, and run across the great tundra like a maddened bull.

When you're on the fly you find ways not to think about your clothes and your hair and all that stuff because it doesn't mean anything – you're just trying to stay warm – trying to see into the country

pastures and over the hills, see if you can make any good come out of the bad and if there are any changes in the weather coming and what you're going to do about it when it comes. That's all – not a dime past survival. A blur of snow and freezing raindrops over mountain passes.

### **30 September 2002:**

Water is the key to survival. One gallon is considered minimum supply for any train ride. Gallon-size orange juice bottles work the best. They're made with citrus-grade plastic, which is less likely to make your water taste like rubber bands. I've hopped a train with no water and watched myself dry up like a raisin on the Nevada salt flats. It could be cold as hell when you get on a train, but later on when the sun breaks midday you might find yourself riding with the devil, creaming through the desert with no shade and no water and your pores bleeding sweat like a water spigot. Exposure kills more tramps than anything. That goes for cold too.

If it's anywhere in the fall, winter, or spring months, you better have a good sleeping bag or bedroll and a piece of foam to keep you off the cold ground and a hat and some leather gloves and some candy bars or beef jerky – any kind of food to keep your insides warm – because that train will roll and you might not see another town for days. Oh, and toilet paper, don't forget toilet paper – unless you want to use your shirt. Earplugs are also a good idea, to save your hearing.

If you don't have a blanket you can stuff newspaper in your clothes and it'll act as insulation. That's called a “California blanket” because the southern part of California has a climate that allows sleeping out of doors with minimal covering. If you don't have anything to sleep on you can use cardboard or sometimes in the yard you can find packing paper or “thousand-mile paper” as some folks like to call it. A good book is *Hobo: A Young Man's Thoughts on Trains and Tramping in America*.

### **02 October 2002:**

Vegas Bound – My Journey

Got all the business work wrapped up this morning and caught a ride to the nearest train station with my buddy Radio Boy John. Chose to hop on the first available freighter that pulled in; a fruit train of about

30 derelict ars heading south through the brown eastern Oregon hills to Nampa, Idaho. Ah yes, one of the last great good adventures a person can have, hopping freight trains in AMERICA! This is a very slow train. Too many stops. A real dog ride.

Sometimes that happens. You get on the first train heading your way and it ends up stopping everywhere. Finally the train I was on pulled deep into an obscure yard, so I walked up to talk to the conductor. He said it was a real slow train and that it would be picking up cars all the way to S.L.C.. As it was pulling out I hopped up onto the gang plank of the 3<sup>rd</sup> locomotive and stowed away into the cab unnoticed. Good move as it was heated, had 3 comfortable seats to choose from, bottled water in a fridge and a little, funny smelling toilet! Rode along all night amid the hissing and groaning and screeching noises there in the powertrain of that long, heavy serpentine diesel eater.

Didn't get much sleep but had a good breakfast of fruit, bagel and peanut butter and more water. Rising up off the floor at daybreak, I saw the sun's golden globe rising above the lava fields of southern Idaho.

Along the track are odd and seemingly quite old scarecrow like figures assembled from the junk railroad workers leave behind in the sagebrush. Out here in the middle of everywhere, these short men with metal arms, broken broom faces. Weird.

Lucky for me the weather cleared up. The day before I was to leave we had the first snow storm of the year. My partner Lynne was out in the woods on a fish survey so Shane and I worried that she was very cold.

The train cam to a long standstill on the outskirts of Pocatello, Idaho, and because it was daylight, I had to lay low and be still. That's because locomotive riding is risky business. Some engineers say, "It's fine with me so long as you promise not to touch any levers." And some say, "Suit yourself, but if I catch you, you're going to jail." So I sat on my Crazy Creek chair on the dirty floor and drew pictures of wht I saw out the windows.

Just before the train was ready to pull out, one of the drivers came back and asked me if I was a railroad employee. He had small round glasses and one of those old time wound up like a spring mustaches. I guess all the other engineers I had run into just figured I was an employee hitching a ride.

So he explained in a real decent way how he really needed to get me off the train and that if they catch you riding in the Pocatello



area, that you go straight to jail, no questions asked!

It is now 3 PM, I'm off the train, and have purchased a \$33 bus ticket onto Salt Lake City, Utah. And that's just the way it goes when you are out trying to hobo around. You have to constantly be open to the next new thing ...

The bus ride from Pocatello to Salt Lake was totally crazy. The seats were all taken when we got to Logan but they just kept cramming huge oversize riders into the aisle. And for the entire ride of 4 hours, I listened to the long haired guy I was sitting next to talk to his friend about his days as a drug dealer, drug addict, and methamphetamine cook. "The Gypsy Jokers bike gang in Spokane, Washington used to give me all the materials and I'd cook up 3 pounds every week." he said.

He was a classic big talker and went on and on in fascinating detail about his troubled life. One of those times when I could have filled an entire Moonlight Chronicles issue with an interesting story if I had a tape recorder.

It was lightly raining in Salt Lake. Since I was dirty and pretty exhausted, I checked into a small motel for \$36, showered and hit the hay.

#### **04 October 2002:**

Walked down to the train yard next morning but the long-shoreman's strike was keeping everything real dead. So instead of taking a bunch of short frustrating rides I got another bus ticket on the dog for Vegas. It didn't leave till 10 PM, so I had a whole day to draw pictures in Mormon town.

Sitting in 70 degree sunshine under a large bell that the Mormon pioneers carried all the way from Illinois, I drew the steeple on the Assembly Hall that was built in the 1880s. There's still lots of flowers here. As I was drawing that steeple on the last page, I kept hearing a whole bunch of yelling going on nearby. It was a gang of protesting Christians at the gate of the temple telling all the Mormons that their religion sucked! I couldn't even believe it.

Mostly the rest of the day I walked around. I ate a hamburger and visited some book stores, but mostly I just hoofed it.

If my dad had been born a hundred years earlier, he'd have been a cowboy. His possessions would've included one horse, one bedroll, and one saddlebag full of books. All he would've cared about was finding a quiet shade tree to sit under and read his books. My father

found religion in solitude, and the only time he felt at home in America was when he was on his Harley-Davidson, full throttle in the wind, with his beard pushed back and his sunglasses on.

### **05 October 2002:**

Las Vegas

Pulled into Vegas at 5:30 AM. All the casino lights were blazing. Six pigeons fighting over the remains of a Butterfinger bar. Bums kept after me for spare change. What, do I look rich?

I have a big brother who lives in Vegas, so before the meeting with the TerraTrike trike folks, we went out to get his BMX track all set up for the race that night. And it was an awesomely sunny, dry day with all kinds of fighter jets roaring overhead from the Nellis Air Force Base air show. Pete, that's my brother, had an extra bike that I practiced on all day and then raced that night! What a rush that was, ripping down the start hill then hitting huge vertical jumps and big swooping corners. I slept well that night.

### **07 October 2002:**

Sunday was huge. First off, we slept in. Exhausted from a full day of racing. Then Pete and I drove his special edition M3 BMW down to a station that sells \$3.95 a gallon racing fuel and we zoomed out into the sun-burnt desert land and made a big loop around Lake Mead. Later in the day was my nephew's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday where they surprised him with a stripper girl! Jeesh, I was kinda dumbfounded, these relatives of mine who's lives are so radically different than my family back home.

Then at 7 PM there I was, in the glittering lobby of the RIO Hotel to meet and to dinnerize with Jack, Peter, Wayne and Randall of that trike company TerraTrike. And we had a great time, getting to be acquainted and talking about my idea to ride their trike across the U.S.A.

And the thing that was so cool was that they didn't think my minimal lifestyle was weird at all. In fact, they run their business in a similar fashion with slow growth goals and well thought out business plans. So it seems like we all hit it off pretty good. We had a toast with our water glasses to minimalism and new friendships.

## **08 October 2002:**

Monday, 85°, not a cloud in sight ...

The TerraTrike crew was anxious to head for the canyonlands for some much coveted R&R, so we met one more time to discuss trike details and then they bolted. A few hours before our meeting, I snuck into the huge INTER-BIKE show that features all the new and trick products in the bike world. The TerraTrike crew goes to the show every year to update their Terra Trike. I was amazed at the magnitude of bicycle designs new in the pipeline.

I'll tell ya what. This has been a real hodge-podge kind of trip. The first 80 miles was a ride in Radio Boy's old Ford pickup. That slow freight train carried me on to Pocatello. The 3 really long greyhound bus rides got me to Vegas. I left Vegas today on a \$149 plane ride back to Boise, Idaho. And now I'm riding along in the back of a windy and very bouncy Toyota pickup. That's why you can hardly even read this. The truck's owner has a dog who has priority over scruffy hobos so the dog's up front and I'm in the truck bed. Not that I mind. In fact, I'd rather ride alone with my own thoughts. I'd rather write a note to you.

Here's a quote from Anders Nilsen I like: "You have to trust what you feel. Certainty is a mirage. Certainty is the refuge of small minds. At some point you have to just trust yourself and act. I feel this so strongly. You have to trust what you believe, trust what you feel. And follow through."

## **10 October 2002:**

Today there is a film crew from the Oregon Public Broadcasting Company doing a short documentary piece on my simple life. It is really strange to have a camera running while you're being interviewed. Makes you pretty nervous. The crew consists of Mike, the producer, Greg the videographer, and Bill, the sound guy. We hung out in the meadow doing lots of shots and even climbed the big fir tree to show me working on these Moonlight Chronicles in the hammock 150 feet up! A perfect fall day. The yellow leaves were tumbling out of the tall cottonwoods and rained down on us as we worked below.

Whenever someone interviews me it's hard to articulate all the many aspects of trying to live out of the American mainstream. In the end I guess it's just about creating a lifestyle that is low maintenance,

that doesn't cost lots of money to run and that frees me up so I can create this ongoing document of my life. To me these journals are the most important factor.

## **26 October 2002:**

Yahoo! The trike deal went through! Now I'm anxiously awaiting the arrival of "Tera" the trike! As you can see, she is sleek and absolutely irresistible. I'm looking forward to a long and luscious relationship! There were a few shipping problems so I'm hoping she gets here real soon, as the storms of winter are now nearly upon us. I'll be handing out cards on the trike tour. Here is what they say:

### THE GREAT AMERICAN TRIKE TOUR

Author/Illustrator Dan Price is riding a Terra Trike around the U.S. To promote human powered transportation. The trip is being documented in his illustrated journal MOONLIGHT CHRONICLES and on the WIZWHEELZ.COM website. To order the latest CHRONICLE and help support the ride send \$5 to Box 109, Joseph, OR 97846  
2003 \* 8500 MILES \* 21 STATES

Never underestimate the power of a human. Some people are wondering why am I doing this big ride. These days it seems that every event is somehow tied in with a larger cause. I have 2 reasons for going. One is to spread the words about the many advantages of human powered vehicles. No pollution. No noise. Better health. More fun, etc. And also, as you longtime readers know, I have a burning desire to get out there to resume my real job of drawing the whole world!

The trip will start November 4<sup>th</sup>, and I am planning on doing the ride in segments: Joseph to San Diego, San Diego to Austin, Austin to Key West, Key West to D.C., D.C. To TerraTrike headquarters in Michigan, Michigan back to Joseph, Oregon. Stopping to rest in the towns listed to get the next rapidly filled Moonlight Chronicle printed and mailed off to you subscribers.

Estimated number of bikes stolen per year in San Francisco, California: 28,219. And yes, I have a pretty BIG lock. And a new tiny tent from Sierra Designs, a couple of warm jackets from Patagonia, lots of pens from Sakura and some free books from Ten Speed Press.

Thanks a bunch to all you sponsors! :)

Here's a little quote from William Stafford (1914-1993):  
"There's a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn't change. People wonder about what you are pursuing. You have to explain about the thread. But it is hard for others to see. While you hold it you can't get lost. Tragedies happen; people get hurt or die; and you suffer and get old. Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding. You don't ever let go of the thread."

#### **04 November 2002:**

Day One: The Great American Trike Tour begins ...

There sits Tera on the front porch at the kid's house, loaded with the bike trailer and ready to go. She showed up 3 days ago and we've been doing test runs all weekend. WHAT AN AMAZING MACHINE! So ground hugging, comfortable and fast! Truly the coolest thing I've ever ridden.

Rode 70 miles the first day. Down out of the pine-covered mountains and up some hills and DOWN some hills! In looking and waving at the truck and car drivers, I'm pretty sure I was the one having the most fun. And they all stare at the trike, slow down, move way over and then smile. Like they were remembering when they were kids and how much fun bikes were. Just saw a soccer ball in a ditch.

#### **05 November 2002:**

Second day out pedaling ...

Early this morning I awoke at my dad's house and made some minor adjustments to the trike. Then I rode into town to get a picture of me riding for the local newspaper. Mark Larson is a year round biker who owns Cyclesports. He helped me get the shifters all adjusted just right and then I hit the road.

Pedaled from 11 AM to 5 PM up and over a 4100 foot pass. The sun was shining and it was around 40°, so even though you do sweat like a dog, it's pretty perfect weather for riding. Hit lots of patches of snow which are very tricky when you're zooming along on those highly inflated (100 lb) racing slicks.

The scenery crossing this section of Blue Mountains is very beautiful. Tall pines and rocky bluffs with a train track off to one side. Went through the Umatilla Indian Reservation (no tipis) and got almost past Deadman's Pass when the chain fell off! Hit top speeds going down off the bare hills into the rodeo town of Pendleton, Oregon. Got a hot shower at the local college. Slept next to the tennis courts.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Day:

Brrr. I don't have a thermometer but there's a heavy layer of frost on the tent and trike this morning. I made a sketch of the super light weight tent that Mike at Sierra Designs sent me for this journey. It's only about 3 lbs! Thanks Mike!

I also sketched the toasty coat that doubles as a good pillow that my buddy Alyssa at Patagonia sent out. So I'm really well set up and should be able to handle this late season weather.

5 PM: Made it to the Columbia River and camped out by a big bridge that will carry me over to the Washington side. I'll then head due west to Portland. Sort of a sad day as I pedaled the blue highway called The Old Pendleton River Road. Sad because it was just so damn cold that it's real hard to enjoy the scenery or do any drawing when staying warm is such a big job. Got 2 flats from a spiny little weed that grows here. Threw lots of rocks and a couple of dead varmints off the road. Guess I'm now an official Road Kill Inspector seeings how I go so slow and am able to simply reach out and pluck them off the asphalt as I pedal on by. Always did want to get squished critters off the road when I was in cars but you're usually going too fast to stop.

I gave a huge black beetle a big piece of a bagel.

You'll have to excuse me for going on and on about Tera. It's just that I've been hunting so long for a hobo-like mode of transportation that's economically feasible, doesn't pollute and moves across the landscape at a reasonable speed. Hobo-motion includes hitch-hiking, where you beg for rides, train hopping, where you wait around for the train schedule to match yours, and walking with a pack, which is way too slow.

By comparison, the trike is perfect. You move along at a slow enough clip that you can actually appreciate what you're seeing. You get to have an intimate experience with all that is around you, even the COLD! I've seen, up close, young sprouts of winter wheat and many things of interest that I would have never seen from inside a car. And

for us folks who admire highly crafted technological conveyances, riding a trike is so like being INSIDE the machine. You are the engine, the life force. Without me, Tera just sits there, still and inanimate.

### **Day Four:**

Got an early start from the marina park in Umatilla. Dark and cloudy, in the 30s! Pedaled across a steel bridge that spans the slow going old Columbia River. Swung left on HWY 14 and headed west for Portland, 250 miles downstream. This is desert country, so there's not too much to report. Found this text in a brochure at an overlook:

In early fall, songbirds migrate through the area en route to Mexico and Central America. Duck and goose numbers begin to build up as the days get shorter and colder on breeding grounds to the north. Take an evening drive along the auto tour route to see one of the area's greatest attractions – the large mule deer herd that resides on the refuge's McCormack Unit.

Well, that evening drive sounds real nice, but I gotta beat cheeks down the road if I'm gonna stay out of the rain storms the radio says are heading this way.

Pedaled till 4 PM when it got too dark to be safe on the road. Got the tent set up on a bluff overlooking the Columbia when the rain hit. The map says I'm near the Goodnoe hills i Klickitat County. In the tiny tent eating granola and sourdough rolls wondering how I will ride if it's raining. Could just stay here forever. Roaming these Goodnoe hills. Eating sagebrush. Talking to birds. Listening to passing trains.

### **Fifth Day:**

Fifth day out was rain free. Guess I'm only averaging 50 miles a day. So, I pedal for 6 hours when a car could go the same distance in one! These are the thoughts you can begin to have when out doing a hard thing. So I have to tell myself, it's still way faster than walking. And what else I tell myself is, IT COULD BE WORSE! This is an important mantra to repeat when you're going up so steep a hill you aren't sure you're gonna make it. You say, well, it could be raining, or, this could be a gravel or dirt road.

Stopped in a town called Lyle when I saw a laundromat/shower place. That's unusual. Think I'll camp out down on the river and go into Hood River in the morning.

### **09 November 2002:**

“Catch the universe, understand it, ride it and live.” - William Stafford

Got totally rained out with only 35 miles to go to Portland. Found refuge in this dry bike trail tunnel just west of Cascade Locks on the Columbia River. A very lonely, forlorn place to spend a Saturday night. I paced up and down in the tunnel, eating on a big bowl of granola and dreamed of my family and warm stove back home.

6 PM: rain and more rain! Here's a bit from National Geographic that explains why I wanted this trike and not a car:

When humans emerged in Africa some two million years ago, their impact on the continent was pretty small. Slower over the course of time, they evolved the capacity to learn – their brains enlarging as they developed tools, agriculture, and civilizations, until they stood poised to change the planet. Today *Homo sapiens* is one of the most pervasive species on Earth, 6.2 billion strong and growing by 80 million a year. Human impacts on the landscape are global in scale, on par with volcanism or tectonic shifts. New data reveal that humans have planted, grazed, paved, or built upon roughly 40% of the Earth's terrestrial surface. This has led to profound changes in the atmosphere, soils, and oceans. No place remains untouched. Population, consumption, and technology are seen by many experts as driving the human impact on the planet. Half the developing world lives on less than two dollars a day, yet consumption – and expectations for a better life – continue to rise. Our large brains got us to this point. The question now is, can they get us out? -NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

### **Down the River:**

What a surreal day. Got up at 6 AM and cruised down a sopping wet bike path that fronted the freeway but hugged the cliffs. A sign said it was part of the old Columbia River Highway. What a ride, until it



abruptly ended in some bushes and I had to haul the trike and trailer up a muddy embankment and back into the mad rushing freeway traffic. Had 6 flats, got totally soaked, but finally pulled into Portland where I grabbed a \$5 shower at a truck stop, pedaled downtown to say hi to my cousin, delivered one of my books to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Books, ate a huge burrito to congratulate myself for making it out of the high country and then went to Fat Tire Farm bike shop to get some tire liners so I wouldn't be getting so darn many flats. Whew!

Slept out under a park shelter and listened to the rain fall late into the night. At about 6 PM a guy with a big pack showed up and after laying out his bedding told me long and fascinating stories about his 14 years hitching in America. He said he was heading up to Astoria to get in on a mushroom hunt. The next morning I zipped away as he still slept. I never did get that guy's name.

### **Another New Day:**

Wanting to get some road under my TerraTrike, I hit HWY 99E at 7:30 AM and pushed pedals all day till I got to Willamette University in Salem (that's our state capitol) where I stood under a shower for about two hours! After 8 days of racking up lots of miles (400 so far), I'm looking forward to a rest at my mom and daughter's house about 40 miles away.

Hit lots of hills and busy traffic so I would swing my cap out at a right angle to let drivers know they were getting a little too close for comfort.

### **12 November 2002:**

Not forgetting my Road Kill and Large Hill Avenger duties, I plodded along a slow moving river on the outskirts of Salem down River Road into a dark and ominous downpour. Soon I was sporting every piece of rain gear I owned and was still getting soaked. I tried to keep repeating what a friend back home once said, that human skin is waterproof, mostly.

Stopped several times to get under large trees where the rain didn't seem to penetrate. Was overjoyed to see the Entering Corvallis sign. Steered up the hill in a burst of sunshine to mom's place where I was greeted with hugs and hot supper!

### **13 November 2002:**

Spent two entire days in Corvallis, Oregon getting the trike tuned up and resupplying. It was wonderful to be with family eating big healthy meals and talking of our familiar human dilemmas. The mechanics at Corvallis Cyclery discovered the trike's shifter problem (a bent derailleur hanger), straightened it out, and now it shifts perfectly, almost like an automatic transmission! Thanks guys!

While in their shop, I fell in love with some Vaude waterproof bike packs. They were very expensive so I didn't get them, but sent out a promo-pack about the ride to the company owner to see if they might become an additional sponsor and donate a set of bags. The bag on my trailer is not waterproof and I'm still not so sure I want to drag a 12 pound trailer behind me for the entire trip, so we'll see what happens.

### **15 November 2002:**

Pulled out of Corvallis on Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup> and went south along a narrow Highway 99W. And all I can say about the 40 miles to Eugene, Oregon is THANK GOD THERE'S A MIRROR ON TERA! Drivers get all pissed if they have to slow down for anything, and I found myself in the gravelly ditch many times in order to avoid collisions. A nice newspaper lady in Junction City made my picture for a story. Pedaled up a very steep hill in Eugene to my daughter's school called Lane Community College, took a shower, couldn't find her anywhere, so headed down the forlorn freeway to get in a few more miles before night settled in. It was very sad leaving the school grounds knowing I wouldn't be seeing Shilo or other family members for many months.

I have been stopping off in the towns I pass through at each newspaper office to see if they would like to get a shot and short story about my trip. It's a good ay to tell lots of people about these cool trikes.

I just pushed it all day against a headwind to go about 70 miles from my start point. The threat of cold rainy weather has me uptight and wanting to get south in a hurry. Went right down Interstate 5 for most of the day. Had frost on the tent and frozen fingers and toes till 1 PM. Hope to relax and get in more drawing in California. I am also in the process of working out the true purpose and perspective of this trip. People always are asking me why. Why am I doing this long, hard ride. And don't I get lonely out there all by myself?

This reminds me of a quote by a writing student: “Many people commit suicide a little at a time – by not living fully who they are. They kill the parts the world does not welcome, and soon they are as good as gone.”

#### THINGS SEEN ON THE SIDE OF OREGON FREEWAYS:

**No. 1:** Banana Peels – guess people figure these are biodegradable. They're everywhere

**No. 2:** Tire Pieces – Dodge these all day. Must be truck recaps blowing off. Got a flat from the wire part last week.

**No. 3:** Broken Glass - Tons of this, especially near cities. Beer bottles mostly, ho, and accident scenes.

**No. 4:** Endless Plastic Bottles – filled with a yellowish liquid. No, it's not a new flavor of Pepsi, but bottles filled with trucker's pee, then tossed out their windows.

**No. 5:** Miscellaneous – lots of broken tools, odd bolts, smished cans and dead skunks and possums.

Note: As a general rule I don't pick up anything because of weight concerns. I am watching for big bags of cash though ...

#### **Grants Pass, 9 AM, Monday:**

Had a huge pedal day yesterday. About 70 miles with 5 big long hills. Got dark 2 miles out of Grants Pass, Oregon, so I camped in the bushes by a rest area. The sinks had hot water. Ahhh.

Next morning I rolled into Grants Pass, got air, a shower, did laundry and go the local paper to do a write-up. So many people look at the trike a smile that I feel like the newspaper is a good way to answer all their questions. I usually tell them I'm out on a fact finding mission, studying America by pedal and pen.

Meeting lots of very friendly folks here in southern Oregon. One lady drove up as I was drawing the movie house and said she had seen me on those big mountain passes and was glad to see I had made it up and over.

A lot of people that I seem to be talking to on this ride are middle age and older. And I found myself rushing through conversations in my haste to get down the road. But the last few days, I have been trying to look at them differently. To remember that each one

of them was a teenager or young child not that long ago. And that how they are just wearing the garb and social mannerisms of adulthood. If I take the time to try and relate to them, I can always see that small flicker of the kid in each and every one.

While eating lunch at a KOA, an old rusty pickup pulled in, loaded with 3 full-on hillbilly types. The two larger ones went into the store for beer, leaving the other in the bed of the truck hunched over, intently making a homemade cigarette. He wore glasses with one dark side. Eventually I met them, shook their strong hands and left thinking what jolly old boys they were. “More power to ya.” the big one said when I told him where I was headed. Then they all tore outta there back to who knows where in those jungly woods to drink up all that beer.

### **19 November 2002:**

Oregon California border ...

Pushed pedals for six and a half hours and finally got out of Oregon! Crossing the border, I shouted with glee! Today was a big milestone. Not only for this trip, but for my entire life! Not since I was 5 years old and the big people made me go off to a prison called school have I felt so **FREE**. For so many years I have wanted to just run away from home but always came limping back out of gas money and driving some darn car that needed a tune up or new tires. So today, I realized in the warm temps and sunny skies that met me on the coast, that with Tera I am now completely FREE. I can feel the lifestyle only seen in my dreams. What a revelation!

At the California border, I passed through the Department of Food and Agriculture inspection station, where a lady gave me a bright orange vest so drivers could see me better. I put it over the bag on my trailer so it would stand out.

For all you map managers, I spent the night on the beach just south of Crescent City, California. Add to my frugal Food, Shelter, Clothing philosophy – one TerraTrike trike!!

When leaving the Crescent City High School where I got a shower, all the kids were yelling “cool bike.” One youngster from the Jr. High started chasing me down the street hollering, “Give it to me!”

Found a sandy campsite, spoke with a fellow camper who was riding buses all across the U.S. And listened to waves crashing all night.

## **20 November 2002:**

Sun's out, 50° ...

Another tough big hill day. I guess I'm going to have to adjust to the fact that everywhere I go, I will run into hills. What in a car is simply a little more pressure on the gas pedal and several minutes, can be an hour of hard pedaling for a trike. Still made 60 miles from Crescent City to Trinidad. Lots of crashing waves on the coast, funny little towns with tons of chainsaw carved bears and old merlinesque characters. One pass was from the breakers up to 1500 feet. That took a couple of hours.

My buddy Bill back home said I'd run into tons of rain in northern California and crazy drivers who couldn't care less whether they ran over me or not. He was right about the drivers. They drive much faster and are reluctant to move over even when we are on narrow winding 2-laners with no shoulder. I always watch in my mirror and pull off if things get too crazy. Today, a teenager in a four-wheeler came within inches of my left wheel! He was going about 40 mph. I yelled and cussed and even threw my hat at a later car that came too close. I'm sure most drivers have never ridden a trike on a busy road so don't realize how scary it can be.

Pulled into the tiny town of Trinidad at dusk, bought a \$5 shower and slept behind the busy all night Chevron station.

## **21 November 2002:**

Got a free shower at the KOA where I washed clothes. Rode all day pretty much at sea level. Lots of green grass, stinky dairy farms and timber mills. It's real nice to be off the big hills for a day.

Pulled off the freeway and into a perfect, sunny little town called Fortuna. Filled with beautifully restored houses and buildings, many with highly ornate woodwork. Rode up to a city worker who was releasing water from a hydrant to get directions out of town. When he didn't answer me, I realized his eyes were closed and he was either sleeping or meditating.

Was getting dark as I cruised down through the Avenue of the Giants in the redwoods. Found this snug, needle covered hideout just off the road. The trees around my tent had stood there for upwards of 1000 years, so I tried to look at them and understand all that time.

Have been wanting to tell you what it is that I like so much about traveling on this trike. Living your entire personal and business life out of a duffel bag takes some planning and tons of organization. You are constantly taking stock of food, trike needs, shower stops, camp sites before dark. And throughout the busy day of trying to keep track of it all, I get a few sketches, so that each night I can write stuff all around them. But in the end I am feeling great satisfaction with these elemental actions. Each move is for an express purpose. Clean, healthy living the reward.

Last night I awoke and turned on my radio. He has been my trusty little buddy on this long ride. I keep up on the news with NPR and sometimes tune in to those strange late night talk shows on AM frequency. Anyway, I couldn't sleep so listened up and down the dial. All I learned was that Wal-Mart has 3200 stores in the U.S.! How many is that per state? (*Ed. Note: answer 64*)

I also thought I'd write to you tonight from my just off the 101 freeway south of Willits campsite about an interesting occurrence these last few days. It's become real obvious to me that the experience I have in each new town I come into is entirely UP TO ME. In Garberville yesterday, I was only intent on getting food and calling home and didn't say BOO to anyone. Today in another neat little mountain town called Laytonville, I had conversations with several nice people and came away with some stories for you readers.

At the local health food store, this long haired guy was busy getting his black cat all stretched out. He rolled him upside down and all around, then put him back inside the pet carrier that was on his car. He told me that back in the 70s he had hitched across America 22 times. And that his mother, who died 5 years ago, insisted that he write a book about his many experiences. "It's all still right up here." he said, tapping his head. "I just have to write it all down."

The other guy I met was a bit scarier. I was standing next to Tera on an empty back lot eating a huge cheese and lettuce sandwich on sourdough, when this fellow sort of aggressively stumbled up to me and started asking questions about the trike. He mumbled and stuttered through each sentence, so I was pretty sure he was retarded. But he was just so sorta evil he gave me the creeps. In the end though, we were high-fiving each other with him playing the "pull your hand back at the last second" game. I pedaled full blast outta there for 8 miles before looking back!

Rode down a very bumpy section of 101 into Ukiah this

morning. The mountains are giving away to oak studded hills. By lunch time, I found myself basking in 65 degree sunshine looking out over hundreds of vineyard acreage. What a great sight after starting from my snowy home 20 days ago. There are only a few grapes left on the vines.

Was more than a little concerned about the Sunday bumper to bumper traffic speeding by all day long there beyond my left elbow. Especially since I had been passing open wine-tasting places where surely some of these drivers had been indulging.

Last night as I lay in my tent, I was thinking about how I probably should have been back there in the town of Willits being the good little social documentarian, studying the small town culture, getting to know some crazy characters. I seem to run off to the hobo hideaways when the sundowns come through, partly cause I like to be totally undetected for a safe sleep and also because I do love my solitude. Too much yakking makes me stir crazy. Guess I'd rather think than talk mostly.

Pulled into the classy town of Cloverdale and got my 2<sup>nd</sup> COLD shower of the trip. The coach directed me to a door at the high school gym and said to use the GIRLS locker room. Jeesh, what next!

Coming out of the little town of Hopland, I was very surprised to run across Real Goods, Institute for Solar Living. I've gotten their cool catalog for years and you should too if you're at all interested in alternate living sources. Write 3440 Airway Drive #E, Santa Rosa, California 95403. Good stuff.

## **25 November 2002:**

Oh my gawd, a state trooper pulled up as I was battling insane traffic on the way into San Rafael and booted me right off the freeway. He said it was illegal to ride there! I had been breaking the law for hundreds of miles! So now I'm stuck in Petaluma hoping my brother could come and ge me for the next 20 miles to his place. There's only the freeway to his town. This is so crazy ...

Yes! I made it to San Francisco! And I'm not even dead yet! After a good night's rest in a regular bed and good conversation with my brother and his family, I laid for an hour in that hot tub in the back yard. It is now 80° here. Amazing.

From one of my favorite books about the artist Thomas Hart Benson come these words: "From 1925 to 1928 Benton wandered every summer for as much as six months at a time; and he took frequent

unscheduled sketching trips well into the 1930s. At first he traveled by train or bus to get out of the heavily settled areas and then continued on foot. He stuffed a pair of blankets, a change of clothes, and his sketching materials into his knapsack, and started out to poke behind haystacks, and garages, and blast-furnaces, to see what the American people looked like without window dressing ... The material he collected ... tramping the countryside, riding the brake beams, and sleeping in hobo's jungles, has supplied much of the subject-matter for later works."

## **26 November 2002:**

Got to have the great pleasure of meeting Moonlight Chronicle subscriber Taylor Patterson last night here in San Rafael. She's a sweet soul who's trying to find her way in these complicated times. Her current companion is a sleek dog named Tiny Coyote that she found on the Navajo Indian Reservation. We met at a Starbucks and passersby were petting and even kissing the dog. Then Taylor took the trike for a spin. She was wearing a big pink scarf that hid some ratty dreadlocks.

Today is one day before Thanksgiving and I miss my family very much. Will be going out to the coast with my brother's family, so it's not like I'm all alone or anything.

Ben is my brother's son. We went up to the high school to watch him play a scrimmage game. I saw this one guy who came to watch and laid all his phones and keys on the bench. He must have been an on call doctor.

## **Thanksgiving:**

Headed for the coast in a slick SUV and was amazed at how fast we traveled the 30 miles. Found sea shells and ate a barbecue turkey. On a nearby beach down an ivy covered trail were these two Miwok Indian tipis made of tree bark. A sign said the tribe had lived on the bay for 3500 years. Found some of the red edible berries that they had made part of their diet.

Ended up spending 4 restful days at my brother's house. We sat in his hot tub and stayed up late watching movies. Also got my Moonlight Chronicle mail caught up, which is a real trick out here on the road. Once this issues gets printed, I hope I'm successful in getting it mailed out to all you subscribers. He saw me off at the Golden Gate



bridge and I pedaled all day down the coast. A cool cloudy day. Lots of cars. Highway 1 on the way to Half Moon Bay is narrow.

### **30 November 2002:**

#### **EQUIPMENT LIST:**

Yes, I finally got a helmet; everyone said I was nuts for not having one. Filter water bottle; I never have to buy water! Tools: patch kit, crescent wrench, Allen head wrenches, tire pump, nylon string, screwdriver. Down sleeping bag smished down into small stuff sack. Three-quarter size inflatable sleep pad. Three pound Light Year tent by Sierra Design ... very cozy. State maps that are laminated and way more compact. LED headlamp ... yowza! Lightweight rain gear. Huge two-gallon Ziplock bags for food: peanut butter, sourdough bread, lettuce, carrots (small kind), dried fruit, candy, energy bars, nuts, dry milk, cold cereal, and vitamins. Original Moonlight Chronicles sketchbook/journal and some micron pens, whiteout, glue stick and one change of clothes.

### **01 December 2002:**

7 AM:

The sun is just rising over the coastal hills. I am up and pedaling south after sleeping in a grove of pine needles. The waves are busy wrecking themselves along this stretch of rocks called Pigeon Point.

7 PM:

Rode along the ocean side cliffs in Santa Cruz. An amazingly beautiful section of town. The street is lined with immaculate ornate homes and surfers ride the waves out front. Santa Cruz is the kind of town I would like to explore for a good long week. So much to draw. Got on a couple of dream-like bike paths. One, leading into town on the north side, had a 2-lane, brand new asphalt surface. I thought I had died and gone to trike heaven. Then I followed the Pacific Coast Bike Route signage south of town that gets you off that darn freeway.

Needing a good hot shower after 2 days on the trike, I went to the Aptos Fire Department after find the gym at the local college

deserted enough to let me hop in the fire house shower and I scrubbed up and hit the road, up and down and through acres and acres of brussel sprout and starwberry farms!?

I think I've gotten about half way around Monterey Bay. Pulled over and set up camp below two enormous stacks and a fishing boat harbor called Moss Landing. There's a harbor horn that sounds like an old Chevy tooter, pelicans soaring out above the water and boats going in and out.

## **02 December 2002:**

70°

Made it into Monterey about 11 this morning. Sunny blue skies illuminated an unbelievably nice bike trail called the Monterey Bay Coastal Bike Trail, which turns into 17-Mile Drive to Carmel. I called the boys at TerraTrike in Michigan where it was snowing and rubbed it in. Picture this guys, a pine treed path along the Pacific Ocean. Gorgeous houses on your left and breaking waves to your right. And the path is smooth and rolls slightly up and down through dunes, rocky outcroppings, and golf courses. Definitely a ride all trikers ought to experience. Spinning through a forest of cypress trees, I saw amazing mansions clinging to the edge of the cliff sides. We're talking 5 million dollar estates here in Carmel!

Climbed some of the steepest hills yet coming into Carmel from the beach area. The streets here are teeming with super expensive cars. There seems to be art galleries on every street. Pulled into Point Lobos Reserve at dusk and rode past the admission gate unnoticed. Seems that bikes and trikes don't get charged like cars do in the parks. Found a hidden spot to stash the trike and trailer behind the whaler cabin and took a hike up into the rocky hills.

It has occurred to me that you readers may be wanting to know how it is that I can travel 1000 miles on this trike and not stay in any motels or designated campgrounds. Well first of all, I am extremely poor, so \$50 for a bed and shower or even \$10 to \$20 campsite fees are too steep for me.

What I do is travel along on faith and a pinch of slyness. The faith part means that when evening comes I have faith that a tiny hiding spot for me and my few belongings will present itself. And sure enough, if I go on instinct, there it will be. A little bluff above the road, a small

patch of grass behind a tree. And then I wait for the right moment (no cars or people nearby) and I scamper in, eat dinner and pop the tent up as it gets dark!

This had to have been one of the most awesome days of my life. After a full-on pedaling day I am camped out on a 50x75 foot bluff with sweet smelling pines and a straight drop of on one side, hundreds of feet down to the Pacific Ocean. The exoticness of this whole stretch of HWY. 1 leaves me in awe and filled with the good pictures in my head. Like some sort of angel is out there watching over me and making this trip so amazing. Have been thinking about the word GRATITUDE and today I made lists in my head of all the things I am grateful for. Even small things like water in the bottles and some bread and cheese in the food baggie. When traveling by trike every little thing can be special. I'm even lucky to be so healthy. GRATITUDE! Think about it.

### **03 December 2002:**

One of the biggest day of pedaling (70) put me into Moro Bay where my old buddy from the Simple Shoes days, Eric Meyer, picked me up. Will spend a few days here getting this issue of Moonlight Chronicles wrapped and sent off to the new printer named Terry.

I'm still pretty worried about trying to get all this business stuff done while out on the road on my trike. I hate to keep you readers waiting. Will have to just keep the faith. Please do continue to subscribe as I have no income during this ride. Will bring the next issue as I pull out of here and head to Santa Barbara where Jack, one of the TerraTrike guys, is going to meet up with me for a trike tune-up and ride down the coast! Here's to a great holiday season! d.price

**more >**

# MOONLIGHT CHRONICLES.



Great American Trike Tour No 2

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## ISSUE NUMBER 33

(December 10, 2002 through January 10, 2003)

Good day to you, reader of the monksters search for truth while pedaling a yellow trike across this vast and varied landscape we call the U.S. of A.. Issue # 32 came to a close after leaving my cold home and meandering south down many a crowded highway. Down, down off the high frigid mountains in eastern Oregon, through the wet Willamette Valley and into a much warmer California coastline. After losing 8 pounds and camping out for 30 nights, I met up with an old friend in

San Luis Obispo and put the wraps on Moonlight Chronicle 32.

“Greatness is not in where we stand,  
but in what direction we are moving.  
We must sail sometimes with the wind,  
and sometimes against it, but sail we must,  
and not drift, or lie at anchor.”

*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

### **Early December 2002:**

Tera and I have unhooked that too-heavy BOB (Beast Of Burden) trailer and clipped on 2 brand new waterproof Vaude panniers, thanks to Guntram Jordan, Vaude's main man here in America. Now I am pulling about 8 less pounds, all my gear stays dry, and the trike handles way better! Thank you Guntram!

Also, while I visited Eric and Cynthia Meyer in San Luis Obispo, I got to know their good friends David and Cydney Dawson. During breakfast out on the day I left they gave me a cell phone to use on the ride and “for emergencies!” Now I'll be staying in touch a whole lot easier and won't be tracking down those costly (50 cents now) pay phones that don't even work half the time. I'll have to send those Dawsons some Moonlight Chronicles!

Slept in the brush near Vandenberg Air Force Base. Next morning I realized the water bottles were all empty so sped into the sleepy housing area and filled them quickly after not getting an answer at a door bell. Envisioned big military police descending upon Tera and me with guns blazing while zipping back out fo HWY 1.

Cruised through Lompoc, California. A perfect day for riding. Up a canyon and over the green hills that stretched all the way to the coast. Saw another biking couple that I'd been running into for the last week. They were on heavily loaded mountain bikes and are going all the way to the southern tip of South America!!

At about 4 PM I saw a most interesting house with round sides and a tall tower. I pulled in to have a look see and ended up meeting the coolest family ever. Dan and Linda and their surfing sons Jason, Justin, and Landon. They live a few doors down from this wave house and invited me to dinner and let me sleep in front of their house about 20 feet from the waves, who continued their ceaseless boxing match with

the shoreline all night.

We talked at length about our shared passion, hand-made houses. Seventeen year old Landon had recently returned from a 4 and a half month surfing safari to New Zealand! I was totally impressed. We talked and talked, and later this week I'm going to meet up with Dan at UCSB (University of California, Santa Barbara) where he works to give him some Moonlight Chronicles. His birthday is also February 9 so we must be kindred souls or something.

### **10 December 2002:**

Next morning I rode the 20 miles into UCSB and was met on the way in by mega-triker Jeff (he owns 2 trikes) who showed me how to get to David Lawson's office. David is a longtime TerraTrike enthusiast who rides his trike 8 miles a day round trip to his job in the Anthropology department of the university. He holds several triking records and invited me to stay for several days at his place so I can get through my mail, sent Moonlight Chronicles #32 off to the printer and meet up with TerraTrike partner Jack, who is flying in from Michigan for some much needed sun dosages and to give my trike a total going over before I hightail it south! Whew. Did you get all that?

On Wednesday I got invited to spend a day and night at a very special place called Hollister Ranch. Years ago, I got to know a guy named Mark Thatcher who invented Teva Sandals. He's now married to a beautiful woman named Rachael and they live in this beautiful home on the edge of the Pacific. The views are stunning and that night I awoke in the guest house and looked out the window at the quiet foothills.

Mark's old college roommate David was also there visiting. We drove high into the hills after a tour of the nearby beach, then took a hot sauna before a scrumptious meal of barbecued salmon and special spinach salad. David works at a Seattle hospital and also is an expert furniture maker.

### **SANTA BARBARA:**

My week long stay at the Lawsons was fabulous. Wonderful hosts, I was given a sunny room to stay in and endless BIG meals. Seems like everyone tries to fatten me up for the road ahead.

I kicked myself several time for not having the camera at hand.

Like the day we got this fared trike and trailer all hooked together and rode the awesome bike path between his home and work. The zipping home in the dark while jets roared overhead and frogs croaked in the marshes.

And then all of a sudden we were picking up Jack at the sunny Santa Barbara airport and rushing him down to a famous family Mexican restaurant to get him a guacamole and salsa fix. And having great conversation and excitable moments like you do when meeting up with your long lost friends.

One day I got to go over to Deckers Outdoor and see my old buddies at the Simple and Teva shoe companies, Todd, Adam and Liz. It had been about four years since I left a total dream job there (refer to *Moonlight Chronicles* #15-25), so we went to lunch and did lots of catching up. Before heading south they got me some new shoes and sandals for future steppin' outs. Dang, I miss those guys.

Then, just more moments later, we were a few blocks down the street meeting the exuberant Channing Hammond, owner of Old Man Mountain bicycle racks. And even though it was late Friday afternoon, he fitted a brand new super light aluminum rack on my trike! The old, heavier rack was too small for those new Vaude bags I had begun using. Now Tera was really getting some majorly tricked out components that help the entire rig run like a Swiss watch. Thanks Channing!

And then we had another great meal back at David's place, took a drive to the beach, and talked late into the night. And that's just how it seems to go whenever I come to this magical spot called Santa Barbara. There's a very special bright-eyed energy that seems to reside here. We saw it in the teachers and student at the local middle school we visited, in Adam, Liz, and Todd, and Channing and the people around him. It's an ALIVENESS AND HEALTHY HAPPINESS I feel nowhere else ...

“To achieve the impossible,  
The unthinkable must be thought.”

*Tom Robbins*

“Believe in yourself.  
Gain strength, courage and confidence  
by every experience ...  
Stop to look fear in the face ...  
Do that which you think you cannot do.”

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

#### **14 December 2002:**

Rode Tera down State Street in Santa Barbara, then Jack and David made some photos as I pulled up and headed for Ventura. The ride was really nice with meandering bike paths along the palm tree lined coast. There's supposed to be a big storm rolling in so I'm pedaling hard to get down closer to San Diego where people say it's dryer.

Because today was Saturday, my buddy Alyssa at Patagonia was out surfing and not at work. I pulled into their Ventura headquarters, left a stack of TerraTrike/Moonlight Chronicles cards at her office, and picked up some cool Patagonia sticker in the store. We started putting sponsor stickers all over the trike while in Santa Barbara.

Watched some surfers out near the wharf while munching on some rools and peanut butter. Rode on through Ventura with a mountain biker who showed me how to get going towards Oxnard, California. Darkness caught me in an Oxnard park near the beach, so I bivouacked in the bushes near some ritzy apartment buildings. There's a few people walking along a well lit path nearby. I think I'll sleep okay.

Got up real early and pedaled in the morning light. Saw some military planes at Point Mugu Naval Base while going south on HWY 1. High up on a nearby hill were lots of antenna & golf ball-like things, except way bigger. Lots of huge waves. It's been threatening rain.

#### **15 December 2002:**

Jack had installed some new steering bushings on Tera and now she steers effortlessly. Today as I was doing the ups and downs into Malibu, it occurred to me that since the tune up, Tera seems to now have”thought activated” steering abilities! When going down hill the handlebars are so fine tuned that you just think about moving this way or that to avoid obstacles on the roadway.

For miles and miles I was mesmerized by all the truly amazing



homes. What's cool about the houses down here is that each one is practically a work of art. Well, what am I saying, they ARE works of art. One of them got me so interested that I sat on a curb to draw it in some of the busiest traffic seen yet. Another thing that builders obviously take advantage of here is all that sunshine. Nearly every house is covered with multiple skylights and huge windows with terrific views. There are days when all I want to do is draw the architecture.

As I was cruising down past Venice Beach, I got talking to the very first trike rider I've run across so far. His name was Michael J. Diament and he said he was just returning from a meeting of the local trike club. I also saw and drew a lady begging amid all the people of Venice Beach.

Made it as far as Redondo Beach, where I found a hide-away in the juniper bushes across the street from the marina. A good day. While riding down the crowded bike path in Venice Beach, I subtly dropped TerraTrike cards for all the people who were staring at Tera. A little guerrilla type marketing ploy I came up with! I could tell from their looks that they were wondering what the heck I was riding. Hope they picked them up.

## **16 December 2002:**

Started out at 6 AM and rode Pacific Coast Hwy 1 all day. Missed the bike route section in Torrance and found myself battling narrow bridges and huge semis through the Terminal Island area of Long Beach. And if that wasn't scary enough, I then rode through a very dirty ghetto district where I kept seeing billboards that had images of handguns and messages of: "DON'T SHOOT THIS CHRISTMAS."

For some reason dude, I just knew the day was going to be rough. People who I'd connected through email weren't answering their phones, I lost my much loved backpack towel, and I hit high winds and blowing sand in Sunset Beach all the way to Newport Beach, where it started pouring rain for hours! The cool thing I learned about sand storms is that you can wear sunglasses and a damp rag over your mouth and pedal headlong into the sucker!

Made it to Newport Beach at 3 PM and because it was raining so hard, got a load of wash done. Called up Matt at Cycle World down the street, but they were too busy to have me visit. With darkness coming on, I pedaled out around a mini-mall and found a tiny park

pavilion to camp under. The rain continued for one more hour.

Now I'm all tucked into the warm tent with an extraordinary view out the window. This park sits next to one of those fancy waterway housing districts where each home has its own private dock out front! And just as it got dark, all the yellow and red Christmas lights lit up on a big house nearby. There must be a million lights on that thing, winding up the palm tree trunks and around each roof line. And inside you can see a cartoon flickering on the screen of a giant television. And in another warmly glowing home nearby that is shaped like a ship, a wife is buys in a steamy kitchen as the wind howls just outside. Hope this weather gets sunny so I can go ...

### **Two and a half days from Santa Barbara:**

Pedaled hard all day trying to make it to San Diego. Met a wonderfully friendly senior citizen before leaving Folger. He was in a bath robe and was walking his dalmatian dog. He said he was a biker too, had ridden in Russia some years back and that soon he will be moving to Alaska to enjoy skiing. He was a neat person and I wanted to talk more, but was in a hurry to go. Rode through the town of San Clemente and its red sidewalks. Also went through the Camp Pendleton area, watching the many helicopters flying every which way on training flights. South of Onofre State Park the bike path becomes what used to be an old highway. It was weird going down it, seeing weeds growing up through the center line. Kinda like I was in some post apocalyptic surreal movie.

Have to say that I've been meeting some pretty out-there long distance bikers on this trip. I'm hoping that riding a trike a long ways doesn't mean I'll go crazy too. They just seem kinda nuts, with a distant look in their eyes. Then I met an even more bizarre character who owned a teeny tiny bike shop. He had tags hanging all over his odd creations that said DON'T TOUCH! And was droning on and on about his ideas about gearing bikes. So I'm just sorta wondering, do people who love bicycles go crazier more often than regular folks, or what? Good thing I'm on a tricycle!

Pulled into San Elijo State Park at 3:30, got a hot shower and actually PAID the \$1 biker fee to just pitch the tent. That's the first camping fee I've paid yet since leaving November 4<sup>th</sup>! No motels yet either.

Have been in a weird mode lately of losing things. My fleece

pants somehow totally disappeared from David's house in Santa Barbara. Then yesterday I hung my cool backpacker town on the trike flagpole to dry while making phone calls and rode off to lost it somewhere near Huntington Beach. And today I was just stuffing my favorite Patagonia fleece jacket behind the seat when it got too hot pedaling, and it too flew the coop! Sheesch! Makes one wonder. What will I lose next? The trike!? It is a full time job out here trying to keep track of it all. And just imagine. I'm living entirely out of 3 relatively small trike bags!

### **Next Day:**

“Every moment is another chance.”

Today was the first day I slept in some. Rode up and down the coastal hills and into sunny and HOT San Diego! 1550 miles from my home in Oregon. Will meet up with the new Moonlight Chronicles printer tomorrow. Busted out and got a room at the local hostel, my first paid for room on the entire trip. Made a big peanut butter sandwich and celebrated the completion of this first section.

Got a ticket to see the next Hobbit movie at 8 PM. Walked all around the old gaslight district. Watched a Cuban hand-roll some big cigars, then got talking to Pete Kelly, a robust black guy who was on the street below my room. He was playing a mean blues harp and his voice carried all the way down the street. He said he once walked from Dallas to Los Angeles and met the nicest folks all along the way.

Really enjoyed seeing the movie. The quest that Frodo and the characters are on is long and hard. This I can relate to, being on this long trike ride. Seeing the movie has given me new strength to continue onward into the east. It gives me a focus.

One of the things I am worried about is having enough water when out in the desert. Wished I could find a plastic container that would fit in behind the seat.

Here is a little article by Ian Sims on trikes:

“Want to go touring? No worries – load it up and it's still quite easy to ride. Have a balance problem and can't ride a two-wheeler? Just get on a trike and ride straight off! And those traffic lights – no need to unclip, attempt a trackstand, or find something to lean against – you're as

steady as a rock, comfortable, all clipped in, and ready to go with both feet! And when you get to the end of your trip, or just want a rest, ne need to get off the machine – you already have a stable chair for a rest or meal.”

Today I left San Diego, or tried to anyway. Spent the next 5 hours frustratingly trying to get out of this huge, car filled city. Now it is dark, and I'm in the tent that's popped up in a field of weeds somewhere in El Cajon. In California, bikers are not supposed to be on any freeways, so you meander through all these neighborhoods trying to keep the freeway in sight and follow along beside them only to discover later that there are 3 freeways crisscrossing everywhere and then you've pedaled out to the middle of nowhere.

The gang at TerraTrike did get my cell phone working, so that's like totally great. You need to know that phone booths have always been my 2<sup>nd</sup> worst enemies (fruit flies are number one) and I hate to use them. I've burned up about \$50 on phone cards on this trip cause you get charged extra for using a phone booth. So tonight I made a few calls from way out here, in the middle of a field. That's really amazing.

Why can us humans be kind, gentle, and caring but also conniving, vicious, and judgmental? I think it can be hard for us to truly be ourselves in this environment. There seems to be this overriding feeling that we should all just conform and be clones. **Trying to be car-less in this full on car society isn't easy.** Surely an honorable decisions, but deemed by most impractical and even fool hardy. But one day in a big city on a trike could convince most anyone that it's even downright dangerous. Every corner spits out speeding cars. Any one could snuff you out with one small miscalculation. **Is resistance futile?**

Can a person who thinks he's smogged up the Earth enough after 30 years of driving, just ride a trike? The key may be as simple as this: **RULE #4 – DON'T TRY TO RIDE IN BIG CITIES!** I think from here on out, I will avoid them ...

### **TAKE A STAND OR BECOME ASSIMILATED!**

Heavy rain trapped me inside the tent until 10 AM. Had the best sleep ever with the rai drumming on the tent fly.

There's a high mountain pass I need to get over and the weather reports says there's snow up there. After pedaling all the way down here so that I could cross the country in warmer climes, this is a little hard to

believe. At around 4 PM I arrived at the hilltop village of Alpine. Filled the food pannier with sourdough rolls, some cheese, 4 christmas smelling tangerines, crackers lettuce, a bag of those tiny carrots, candy bars and one energy bar.

How am I eating? Just recently I realized that my favorite bread, sourdough, is just white bread! I love the chewy crust but guess I better start buying loaves with more whole grains to stay healthy. Don't laugh but after sweating it out for 4 hours on the trike, I'd have to say that the best experience of the whole entire day was being under a hot shower at the Alpine Fitness Club, thanks to the friendly receptionist Brooke.

Sleeping on a patch of grass behind a Baptist church. Resting up for the long climb tomorrow, which is the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year.

## **21 December 2002:**

I have a 17 year old son named Shane back home in Oregon. When I called today, he said he is out of school now for the x-mas holiday. He was busy stacking a new load of firewood. I'm proud of him for taking over those kinds of chores while I'm gone. I told him so. But I don't think he has a clue as to why I have taken on this raw challenge of crossing the country. I think he will though. When he grows older, has kids of his own. Then maybe he'll understand. I find it hard to explain it all to him, so don't really try, then feel bad.

Wow. A really big day. Climbed up and up through the cold mist, all the way to 4181 foot Crestwood Summit pass. That's as high a mountain that I've climbed so far, and right there along the border to Mexico! I could see snow on the next ridge up before heading down off the back side in a terrifyingly cold descent. Had all the winter duds on all day!

The first descent took Tera and me down to 3000 feet, where we plodded along looking at all the crazy junk on the side of the Interstate 8 freeway. There were the usual bungee cords, banana peels, and bottles, but I also found one dice gambling cube, 2 halves of 2 twenty dollar bills, a tire gauge and, I kid you not, at the very summit, a sparkling cold Miller beer!! I guzzled that puppy, burped and pedaled away remembering a similar incident in Hell's Canyon. After a 75 mile hike, there sat a perfectly good can of Coke on the trail! Weird.

But listen up cause this story ain't over yet. Like I said, we got

over the summit but were still riding along in the rocky high country and freezing our bums off, when we come to **THE BIG** downhill, a 5% 13 mile drop down some winding canyons, clear to the sea level desert far below.

Now, I'm sorta crazy, but not enough to go blastin' off a hill like that to see just how fast little Tera would roll. No. I applied some much needed braking all the way down that sucker and when I got to the bottom and checked things over, I came to discover I had actually burnt out the right side brake! Called Jack at TerraTrike on the wireless and he didn't yell or get mad or nothin'. He just very calmly said he'd send out some new brake shoes. So until I have them, only one brake. Interesting.

Shagged a quick shower at an RV place before getting kicked out by the attendant. "This is private property." he said. "Well hobo trike riders need showers too." I said. Camped out at a nearby county park. This is Imperial Valley. Lots of lettuce grown here. Miles and miles of leaf lettuce.

I saw a sign post that read: El Centro Pop 37,183, but the 3 had been crossed out and a 2 handwritten by it, obviously the work of a disgruntled departing citizen. This is an ultra-desolate downtown. Really a sad place.

David Lawson back in Santa Barbara made an interesting comment. He said that if aliens ever did scrutinize our planet, they'd probably think that cars are the dominant life force. I'm trying not to develop a negative attitude about them, but when you're on a trike all day, you sorta wish they would all disappear.

## **22 December 2002:**

Well, today that wish almost came true as I took the old highway that's rough as a cob almost all the way to Yuma, Arizona. No cars to worry about for miles and miles. 60 miles to Yuma and it was just me, Tera, sand dunes and creosote bushes!

Called my dad today on the phone as I was bumping along. He just had an artificial knee put in and i was feeling sorry for him and all the pain he must be enduring. Never the loving type, he cried as we spoke. He said he wanted to hug all of us kids and that all these moments are precious. Jeess, getting old is such a bummer. All those years that you look back on. All those precious times gone forever.

Today is 50° and cloudy, with lots of border patrol stuff down

here. The mountains are huge monoliths rising up off the flat desert floor.

Camped under some very bushy and needle-laden trees last night. The routine is down pat. And a shower SOMEWHERE. Last two nights it was RV camp grounds. Then scout out a tiny hiding spot, sit quietly on the trike to eat some supper, then set up the tent just as it gets dark. Mostly I'm unseen and under the radar, an invisible hobo (that's what shame used to say, "invisible"), just trying to get a safe rest in the bushes. And if some hootinany wants to give me trouble, I've got a pocketful of pepper spray, so watch out!

### **23 December 2002:**

Spent the day in Yuma getting the brakes all tuned up, doing the Moonlight Chronicles mail (thanks Shane & Lynne for sending it out), checking email at the library and wandering around with no bike bags on the trike. You see, I broke all the rules of hobodom and bought a motel room! What a total luxury! Table, toilet, shower at the El Rancho Motel!

### **24 December 2002:**

Here is a letter I received from Kim Stafford, Director, Northwest Writing Institute. It is the kind of thing that keeps me going:

Dear Dan,

As the weather changes, I think of your road, the gritty shoulder you must be riding toward dawn. I think of the little adjustments – or big ones – people make in their psychic grasp of what is possible in life when they meet you, talk with you, or even simply glimpse you in passing: a blur that will not leave the mind. A whole new way of being a traveler, an American, a world citizen.

My yoga teacher read an old commentary from Swami Somebody: 'You personally cannot save the world. Nor can you destroy the world. It's best to relax and not take things so seriously. This way, you can at least save your own well-being, and not destroy the chance you have when you meet others.'

Again, I thought of you, your journey.

Travel safe, and far, and deep.

*Kim*

## **ARIZONA** GRAND CANYON STATE

Christmas eve day I packed the bags and pedaled over to the KSWT-13 television station. Erica the new lady did a little piece on my ride for the 6 PM news. Rode all day east on HWY 8, past the Gila Mountains and the Copper and Dome Mountains too. The desert is nice this time of year, sunny but not too hot. Got talking to retiree Leroy at the post office yesterday. He said that Yuma is the sunniest city in the world! "And you know they don't allow information like that on the TV if it isn't true." he added. All I know is it's down nice to feel the sun on your body in wintertime.

### **Christmas Day:**

So here it is, the end of another year. Such a bizarre time for our world. It feels good to connect with strangers on this ride. To have small conversation, to see them smile when they see the trike. But I, like others, long for a more innocent time. When the world seemed less evil.

Pulled into the tiny town of Tacna to clean up and find a room in the inn. But there was no room, so I wandered behind some funny little shacks and set up camp under a palm tree. Found a wise man named Al Dobbins and his wife Nina, who had me into their warm bungalow to watch Tera and me on the 6 O'clock news show. They too are from the far off land known as Oregon. Afterwards I went back to the sad tent and tried to dream of past holidays.

Did a lot of family phoning this morning and everyone sounds good. I'll miss them all this x-mas and wish I could be there. The saddest part of all is that my partner is upset that I left in the first place and sometimes won't even come to the phone.

Wow! No cars are visible in my rearview mirror. Must be a holiday! Really big pedaling day. 77 miles through the nothingness to Gila Bend. A town of "1700 friendly folks and 6 old grumps" according to the city welcome sign.



Last night, I stayed up late writing by headlamp in the tent. Years ago, I wrote up a credo or mission statement of sorts for a photo magazine I started called Shots. Then, I made up another for the Moonlight Chronicles in 1994. And last night, I wrote another for all us crazy trikers. We may be making some new t-shirts so maybe this credo will be on one:

### **THE TRIKER'S CREDO**

All ye pedal pushers and lawn chair lovers UNITE! It's time to preach a new gospel in this auto-laden land. Tell neighbor, friend, and foe alike that three wheels are better than four. That true stability, added endurance and a relaxed demeanor, add strength to our quest to truly FREE the freeways. That ONE LESS CAR shall be our motto. That GAS FREE shall be our cry. That our children's, children's, children may experience a day when all human beans become participants, practitioners and proponents of PEDAL POWER. That it's not the destination but the JOURNEY that matters most. That riding means better health and longer lives, and living in the HERE and NOWS. Spread the message far and wide. With LESS we can be MORE. With PEDALS we don't need PETROL. With DETERMINATION we can live the DREAM!

Kind of long winded, but that's the gist of it. Sorta my take on this whole trike vs. cars business.

Camped out in a junky area behind a motel. The back wall of the motel looks like a gawd awful plumber's nightmare. Guess it must not freeze very often here with all those exterior water lines. There's lots of dogs barking. And since I've been out in this desert on the trike, there are no people, only thousands of tall cactus characters and some prickly bushes.

### **27 December 2002:**

Friday ...

I've been sleeping in the damndest places. This was an adobe wall surrounding an old abandoned school. Very cold night. There was a thick layer of frost on everything! Have seen several cotton hauling

trucks. There are acres and acres of it grown here in Arizona. The roads have little white cotton balls all over them, kinda like in Oregon, there's bark from the logging trucks on the roadways.

Another long day of pedaling. Passed a high rocky peak that had RVs parked all around its base. Now I see where some of the snowbird folks from up north go. They just park out in the middle of nowhere, fully contained. TV, bathroom, little car in tow to make grocery runs. And all this SUNSHINE. What a life!

Here's a brief rundown of my trike setup:

There is a water filter bottle in front of my seat, through which all water is cycled. On the left handlebar is a very small zen-like dingy bell for traffic. The tires are killer IRC Metro tires, 2,000 miles and still smilin'. Atop my rear rack above the rear wheel is a Vaude top bag for all the small items. Now there is an Old Man Mountain super light aluminum rack that holds all my panniers, which straddles the rear wheel. On either side of the rack Vaude Trans Alp fully waterproof panniers (the best). The pedals have cleats that allow my to lock my feet to them, kinda' like ski bindings. A safety flag flies many ribbons found on the roadside to warn cars of my presence. And all this gear is topped off with two Burger King Simpson watches on the front cross member. Homer says "Eat Burger" and Bart says "Cool your jets man"

### **Tucson:**

Drove Tera extra hard to make it into one of my favorite towns ever, Tucson. Drove through several year ago and remembered a town with some very unusual attributes. There's just something so different about this place. Someone here knows how to do LIGHTS! And I mean from the amber yellow street lights to the toned down porch lamps to the glowing fireplaces and golden lamps in the quiet and inviting cafes. And the houses all have this sunburnt, 40s, dwelling of famous archaeologist's/museum curators homes. Am I making any sense here? There are streets where they even park the cars with the back end towards the curb! Cool.

## 28 December 2002:

I think it's fair to say that last night was the noisiest night sleeping out EVER! Set the tent up next to a hedge on the pretty green lawn of a fraternity house near the university. First off it was a Friday night and the house fronts a very busy street. When do these college students sleep? Then there were endless sirens and tons of cop cars zooming off to accidents all evening. Then, at about 11 PM, a big helicopter seemed to be hovering right there over me, and I thought, in my slumber, "Well, the jigs up, they've come to haul me and all the other hobos out of Tucson." Just then, a strong stream of water started pouring on the tent!

And it took a few minutes to realize that the nighttime sprinklers had just come on! And they came on again about 2 feet from the tent at 5 in the morning too. I guess the lesson is, don't camp on bright green lawns in desert country! Duh.

You know, I've just really come to believe in the power of serendipity on this trip. I was invited out to dinner in Tucson by a couple of guys I'd met earlier out on the road. When the meeting didn't materialize, I took myself out for a big burrito and there on the table was a business card for a new director at Tucson's Channel 4. The next day I called the station and surprisingly they sent out cameraman John and he filmed me spinning around on Tera. Now after a day of pedaling from Tucson to Tombstone, I found myself sitting in the home of Louis Campbell watching myself on the news!

Coming into Tombstone, I had two chain idler wheels on the trike freeze up, and one flat tire. The RV places were refusing me a shower and just as I was about to give up and head for the edge of town to camp, I hear bells. Church bells. So I followed the sound and found a most delightful Louis playing the bells in the Episcopal church. She told me the history of the church, "in 6 lines or less," and now I'm camped out between her place and the big old church. So cool how these things work out.

Dropped down off that darn freeway and onto HWY 80 south today and was just totally rubbernecking at all the cool sights. Was getting nostalgic hits of Imbler-ness (that's my old home town, Imbler), when passing through the sun-beat and wind-blasted town of St. David. There were trees of old hanging over the street and all the beater homes had cools olden days cars and aluminum camp trailers in the yellowed yards. And a low winter sun so brilliant that you'd swear these southern

Arizonans just had to all be born with sunglasses on.

OTHER THOUGHTS WHILE PEDALING:

- 1) In a car you don't notice things like 10 MPH headwinds that can quickly modify a triker's 60 miles a day to 30. With chapped lips as a bonus.
- 2) As to eating, I've discovered it's better to SIP AND NIBBLE throughout the day rather than GULP AND GORGE three large meals.
- 3) DE-CAR YOURSELF, as in ride trikes to save your health, your money, the planet!

**30 December 2002:**

Tombstone is a very interesting place. There's a still active gun shop that fold guns to Wyatt Earp and all those other famous OK Corral Characters. The main street features old time board walks and daily shootouts as well as stage coach rides around town, complete with a narrating cowboy driving the horses while explaining all the history.

And I met Kate Hargrave of the Tombstone Tumbleweed newspaper who made pictures of Tera and me. Kate is a kindred spirit who lives with no running water or electricity. Plus, back in 1981, she walked over 2000 miles with mules and fully authentic 1800s equipment! And we thought my trip was tough. What an inspiration.

Drove Tera out of old Tombstone and up over the Mule Mountains pass at 4500 feet, went through a smooth tunnel and down a steep hill into the mining town of Bisbee. And what a place it is. Nestled on a steep hillside, there's endlessly fascinating architecture and shops winding along European style streets. Being overwhelmed with so many cool things to sketch, I settled on the antique copper mining carts. Later on, I realized I should have taken the "Digging In" tour, which apparently takes you through an underground mine "rich w/minerals." Was really blown away to read that miners dug "2000 miles of tunnels through the surrounding mountains."

Wanting to get to a lower elevation for the night (there was a thin layer of snow in the hills above town), I zoomed away, looked down deep into the enormous open pit copper mine nearby, then headed for the local co-op to get some groceries. Ate some lunch on a sunny side walk, chasing off an over friendly bob tail cat while talking to people about the Trike and giving away the last of the business cards.

Stopped at a nearby RV park for a shower only to discover it was the famous Shady Dell, “serving travelers since 1927. Stay overnight in a beautifully restored travel trailer and have breakfast in an original 1957 diner ...” There was a 1940s Yellow Cab parked there that I just stared and stared at. Guess I wish I could just go back and live in those simpler times.

“Happiness is not having what you want,  
but wanting what you have” Schachtel

The Daily Dispatch ...

Rode down out of Bisbee into a huge flat valley to Douglas. The Mexican border is on the south end of town and I was feeling like the only gringo in town. These towns seem to be so far away from anything. They seem exotic somehow. Ate a crappy burger, got some groceries, photographed some old timers on a sunlit corner, and slept in a thorny field behind a big Wal-Mart

### **31 December 2002:**

Very cold night. In the 20s. Frost on everything. Those are the kind of mornings that make it hard to break camp. Knowing your hands and feet are gonna' be freezing before you go.

Before leaving town, I got the nice lady at the Daily Dispatch newspaper to make a picture of the trike. My cell phone didn't work in this area, so I tried to call home from stupid payphones all day. I've got BUSINESS to attend to and New Years greetings for the family. Guess it will all have to wait for another day. I'm still trying to figure out a way to be out here on the road making Moonlight Chronicles without all the worry and hassle of waiting subscribers. Very frustrating day. So I pedaled on into this very last, sunny, gorgeous 18 hours of 2002 and tried to think of positive things.

Stopped to talk to gun carrying Everett Turner in the tiny town of Apache (2 houses and 1 school). He had a dog named Sam that would roll over and play dead when Everett pretended to shoot him. After I had left, he drove down the road after me and offered a big road atlas of the U.S.A. For my trip. I'll have to send him and his wife (she's the school teacher) a Moonlight Chronicles for that fine gesture.

Up the road a piece, was this big rock shrine commemorating

the very spot where Geronimo “surrendered in September 6, 1886, forever ending Indian warfare in the United States.” Mortared into the structure are 7 grinding stones the Indians used to make their food. That was weird, and I'm still not sure what to make of it all.

So you know, Last Day of the Year, I was really tweakin' on that as I moseyed along up and down the rolly road. And I didn't come up with much. Other than how in the world could I ever regain the curious mind I possessed at the age of 5? And there are inklings of that old magic hitting me from time to time. Like sometimes I'll drop off the grindy road and just go meandering through the alleyways and mud puddles of some little town. Or squattin' down on my haunches to eat a meal next to Tera and realizing how much I'm enjoying each and every bite.

Crossed into the fifth state of this journey, New Mexico, at 2 PM.

### **January 01, 2003:**

I know there's a majorly desolate one in Utah, but surely Highway 9 here in southern New Mexico has to also be one of the loneliest stretches of asphalt in the US. There are two tiny junctions through, thank God. When I was cleaning the stickers of Tera's tires this AM, I discovered a good sized hole in one! Having for some crazy reason left the roll of electrical tape back at David's place in Santa Barbara, I had no other choice but to limp along in the morning chill looking for a kindly rancher to help me out.

First, I found an old piece of inner tube, so stuck a patch on the hold and wrapped the tube around the tire and rim. But the tube kept slipping down off the patched area. Then, in the first sleepy town I flagged down an electrical tape carrying cowboy, complete with muddy truck, rifle in the seat, long scraggly mustache and old sweaty cowboy hat. So the tape held pretty good, but every 10 miles I'd have to hop off and go round and round some more. At that rate, I would have used up the tape before riding into the next large enough town to sport a bike shop. So I bumped along till I cam to a town with a dilapidated old store, several wasted trailers, and rusty cars all around.

There I had the bright idea to buy a tire off some local kid's BMX bike and did so at a place next to the store. Problem solved. Still wasn't able to reach the family. They must think the Mexican banditos did me in. Cranked Tera 71 miles despite those tire problems. MY only

other thoughts to write about today are what a great ice breaker the trike is when meeting strangers. Almost everyone I meet has an ear to ear grin and starts pounding me with questions. If I had just stepped out of a car, nobody would even notice.

And while we are on the subject of cars, I gotta' tell you how sad it is to pedal all the way across a crystal clear blue sky desert and then encounter the brown haze hovering over all large cities. And you just know that autos are the cause of most of that pollution Why don't people care that they are doing this with all their incessant driving? Why don't we all demand that pollution free cars be built NOW? Have you seen those exercise bikes some folks have attached to electrical generators? Some parents have their kids pedal enough power to run the TV for a few hours. The same could go for transportation. If we all had to PEDAL everywhere we went, I'll bet the roads wouldn't be so congested!

### **January 02, 2003:**

the **FUEL**, aka the groceries that keep my wheels turning:

**GRAINS:** include bagels when available and those long thinly sliced deli rye breads. Also eat dry, with no milk, granola with raisins. Use dry milk sometimes.

**CANDY:** It's what gets me down those last 10 miles of the day. The caramels and chocolate bars are my good friends!

**MORE GRAINS & A LITTLE DAIRY:** cheese that is spicy and some snappy crackers like Wheat Thins or Finn Crisp.

**FRUIT:** Since eating my whole bag of homemade dried fruit, I eat an apple or orange every day.

**VEGETS:** tiny carrots (heavy but good for the head lights). Lettuce and sprouts make great cheese sandwiches.

**GLUE:** Yes, peanut butter! Staple of all nomadic folks. On bread or by the spoonful.

### **EL PASO ...**

Awoke in a patch of sagebrush about 7 miles west of El Paso. Very near the border of Mexico. A lone helicopter flew very low back and forth all night. 29° the next morning.

By 8 AM, I was stomping around in my frozen shoes in the

sand and found myself crying. Here's why: Checked mileages and realized after 2 months of hard pedaling I'm only one-half way to Key West. Also, as I was chewing on some granola, I broke a corner off one of my molars. Now I guess I better find a dentist. Also, there was frost all over the trike and tent, which makes packing up a bummer. Also, I was about out of food and no Safeway in sight. Also, I guess I was just missing the family and tired of straight endless roads.

Weenied out after heading out of busy El Paso and got a motel room. Watched the sun go down over the mountains to the west, then soaked in a hot tub of water. Need to find some more food before heading east on HWY 10. Whew!

### **January 04, 2003:**

I don't think I've ever enjoyed a motel room as much as I did last night. So good to get all cleaned up and stretch out on a big bed.

Rode south and encountered a new lane being built on HWY 10. Four and a half miles of 12 inch concrete road surface was being laid. "That thing will be here long after we die." commented one of the workers.

### **SUNDAY NEXT MORN:**

Pulled over in the desperately desolate town of Sierra Blanca to sleep behind an old defunct RV campground. It was sad to see that nearly every business in town was closed up for good. Drove Tera east over the west Texas hill the next day enjoying the sunny sky and 60° temps.

Tonight I'm in the small town of Van Horn (pop. 2800). There's a big white star on the water tower all lit up for the holidays. Down on main street I found the County Historical Museum and sat to draw the trike by the front door. The houses here seemed to be all sand blasted and faded from the hot sun. Up Main Street you can find 8 motels, 3 RV parks, 15 restaurants, and one small grocery store. The tent is set up behind a church. I can hear kids playing and watched as two young girls did their darndest to clean out a throw rug with a broom. And it's a good thing that people in places like this tie up their dogs cause they bark like crazy and come lunging at Tera and me as we pass by. Only once on this whole entire ride have I actually unhooked my pepper spray and got ready to action when some big dog was out and chasing us down the



road!

Because I am doing a mail drop here tomorrow morning I got to hang out all afternoon, and see things like the ornate gate of the old Culberson County Courthouse.

Seems that the word got around town that I was camped out behind the Baptist church. After getting it okayed by Javier Martinez, the local art teacher and friendly person who I helped paint a room in the church's rec center, a state trooper zoomed up to put his headlights directly on the tent while an irate citizen drove up and started asking me what I was doing! When I explained that Javier had got it checked out with church officials, everybody calmed down. Maybe they thought I was a terrorist. Jeesh, welcome to our town, huh?

About an hour later, Javier came back with some steaming hot tamales for me that his wife had just made. He also gave me some sweet bread, "an old family recipe." You just never know what's gonna' happen out here I guess.

How about that. After 60 days on the road, I finally got to make a little stick fire. Left Van Horn this morning. Had to lay low there for an extra day because of a big wind storm that turned the sky all dark and filled with dust. Rode Tera for 6 hours, then pulled off in some hackberry bushes along the road to make camp. The fire was a warm friend.

### **January 08, 2003:**

Sunny, 70° ... smells summery ...

There are stickers and thorns on nearly every plant in these parts. I average 2 flats a day. Made it into Ft. Stockton by 2 PM, got a cold shower at the high school, washed clothes, checked for mail but there was none. I'm expecting 3 or 4 different packages so hope they show up tomorrow.

To all you terrorists and other crazy people out there: Don't blow up the world. We like it here and don't want to live on Mars (weird thought I had on the trike today). And now I will fall to sleep here on Comanche Springs Park and dream the triker's dream of long smooth roads and big tailwinds.

Biggest mileage day yet, thanks to a 30 mile per hour tailwind! Most of the time I was in high gear, hanging on for bear life, as Shane used to say! Saw hundreds of huge wind turbines but only a few of

them were turning and I wondered why. Then I came upon acres and acres of oil derricks pumping that black petrol out of the ground. I realized then that I was in oil rich Texas and better not go off too much about gas-free transportation or I might just wake up some morning with my hide nailed to a prickly cactus and Tera melted down for scrap iron!

DRIVE LESS ... PEDAL MORE  
Down lonesome road Highway 290

**January 09, 2003:**

Took a detour through the miniature town of Sheffield, where the Baptist minister Jerry let me get a much needed shower. On the way out to a windy campsite in the juniper bushes, I enjoyed once again watching the yellow center line as it glistened like gold in the evening light. If the angle is just right, it positively glows with a dark yellow reflective light. Something I've never noticed while riding in cars.

**January 10, 2003:**

You just never know what the weather's gonna' do. After yesterday's epic tailwind and 70° temps, today I went uphill and into a cold wind all day. Those are the days when you just grit your teeth and crank on. Ozona was a neat little town with a southern-like square and historic homes. Some towns you come to and it's obvious they are struggling. But places like Ozona, even though remote, seem to thrive and don't have that "soon to be deserted" feeling.

In the central time zone now and it's staying lighter later. Pedaled from 8:15 AM to 5:30 PM and found a patch of grass near the freeway on-ramp to camp on.

Yup, it's the last page. I've now been two and a half months out here in endless America. And I've practiced many of those Buddhist beliefs like less is more and believe in your instincts. But I have to say that all that talk about time and space being an illusion still baffles me. On this ride, time seems to be absolutely predictable (8 hours pedaling, 9 hours of sleep), and space perfectly measurable (the map shows where the next 60-70 mile effort will land me).

Tune into issue number 34, which will document the ride from Austin, Texas (two days away) to Key West, Florida! Lost of

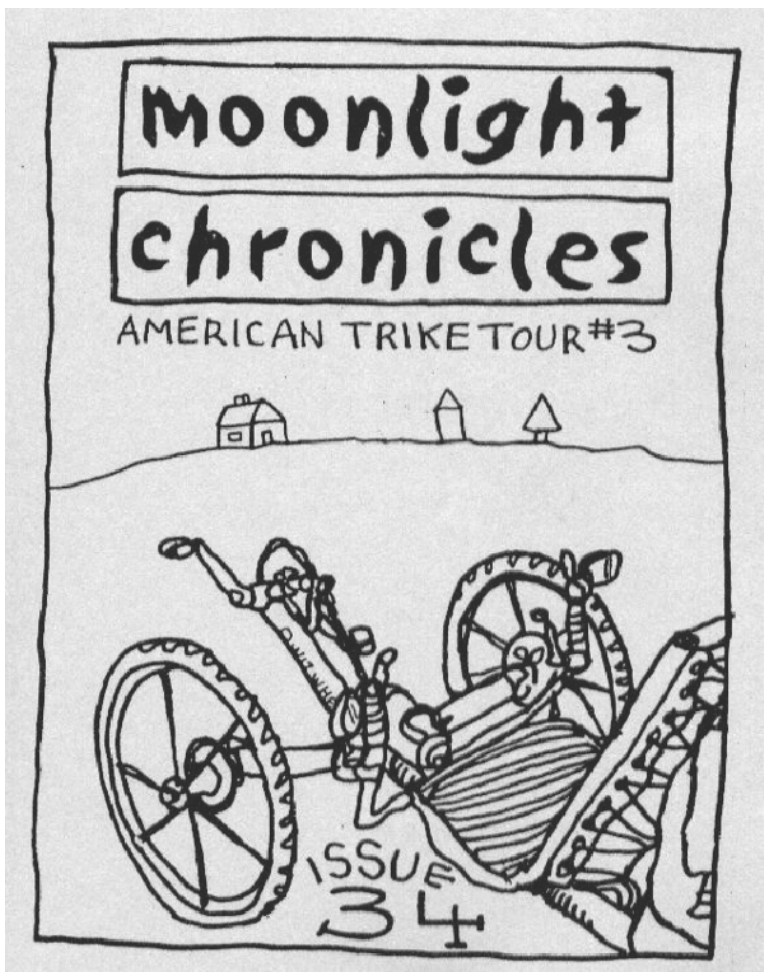
appreciation to all those that are making this ride a reality. Let's all get out our trikes and start pedaling more ... triker guy d. price

SPONSORS: Patagonia, O2 Day, Old Man Mountain, Sierra Designs, Sakura, Advocare, Vaude

All the lines in these Moonlight Chronicles are made with Pigma Micron pens by Sakura: waterproof, fade proof, & stupid proof!

Moonlight Chronicles: ... a few years back I had a dream. In the dream, I was able to stretch out and move about freely. To do what felt right. There were no deadlines or schedules. I was wandering down a dirt road, with a rock in my shoe. Living life as it came towards me. No one was controlling any aspect of my movement ... through these journal, I am trying to LIVE that DREAM. Please do come along. The road is wide and mostly empty.

**Yep, there's still more >**



**ISSUE NUMBER 34**

(January 13, 2003 through February 15, 2003)

... ah yes, these journal notes and tiny sketches being the further adventures of triker man d. price as he meanders through the final leg of his American odyssey on that clever contraption known to all as Tera the Trike ...

### **January 13, 2003:**

Yee Ha! The Great American Trike Tour continues here in the heart of the lonestar state. It's been a wet, cold, hot and wild ride so far and I hope to pull into Key West, Florida by the end of February. I've missed my family and my beloved hobbit house over the last two and a half months, but keep at the pedals, spreading the good word about 3 wheeled transportation. Tell all your friends to DRIVE LESS and PEDAL MORE. Our kids will thank us one day.

These last few days of riding have been a real bummer. Going up and down in these boring Texas hills. Temps in the 30s so you sweat going up and then freeze going down. And there's nothing to look at or draw for miles and miles. Just cactus and more cactus and now some hardwood trees. Rode into the old German town of Fredericksburg, a touristy, bustling place of 8,900 inhabitants, and went to show the newspaper the trike, got groceries and headed for the KOA 6 miles south for a hot shower. I wanted to draw some of the cool stuff in that town, but my fingers were too frozen.

### **January 14, 2003:**

Rode all the next day in the cold, up and down and along some very dangerous sections of Hwy 290 into the busy town of Austin, Texas. Found the post office where those 3 boxes that I had been hopscotching over the last 2 weeks were and called an old friend who promptly invited me to dinner at a Thai restaurant. I am staying here for a few days of rest and relaxation.

Saw a small herd of bison on the LBJ park lands. Lots of grass here.

Beverly Spicer is the feisty gal I'm staying with. She and I met 14 years ago at a Maine photo workshop gathering. She has 2 cats, a house filled with endless books, CDs, and unusual collections of items everywhere. Kind of like one of those mysterious Indiana Jones kind of abodes, you're careful, not knowing if there might be a coiled up cobra snake in a basket or a priceless piece of porcelain just waiting to meet a clumsy foot. I rested up 2 whole days, eating feast after feast and getting all my ducks lined up. On the last day, we sped around in her little PT Cruiser automobile to a lake, a mountain, and the best barbecue ribs I've ever eaten at The County Line "Legendary Bar-B-Q" eatery.

There was a tape playing in the men's room on how to talk like a Texan. And what was most cool about the whole visit was the intense style of communication that was going on. We ranted and raved about stuff we knew about and even about things we didn't know about. By the day's end, my talker was plum talked out. And remember this: If you ever do find yourself hungry and in the area known as Austin Texas, The County Line is so grub you'll get the shakes just thinkin' about it for years to come. Beverly says so and I believe it to be true. Must have gained back all that weight I'd lost during my trike-a-thon.

We found a cool poster during our time together. It showed a photo of a bicycle, with the big WANTED and REWARD words above, just like an old west wanted poster. Under the photo of the wanted culprit were these words: "Wanted for being a threat to the national economy by promoting less oil consumption, better health awareness, and overall thrifty behavior. If spotted, immediately shout an insult of the worst kind."

### **January 17, 2003:**

This morning before heading east I met with television cameraman Lex Stanfield of KVUE. He shot a little story on the trike and caught me heading out of town on that dastardly HWY 290. For about 15 miles there was a healthy road shoulder and I sailed along in the cold breeze. Then, at the town of Elgin the shoulder became nonexistent and I rode petrified the rest of the day on the far right edge of two super busy lanes going eastwards. Not in 3000 miles of riding have I seen this kind of road. At one point I got so distressed about my safety that I got off Tera, stuck out my thumb and tried to hitch us both a ride beyond the madness.

Soon, I was back at it again, having crazy drivers honk their horns at us and one young kid that came way too close. Stopped again after that and ate some candy bars, then gingerly made my way the next 12 miles to Giddings. Needless to say, I didn't even make on drawing today. So it was another tough day. At midpoint, I was really ready to pack it all up and catch a flight home! That's how upsetting it all was. We'll see what tomorrow brings.

### **January 18, 2003:**

Still trying to come up with a cool triker logo ...

Biggest mileage day yet ... 95 miles to Houston! These are the conditions that cause such a big passage: 1) A strong tailwind pushing you along. (2) Very smooth pavement allowing for fast speeds. (3) Relatively flat terrain – translation: NO HILLS!

Quite amazing considering the living hell I encountered yesterday. Did I tell you that about 2 hours was spent on a DIRT road! And then was the section where 2 graders came by making it a muddy dirt road. Jeesh ...

Was involuntarily sucked into this sprawling metropolis called Houston while doing my best all day to go around it. Was busy pedaling northwards around the beltway when a constable pulled me over and said I couldn't be there. Took a nearby feeder road that finally petered out, and I was forced to pass through “the very black and very bad neighborhoods of north Houston” according to a gray haired policeman I got directions from. I was a little anxious and met a nice bus driver who said I could put Tera on the bus, right there in front, but I declined, continuing onward towards Interstate 10. I guess I must have seen two dozen churches, all filled and some even emanating thumping musical noises as I passed by.

3 PM rolled around and I had escaped the city, caught a \$5 shower at a KOA, then came face to face with this monster of a bridge (the dreaded Trinity River Bridge) that 3 bikers had told me was impassible. It was filled with fast, constant traffic and had absolutely no shoulder for me to ride on. Tonight I am camped nearby, still not knowing how to get across it.

Houston is the first town I've seen to have the houses up on short stilts for air circulation. Guess they don't have to worry about their pipes freezing this far south. But what's weird is that all the bridges have signs that read: WATCH FOR ICE.

And if you look far out across the flat lands towards the gulf, you can see the many pipes and stacks of the oil refineries. And they stink too. Like the very greasiest corner of your local garage, the smell moves slowly out towards your nose and you think thoughts like “damn this place is polluted” and “how can people live in an area like Houston.”

### **Martin Luther King Day:**

Well, I'll bet you're dying to know how I got across that bridge? The next morning I was up quick like a bunny at daybreak and over

near the bridge. And even though that heavy traffic never did cease coming ALL NIGHT long, I caught a momentary lull and sprinted as fast as my TerraTrike could go up the steep side and down the other. Somehow I had found a window when no semis were crossing and all the cars pulled into the left land. Whew!

After 40 miles I rode through Port Arthur and took pictures of the huge oil refineries and 3 big tankers coming in the Sabine Pass from the Gulf of Mexico. And it was weird and sad, then happy. The **weird** part was pedaling all this way and thumbing my nose at every gas station I passed. I tell folks I've gone over 3000 miles and haven't bought a drop. The **sad** part was realizing the unimaginably huge global machinery that petrol is. I mean, there I am , a tiny speck on the landscape, trying to tell others about how pedaling is better than burning fossil fuel, and idling by is this enormous multi-million dollar vessel filled with crude oil, going to the port where thousand of people make their living turning it into gasoline so we can all drive around and mess with old Mother Nature's wonderful air some more. And the **happy** part is that after working that crank for 15 days, I crossed over a wind blown bridge and entered Louisiana!

Yahoo! No more Texas. And what's really weird is that all those 820 miles I never did see a Texan longhorn cow and now here in Louisiana I'm seeing them all over.

Met a friendly lady at a Stuckeys on the freeway who said, "Well, good luck on your trip." with that neat Texan accent and a little wave of her hand in the air. It's cloudy, big windy, and 63 degrees Fahrenheit. I passed a road sign that read: "Texas Crawdaddys – live, purged, farm raised."

After many, many miles I came upon the small gulf side village of Holly Beach. Pulled into the Tides Inn RV Park where I met Gary and Liz who let me wash clothes, take a shower, and set up the tent, all for free! And Liz fixed a plate of fruit and hot cup of soup that Gary gave me. Had one of the best sleeps of the entire trip there, totally wiped out from the Texas experience I suppose.

### **January 21, 2003:**

Come 7:30 AM, I was heading east on the windy road. Saw lots of gray moss hanging from the trees. Just inland a bit from the coast, it's all one big swamp and kinda creepy. Got to ride the ferry into a depressing town called Cameron. Even the cows and horses seemed



depressed. And on the porch of the old Doxey Place, I saw 4 wooden rocking chairs rocking in the wind. Kind of like ghosts of the past inhabitants come back for a visit.

Just worked and worked those pedals for 9 hours, dodging the oil trucks and road kill, till the sun came out on a red barn outside of Forked Island, and I just knew I had to stop for the day to rest my tired bones. Sitting just inside the barn, munching dry cereal and peanut butter sandwiches, I saw in the sky thousands of little birds fluttering against the wind making for the coast. A bird migration for sure I thought as I watched them rise up over a nearby tree with 3 wing beats then a pause, causing them to look terribly haphazard in their going and not at all like the majestic “V” formation of ducks and geese.

Next morning I awoke in the 100% humid, sticky darkness and listened to a Lafayette station playing a bunch of zydeco songs in French. The news spoke of a major cold front about to move in and as I ate breakfast in the tent, all wrapped up in the warm sleeping bag, I felt the wind dissolve the humidity and drop the temperature about 30 degrees in just minutes.

It's really amazing just how sticky the air can feel. Your hands feel like you've been dipping them in greasy water and all your once dry clothes hang on your frame like dish rags.

Ran my tires over hardened mud clods and old chunks of sugar cane all day. Up through the cold head wind to New Iberia, then southeast on a route they call the Old Spanish Road.

And some days in this pedaling business it's all just dead dogs and dirty diapers in the ditches and you pray for home. I'm so appalled by the litter, even in the swale right in front of really nice houses, just piles and heaps of garbage. Where has the civic pride of these people gone? Other states that had truly unbelievable amounts of garbage on the roadside include Arizona (gee, I could retire in that state just collecting bottles and cans) and Texas (why don't they get those thousands and thousands of prisoners out to clean it up?).

Typical Louisiana roads: NO SHOULDER!!

I guess what I long for is a 1920s, 30s, or 40s America, when things were more classic and stylized. Now it seems that everything's just a mish-mash of this, that, and the other, and nothing matters but this endless race to garner greenbacks. **When you are on a trike, all the rest of the world seems to be in a mad dash, like in the gold rush**

**days. And only us trikers and the little roadside creatures know how incredibly loud, aggressive and obnoxious all those speeding cars and trucks really are.** Last night as i slept in that barn with the road about 30 yards away, it literally sounded like a train or hurricane was going by every time a truck passed. I mean, it felt like the whole structure of that old barn winced and quaked with fear.

Jeanerette loomed up ahead by 2 PM. It's the first town that really had me thinking I'd ridden that trike right into a Eudora Welty or Wm. Faulkner novel. Big stately old wooden mansions just down the street from the sugar cane factory. It even smelled different there. Two rough and tumble looking African Americans came shuffling by as I was drawing a harvester machine, and we talked a bit. One of them had a big scar on his face and acted as though he couldn't understand a word I was saying. I got spooked and pedaled to a town called Franklin for a warm MOTEL ROOM!

### **January 23, 2003:**

Drew the trike through a window at a Burger King ...

Wow, more arctic air has gotten pushed into the south, and I had to wear full winter gear all day. Thought some more about the TWO TOWERS movie and watched for Frodo and Sam in the bayous all along HWY 90. May have glimpsed Gollum paddling in a skiff ...

So there I was, flying down the freeway with frozen feet and frigid fingers from Franklin to ... (wow, that's a lot of Fs). Boy, I'll tell ya, the things that can entertain a small mind on a slow day, like thinkin' about Louisiana town names like Chacahoula and Thibodaux. Anyway, was pedaling across long, endless elevated freeway section when I spied a Coke can rolling right towards Tera and me. And with aviator-like ability, I nailed it good with the rear tire and a loud "Aha!"

The rest of the day was spent in an odd sort of zenish concentration in order to steer Tera's 3 wheels through the rows of white porcelain bumps that some crazy road engineer had glued to my only passage across those bayou bridges. If I hit them just so, all three tires would miss them entirely.

"The road stretches out before me. I know I will encounter obstacles. The path will sometimes appear circuitous, or worse, perilous. I have fears. But still, I go." ~ Joseph Dispenza, The

## Way of the Traveler

“There was a time when I shut down in my life. And when I shut down, the darkness and the energy of greed and lack of consciousness in the world won. And when I reopened my heart, I regained my power. When you live with an open heart, though, you must be open to everything. So that's hy those of us with an open heart feel pain more deeply and feel pain more intensely, but an open heart also gives you a deeper strength. The root word for courage is cour, which means heart. That's the only place true courage comes from.” ~ Julia Butterfly Hill

### **January 24, 2003:**

It's getting harder and harder to find hidden camp spots. The population density is so much higher here in the southeast. Finally found a snug hideaway late last night behind an unlive in house under a big oak tree. I like sleeping under big trees. It feels like a guardian of sorts that watches over you at night. Also across the street was a Burger King, which is an essential in these “studying to be a hobo” times.

At 7:30 AM it was 24°. Pretty chilly indeed! So I rolled everything together and pedaled over to the Burger King to wash up, warm up, eat a biscuit sandwich, and write some in this journal. It is kind of a boring place to draw though.

Sorry this issue hasn't been more Anthropological in nature. I'm sure there are lots of interesting characters and culture to look into, but I'm pretty fixated on trying to pedal the trike across this enormous continent. After spinning those 3 wheel for 7 hours in below freezing temperatures, I arrived on the wets bank of the Mississippi River and rode a big ferry across into the city. The 2 talkative captains invited me up to their lofty driver's seats and explained how all the levers worked. What a great way to enter **NEW ORLEANS**.

“Yeah, I like that Baby. That's smooth. Yeah. I really like that.” said a guy who was walking down a street and saw me zip by on Tera. Rode north to St. Charles Avenue and hung a left, heading for Loyola and Tulane Universities hoping to snag a shower. And oh my god, you should see the houses on that street. Some of the biggest, oldest and most ornate mansions I've ever seen. Tall white columns and shining chandeliers in the front hallways. And in the middle of the divided street ran old fashioned dimly lit street cars. This whole entire scene

was filling my eyes as I spun along in the twilight looking for the schools. I finally found them, but was too tired to search for the locker rooms, so set up camp in the frigid darkness of nearby Audubon Park.

Well, I got a big welcome to New Orleans last night at 12:30. I was sleeping soundly near some bushy bushes when a spot light went on all over the tent and I experienced my second visitation on this trip from policemen. Even though it was dipping into the 20s, they still made me pack up and leave, but told me of a nearby spot by some tennis courts where I could stay.

Next morning I found the gym at Tulane and warmed up under the shower. And you know what's weird? I've sweated more in New Orleans than any where else on the trip, yet the weather here is the coldest since day one! I'll try to explain.

Because the local television station said they might be able to film me leaving town on Sunday, I had the whole day Saturday to wander around and draw stuff. Which I was happily doing while explaining the trike and my ride to passerby. Then a lady named Elizabeth Klein came by and said I could go to her health club as her guest if I wanted.

Later in the day, I called her on the cell phone and before long was enjoying the very warm steam room at the New Orleans Athletic Club, est. 1872. And that same morning I was cleaning out the old pores at the sauna at Tulane. Plus, Elizabeth found me a totally cool room to stay in on the French Quarter! So 2 dreams have come true today. One was to GET WARM! And the other was to have a little place to stay, in one of my favorite cities, so I can wander and draw stuff.

At 7 PM, Elizabeth and I walked down the noisy streets of partying people to get a drink and bite to eat at the Napoleon House in the French Quarter.

### **January 25, 2003:**

Next morning I was up early to pack the bags and take a long walk around the wet misty streets. There was no one around, which afforded me plenty of clear thinking time and endlessly interesting views to stare long and hard at. Also saw places and had memories of a trip taken 20 years earlier with my partner Lynne to this city and it all made me feel so old, so sad. As if my own life's history is somehow seeming ancient, of another lifetime and unreal.

At ten o'clock, Fox 8 television news photographer Patrick

Hardesty showed up to film me and Tera heading out of town. He had me zipping here and there, and did a short interview about the ride.

Then I spent the next 7 hours pedaling in a soaking cold rain into Mississippi. And that's just how the super tramp life goes. One minute you are a celebrity on the evening news after laying around in the steam rooms of the privileged few, dinners out, warm bed; and then you're out in the rain, a nobody, pedaling hard down the lonesome road. You change flat tires on the road's muddy shoulder and listen to fascinating characters from who knows where when drying off in old lakeside pool halls.

And some folks honk and wave, but mostly it's just you and that old cobbly road that when you look up seems to go on and on, so you don't look ahead much, but put your thoughts elsewhere and just pedal.

Believe it or not, ROAD WORK AHEAD signs are a welcomed sight for a weary triker. First off, it slows the traffic down, which eases the tensions between slow going triker and high speed autos. Secondly, it sometimes offers the triker a fully protected and sometimes even brand new road surface to ride on. It's funny, cause when you are in a car, it always bums you out to see CONSTRUCTION AHEAD signs, knowing you'll have to slow down. American drivers are hopelessly addicted to speed!

### **January 27, 2003:**

Enjoyed a short sunny ride into Gulfport Mississippi. I'm needing to hang out here so I can pick up some boxes of Moonlight Chronicle #32 at the UPS office and mail them out to all you subscribers. Sorry that issue was so late. I got it to the printer before Christmas and finally they are getting it finished. Guess I need to get a new printer. I hate to be late with these little books!

Not quite sure if I can get it all done and then across town to the post office. I'm trying to have faith that it will somehow work out.

“What is the nature of the search, you ask? Really it is very simple, at least for a fellow like me. So simple that it is easily overlooked. The search is what anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life. To become aware of the possibility of the search is to be onto something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair ...” ~ Walker Percy

Don't tell the Harbor Patrol, but I slept behind a boat sales shack right on the water front last night. Met the owner Govert from Holland, who said I could set up camp there and who also has offered to help me with today's hauling boxes around town dilemma. Govert said the Harbor Patrol officer is hard nosed and likes to kick people out who don't belong. Watched the sun go down behind the boats, then took a long walk and actually ran into and talked with the officer.

### **State of the Union Speech Night 2003:**

“A free people will set the course of the world.” - Bush

Tonight, a weird thing happened. It was after dark and I was making my way down to a nearby grocery store to get supplies for tomorrow's ride east. I had put my wallet and the phone in a jacket pocket, but when I arrived at the store, the phone had disappeared! The only thing I could figure was that it had somehow fallen out on my way, through the darkness. So back I went carefully looking as well as I could, and about half a mile back, there it was, laying on a grass spot I had sped over! So I went back to the store to get the food, and I swear I thought I must have entered into the Twilight Zone.

First of all, it was one of those bag your own places, you know, with the goods still shelved in their original packing boxes. And everything just looked so different. And the whole store was strangely quiet with a barely audible 70s music station emanating from the ceiling. And there were real white trashy types all around, loaded key chains, hickies, and black eyes, and a checkout lady with really long green fingernails. Fingernails so long that she was very slow to punch keys and check people out. And there were only two checkers, so the lines were getting longer and longer, but mostly it was just a feeling of dread, like the whole place was somehow evil and made all who entered very quiet and depressed. And one older lady ahead of me ws so white and haggard she honest to god looked like a walking corpse. Man, I got outta' there in a hurry. What a strange night January 28 was!

After endless failed attempts to get the new printer to get Moonlight Chronicles #32 sent out to me here in Mississippi, I had to just give up and head down the road towards Alabama. It was really upsetting to not get that work done. Now it will all have to wait until I return home in late February. Damn.

Camped out behind the Trinity Pentecostal Tabernacle near

Moss Point in the very southeast reaches of Mississippi. The pastor invited me into the evening service. As members arrived, they all shook each others hands in greeting. And without wasting any minutes, they all soon had their guitar, drums, and organ going with fantastic gospel singers fanning the air with upraised hands. Some testified in an open manner to their love of God. These people are salt of the Earth, no baloney believers with tremendous conviction. You'll find no solemn, quiet folks in a Pentecostal church. Nor will you find a bunch of religious nuts, dutifully putting in an appearance. THESE PEOPLE REALLY DO BELIEVE IN THE LORD and the music can move you to tears.

It all took me back to the 80s when I made pictures and recorded the music in countless Kentucky country churches. The stout Evangelist preacher spoke of the importance of prayer in one's life. "The sin of prayerlessness." He said, "Let the fire burn and consume your soul." as he pounded the lectern and stomped his big feet. Then all the members went to the front to kneel in prayer as a soft piano played in the background and the preacher knelt down to rub on shoulders and backs. And all the women have very long hair that they wrap round and round in spiraling buns. And one feels greatly moved. And I missed those times in Kentucky when I'd find the most rural church I could, then snap little moments of such wondrous people.

I must confess my sins and testify to unclean thoughts and vicious acts of brutality dear reader. Last night as I slept soundly, in that grove of pines, a small dog and a large dog came to awaken me with their loud yippy and barking ways. At first, I just laid my little radio friend upon my ear and tried to drown them out. Soon they approached closer and I got up and began chasing them away, throwing sticks and hurling rocks there in my long johns. And finally, after I had chased them away back to their own lair did I lay awake and conjure up ways of doing them and all barking dogs in for good. I will spare you the unsavory details, but I have sinned and ask your forgiveness ... And the good Lord made the heavens begin to cry and pour down a drenching rain upon my tiny shelter. And soon the waters all about began to rise and once again I was awoken ... to a wet tent floor and belongings. Yes, that campsite was smack-dab in the middle of a swamp! Now everything is soaked!

**January 30, 2003:**

Zipped out of that boggy mess and rolled down the foggy road into all the small towns this side of Mobile, Alabama. Stopped in Theodore at a laundromat to wash clothes and dry out the tent. Not much of a shoulder to ride on into the city. Was over in the dirt mostly, which is a bright red color here in southern Alabama. You can tell which drivers live on the country roads cause their cars are covered in the stuff. Saw more amazing antebellum mansions with big fat columns and intricate woodwork on the main street of Mobile. Talked with reporter Kim Lanier at the local newspaper, then pedaled north to cross big longish bridges as I make my way towards Florida.

I have to say I'm beginning to feel weary. Three months of watching a rear view mirror, constantly worried that some fool is going to cross over that white line and nail me, is slowly wearing this hobo triker down.

Surfed on the side wakes of passing semis all afternoon as I crossed the bay. You see, when you're getting all your locomotion by pedaling alone, you dream of ways to enhance the momentum. Hills are a happy occurrence. If they're going down, that is. But as they say, for every big downhill you have to climb an uphill too. On this ride I have conjured up portable sails, sun powered electric motors, and all sorts of crazy ideas. But today I was surprised to realize that earlier in the trip I cringed with each passage of the menacing semis, whereas now I'm watching in the mirror and going "Okay truckers, where are you now? I'm needing a two-gear boost here. Okay, bring it on!" And that's just about what you get when one blasts by your left side, about a two gear upshift until the wake fades away.

Listened to my friend Mr. Radio last night. He helps keep this tired soul cheered up in the vagabondish hideouts I find to camp in. There was one funny news item. The DJ reported that a new Alabama law states that it is now illegal to have any indoor appliances out on your front porch! Time to clean up those hillbillies once and fer all dangit!

Found some tall weeds to camp in across from the police station in Daphne. There were really thorny stickers that I had to cut out with the knife before popping up the one-man Sierra Designs tent. I figured I'd just stay right there under the copper's noses and see if they noticed. And they didn't. No big crime anyway. I'm just a tired little super tramp triker lookin' for a flat spot in the bushes to call home for a few hours.



No harm in that is there?

### **January 31, 2003:**

Left the shoulderless roads of Alabama and raced Tera into Florida on a gloomy Friday. Lots of long bridges across broad bays in this country. Several times throughout the day, I just pulled off the incredibly busy roadway and sat, slumped in the seat, feeling tired. Tired of pedaling. Tired of cars and trucks zooming by just inches away. And just plain tired. Up till now, it seems that the energy level was pretty high. Guess I'm just wearing thin. And mostly I'm just so bummed out about so many cars everywhere. A guy gets to wondering where all these people are going at all times of the day. Doesn't anyone have a 9 to 5 job anymore? In the near future, I think we may have to rename our beloved United States of America to the United States of Automobiles!

Forgot to tell you about a wreck I had on the trike. A few days ago when I was so distressed about the Moonlight Chronicles printer not making good on getting issue #32 sent out to me, I raced out of Gulfport and meandered from the narrow roadways to the bumpy sidewalks trying to find a path to Biloxi. Was clipping along at a good speed and tried to go up on the sidewalk over a curb. The front wheels went over it, but the rear wheel slid sideways and the trike rolled over! Got up more embarrassed than hurt and was really surprised that it had happened.

### **February 01, 2003:**

Biggest mileage day yet. Went 100 miles along the gulf on Florida's panhandle. A sunny but cool temperature day. There's way too many cars here in this state. Tourists from up north come by the thousands wishing to escape shoveling snow and icy roads. There are even outdoor showers on Panama City Beach!

Have been having interesting talks with many folks who approach to ask about the trike. Many can't believe that I have ridden it 3500 miles. I thought more people realized that lots of riders have crossed the country and that it's not that uncommon. And in fact, before cars, back in the old days, many people actually WALKED across the country. No kidding. So I'm not overly impressed with myself. This just clarifies the transportation question I've always struggled with. Now I'd

like to travel by trike forever.

### **February 02, 2003:**

Some days I pedal so hard I forget to stop and draw anything. And sometimes I'm so tired that I can't draw very well. I'm traveling east on the Florida panhandle. Lots of white sand and pine trees. And today was one of the first warm days since California. Great to not have freezing tootsies all day!

While eating lunch on a beach near Beacon Hill, I looked up and saw a long distance biker pass by. The a while later, I came upon her. Danita had ridden from Mobile and was headed for Miami. We swapped stories and compared equipment and rode on into Port St. Joe together. This was the first person on this whole trip that I have actually ridden with and it felt weird and strangely inhibiting. Guess I've gotten so used to going solo that it would be very odd to travel with another person. She opted to stay in St. Joe to rest up her tired knee and I reluctantly pedaled onward 28 miles to East Point.

Was thinking about her all day and how much I enjoyed visiting. And I also kicked myself some for not offering her some of the Tiger Balm that had helped my scrawny knees out so much back in November. Heck, I would have even rubbed it on for her ...

And what's really funny is that I had just that morning been congratulating myself for having finally conquered that instinctual need to have a woman companion. Guess I'm just better off being alone, I told myself. And then I get blown away and very attracted to some gal out here in the middle of everywhere. That hasn't happened to me for a long, long time. Wonder if I'll ever see her again ...

#### **3 REASONS WHY CAMPING ON THE BEACH SUCKS:**

- 1) Sand Fleas. (2) Sandy Feet. (3) Wet Tent

### **February 03, 2003:**

There was a great sunrise on that beach though. In my state, the sun sets on the beach. Pulled out about 7:30 AM and rode into the fog while watching all the herons hunting for food in the low tide areas. Was surprised to see a lookout tower here on Highway 98 above some pine trees. Just like back in the old home state, except that this one had windows and an air conditioner.

It was a long, long 91 mile ride today through the jungle forest. To keep from going crazy, I took note of all the odd road names. Names like Tobacco Sink Road and Tupelo Ridge and Obediah Triplett Lane and Poor Spot Cemetery Road. There was a town that didn't amount to much called Sopchoppy. And going down the road, I just kept saying it, "Sopchoppy, Sopchoppy." In the very next town, I stopped at a fruit stand and asked the large slug-like owner where that strange name had originated. He said it was from the past Native Americans and means dark waters.

As I pedaled onward through the day, I swear to God I saw Whoopi Goldberg fishing off the Wakuula River bridge with some old guys! First I looked cause I was kind of surprised to see a woman fishing. And as I passed, I noticed her dreadlock hair, and then she looked right at me with a look of "damn, this is so boring and yes I am Whoopi Goldberg." I didn't stop, thinking maybe she was spending some quality time with her old pop or something and wasn't into being recognized. Really weird.

I guess what I like most about traveling by tricycle is that you really never know what's going to happen next. Take the road for instance. Every county seems to have their own ideas about how to design them. Today I was on a wonderfully smooth shoulder, plenty of room, for about 20 miles. Then I arrived in Dixie County where they decided they didn't even need a shoulder, so I rode for 20 miles WITH 2 lanes of speeding trucks and RVs. Then after passing through Cross City, I spied a perfectly smooth bike path heading in my southerly direction for miles and miles! And it's right next to the highway that suddenly has a wide bike land on it! Also rode on a perfectly white dirt road, smooth as silk.

### **February 04, 2003:**

This morning was an adventure. I had pedaled 10 miles out of Perry when I realized my big flag pole was missing! I had forgotten to put it on the trike. Not wanting to pedal 20 miles round trip to retrieve it, I first tried to hitch-hike back, but that didn't work. So I got a taxi cab to pick it up and deliver it to me! Can you believe it? Cost \$15 too. Damn I was tweaked!

All the pine trees I've been zipping past for 2 days are plantations. And they log here, just like back home in Oregon. The trees are very skinny and hang off the back of the logging trucks like long

toothpicks. You can hear the heavy equipment working out in the woods and smell the sweet pine pitch as you pedal by.

Tonight I'm camped behind a church down a shady lane next to an old cemetery. Watched the sun go down as dogs barked, donkeys brayed, kids played around a fire and yelped and hollered the way kids will do late into a summer night, and an old fellow was busy feeding his cows some hay. All this and more going on as I perused the headstones and thought of our short visit on Earth while walking under huge magnolia trees hung with the drapery of light green moss.

Guess I must be gettin' religious or something. Here I am camped out behind a Catholic church tonight. Went 74 miles through to Crystal River and got off the road at 3:30 PM. The traffic was absolutely horrendous. Enough to give anyone religion I guess. Feels like southern California all over again.

You remember that smooth bike path I was enjoying yesterday? Well, I got back on it again early this morning and rode it all the way to Chiefland. About 22 miles of bliss. And about half way there, it crossed the murky Suwannee River on an old railroad bridge. It was then that I realized I was having my first ever RAILS TO TRAILS riding experience. And you know what? I've ridden the length and breadth of this big old country, but that path made me realize I haven't really seen anything but strip mall and obnoxious automobile America!

On the bike path I wasn't being brutalized or run down by SUVs. I was seeing a whitetail deer, a ringtail cat, and hearing bird calls I'd never heard before. I leaned my head way back and took in the view of treetops while merrily pedaling along. I think I even hummed a song and whistled some too, which led to thinking thoughts I had way back on those California bike paths. It's about a biker/triker utopia. What you do is, you take the money they use to make some of those really high priced bombs, and you spend it instead on bike/trike paths all around America. And every 50 miles there's a cool little biker/triker camp, complete with laundry, showers, kitchen, and food store. And if you work at one camp for a while, you get tokens good for services at other campsites along the route. And they wouldn't be just ugly metal buildings. No, each one would match the culture and landscape you were passing through. It's that, or just outlaw all automobiles! Just imagine all those freeways and roads filled with TRICYCLES and BICYCLES!

Spent a strange, sleepless night near Tampa behind a Catholic church where the tent was first showered by the light from communion

through a stained galss windw, then by the automatic sprinklers! I have been cleansed!

## 440 MILES TO GO

### **February 06, 2003:**

Was cruising through Tarpon Springs when I discovered the 35 mile Pinellas Trail, a bike path through to St. Petersburg! What a wonderful ride! Rode all the way down to Seminole looking for a shower or a motel or something. This high humidity can sure leave a triker feeling sticky.

Came across a great bike shop called Bicycle Outfitters and met the owner Gerry Beland. They sell lots of recumbents and he offered to ride with me over the big Sunshine Skyway bridge tomorrow. I might have also drummed up some interest with the local NBC television station, so we'll see if they send a cameraman out. Finally found a **KOA** campground and got a shower. The lady said that **tent sites** were **\$38!!** So I'm camped just off the bike path hoping the cops don't show up tonight and tell me to move. It's supposed to rain.

### **February 07, 2003:**

6 AM ...

Well, those coppers did show up and I did have to leave that tiny little corner of COUNTY PROPERTY adjacent to the bike path. Here's how it happened: Not wanting to wait for darkness, I boldly set up Mr. Tent and climbed in at 5:30 PM to chill. A storm was in the works, so I wasn't too surprised to see some flashes of light as it grew dark. Then I hopped out of the tent to watch the storm and saw a man flash me with is digital camera and then waddle away down the bike path. A half hour later, there he was again with a squad car and bright spot light aimed at my shy Mr Tent and me.

The sinless do-gooder had squealed on us! Can you believe that? So I packed up and went back to that KOA and slid into the darkness behind one fo their \$59 a night cabins and slept soundly.

Next morning I got to have another shower and dried my damp clothes at the laundry. And oh what happiness a hobo triker feels at moments such as these. Pedaling away in clean, dry clothes and just

washed body. Down the foggy bike path I went, under all those singing birds and buzzing power lines. What a joy to be riding at 6 AM in a t-shirt!

Went out to breakfast with Gerry and his friend the postal worker who delivers mail on a bicycle! We all rode down to the very end of that great bike path, then way out to the sky bridge that crosses the bay. Gerry had arranged to have a pickup there so we could haul the trike over the unrideable part of the bridge. I thanked them for all their help and rode on into the busiest area yet encountered. It's called Sarasota and is just jam packed with racing automobiles. I hear that bikers get killed all the time on the very highway I am now on!

Spent a ton of time trying to reach the guy at the Today Show who said they might film the end of the trip. Late this afternoon, I finally caught him and he said they had decided not to do anything. Bummer.

Unless you've had your eyes closed while driving down your local strip mall, you've probably noticed that all the fast food joints are in the midst of a HAMBURGER WAR! Everything is now 99¢ this and 99¢ that. So I decided to do some taste testing of my own. Here's the full \$2.97 report:

Checkers: pretty puny 99¢ burger – good n hot – lettuce, pickles, tomato – just too darn small

McDonalds: a little bigger – same ingredients – order it w/o onions and it will always be hot

Burger King: still the best – the 99 cent WHOPPER when you can catch em on sale

It has just occurred to my dumb head that I may have been doing this “hobo in the bushes” thing all wrong. Just like I mentioned way back in Willits, California, “I probably ought to be in town on this Saturday night soaking up the culture of Willits and here I am hiding on the outskirts of town all camped out and alone.” When I do get all mixed up with people, it's always very interesting and they usually try to fatten my skinny butt up and take me to dinner!

Take this afternoon for instance. There I was furiously cranking my way through Sarasota. People yelling and honking to get out of their way. Then it starts to get dark, car lights come on, and I begin searching for a camp spot. And soon a wooded area with abandoned house appears and I zoom in, go bouncing off the road into a bushed out area

and sit quiet like a mouse to see if I'm safe. Then, I spot a lived in house farther in and for some reason decide to pull out of hiding and ask at the house if I could camp on the acreage. Guess I was just tired of the whole hiding bit.

And incredibly I was welcomed with open arms by these folks who let me put my tent near their house, get a shower, pick oranges off the trees AND they took me to dinner amide interesting conversation! Al and Anna Marie were fine folks to help me like that! I should have been walking up to houses more often on this trip, with an intro like: "Hello, I'm pedaling through your town. Do you mind if I camp in your back yard?" Who knows how things could have been different. Maybe I'd weigh more by now!

### **February 08, 2003:**

A real nightmare day of riding. The cars here seem to come relentlessly, even early on a Saturday morning. About half of the 70 miles I rode were in the lane of traffic because there was no shoulder space. It was like being one of those guys running ahead of the bulls in Pamplona. The rear view mirrors on Tera constantly full of over-eaten snowbirds from up north with coronary catastrophe written all over their tan faces. So it goes here as I make my way down Heart Attack Alley. Never knowing if the next minute will mean death to old smootchy here. What if one of those clogged up drivers has his cardiac event while coming up behind me?

Passed the Church of the Lutheran Confession about 2 PM then saw a sign for the Sunseekers RV Park. The last 2 RV parks I had tried to get a shower in gave me a flat out NO, but for some reason, I pulled in anyway. And what an amazing place it turned out to be. First of all, the old gal that was running the show was too busy with her arrivals to deal with me, so I nabbed a hot shower and even shaved. I usually wash my riding shirt in the shower, wring it out good and then wear it as it's drying out! That's how warm it is here now.

While showering, I came up with the idea to meet one of the members of that lively camp. Nearly everyone had a bike or granny trike and many were out walking, riding, or visiting with each other. So I zeroed in on one Ken Mumby of Mishawaka, Indiana who was relaxing amid his brightly flowered little space of lawnage. Retired at 61, he and his wife have been coming down to this very spot each winter for the last 16 years. He likes to fish, and she does oil paintings,

two of which she brought out for me to see. Ken worked in the sandblasting industry and put 3 kids through college. "And then I'd had enough of the cold winters." he said, while cleaning off his glasses. She had blue hair and an intoxicating smile.

Found out that the oldest trailer in this park is a 1947 Silver Bullet.

Rode on into and through Ft. Meyers. Had to race across a "No Bikes" bridge. There was no other way south, so spank me (besides, I ride a TRIKE, not a bike). Got off the trike at 5 PM and looked at books in a Barnes and Noble. Found a perfect campsite behind the store in the pines.

Today I was seeing so many cars that I said, Well, if I have to stare at stupid cars all day I guess I'll just start drawing them. Nd after struggling to deal with them of rover 90 days, I guess I'm pretty grumpy about their whole **stinky, resource hogging existence**. I wish they'd all just suddenly disappear, leaving all those horn honking drivers **skidding to a stop on their fat butts**. I wonder what they would do then. Walk home? GASP GASP ... the horrors of it all! Can you imagine? **People having to walk!?**

I drew one picture of a 2003 Nissan 350 Z touring speedster (molybdenum coated pistons, auto temp control, carbon fiber driveshaft, heated seats, 18 inch wheels, home link universal transceiver) for only \$35,000. That's 350 Benjamin Franklin bills, and all you get for it is a complicated bunch of steel, glass, plastic and rubber that drinks gasoline, runs up insurance payments, and sucks the wallet dry at the mechanic's shop. Oh yeah, all the crooks want to steal it too.

**February 09, 2003:**

276 MILES to GO ...

Pedaled Tera south down HWY 41 through an endless line of stores and businesses. This south coast area is very ritzy. Lots of fancy cars and fancy people. One of which I almost collided with while crossing a busy street. He was in a bright red Mercedes sports coupe and was chomping on a big expensive cigar. We both skidded to a stop there in the middle of the intersection and just stared each other down for several seconds.



Later, I stopped at a Dairy Queen to have a birthday cone.

Only went about 40 miles today. 81° and a heavy headwind made pedaling not fun. Slept down a little side road next to a dark lagoon. Only put up the mosquito section of the tent and it was a good thing because within an hour there were hundreds of the mini vampires all over it, trying to get at me!

Woke up to dense fog and got on the road by seven. The humidity was so heavy that you could feel water droplets in the air speeding along on the trike. In the Everglades all day. Wow. Like entering a prehistoric world with all manner of birds wherever you look. Seems like you're in the oldest most moldiest greenhouse in the world ... which you probably are.

Man, that place was too cool. Saw acres and acres of dewy spider webs hanging in the dawn light. Saw tons of reptilian road kill. Alligators, snakes, frogs, and turtles all smished. And groggy old black buzzards gathered on fence posts and signboards letting their most recent meals digest. Spooky.

In one section there was a canal running along and when you looked over to its rocky edge, you could see tons of GATORS! And you think, ah look at the nice alligators all sleeping on the shore. And you stop and try to sneak over for a picture, thinking cool, I'll tell them back home that this was the scene just outside my tent door ... but then, SPLISH, SPLASH, those gators leap into the canal the minute you get too close. Fakers! They weren't sleeping. NO. They were just waiting for some dumb bird, slow turtle, or Oregon triker to get a little too close, then SNAP!!

I kept that picture in my mind as I pedaled along the roadway shoulders only a few inches off the ground with no protection. They come out of the bushes here and cars run them over.

Florida, what an amazing place. You can do all the bird watching you want. And if you get tired of looking at what's flying, you can always eat some of what's been swimming. There are seafood places at every pit stop.

### **February 10, 2003:**

Rode really hard all day. Stopping only to bathe in the cool waters under some bridges. Was so hot I drank 3 soda pops and then

collapsed in a ratty motel room with a soggy bed. Went nearly 100 miles. And came across the absolute worst road on the whole trip so far. A narrow, truck filled, speeder's delight called HWY 997 from Sweetwater to Homestead. 22 miles of total triker's hell!

**February 11, 2003:**

More super bad road this morning. Where a 6 lane freeway ought to be is a narrow 2 laner with a tiny shoulder to ride on. And every 20 feet some dunce put a row of those glue on speed bumps, those things to help sleeping drivers, but make a triker's ride sheer misery. Then a bike path emerged in Key Largo so the riding became fun again.

I'm thinkin' these Floridians are real water bugs. There are boats of every kind all up and down the road. In some places I have seen them stacked 4 high on big out of the water racks. And now that I've come to the Atlantic, I can see ocean going sail boats and big catamarans anchored offshore.

100 MILES TO GO

And whole newspapers are devoted exclusively to sport fishing and have photos of fishermen from all over with their big catch. One paper was filled with columnists writing about recent catches. While I waited for darkness to fall before putting the tent up in a small park, I heard a guy on the radio going off about all the latest fishing news.

**February 12, 2003:**

Slept really good in that park. Got a shower at a fitness center across the street and headed west. Saw lots of people fishing off the long white bridges that connect all the islands. Saw a place called the Botel Motel that you can pull your boat up to a dock and step into your room! Saw lots of places that reminded me of the old Flipper TV show we used to watch . The air here smells pretty funky. Must be the salt water all mixed up with dead fish.

Also saw a road sign this past week that read:  
ALLIGATOR CROSSING NEXT 8 MILES

I was thinking that pedaling all the way from Oregon is a good way to be coming into Key West. Kind of like a sailor who puts in a lot of hours to get to a new port. Makes you feel like you earned the right to be here. As I look off the side of those long white bridges, I see many boats anchored with guys fishing off the decks.

Camped out on Big Pine Key in some scrub brush near Frostproof Road.

### **February 13, 2003:**

Awoke early and began heading the last 10 miles into Key West. A local public relations person caught wind of my ride a while back and got a videographer to film me coming into town. Then I pedaled down to the famous hangout of Ernest Hemingway's called Sloppy Joes, where a group welcomed me with a beer, some key lime pie, and lunch! A local billboard for Sloppy Joes reads: CONVENIENTLY LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

Pretty cool way to end my trip!

The old town section of Key West has big Caribbean style homes and I wandered the streets the rest of the day in awe of all the warm summer-like air, and bushes heavily laden with flowers.

Spent the rest of the day seeing all the interesting narrow streets, getting a room at the local hostel and going to the pier to watch "Sunset", an old local tradition where tons of people gather to celebrate the end of another day. There was a huge cruise ship docked there in the evening light. You could see televisions and people through some of the lighted portholes. And all kinds of performers were doing their acts there on the water front.

Rode Tera in a slow arch around the southern part of Key West after dark. It was great to be out just piddling around, cutting circles and sharp turns under the amber colored street lamps. So good to be at journey's end, to be healthy, happy and still alive after all those difficult miles.

4250 miles traveled

## **February 14, 2003:**

You know one of the things I enjoyed the most about the ride was getting the chance to test out some minimalist ideas I've been thinking about for a very long time. When you look around at America you see some amazingly rich people. People who have all the extravagance one could imagine. Fancy houses, cars, boats, planes even! There are millions of people who lead lives that the pharaohs would have envied. And there's also extremely poor folks and lots in between too. But what I'm getting at is it seems that the trip I was on was "living the good life." I was challenged and never bored. And it all had nothing to do with material possessions or having lots of money!

I really don't think I was able to convince anyone I met on this trip to give up their cars and just ride a trike. Guess our country is just too fast paced for that kind of thinking.

## **February 15, 2003:**

Had to say goodbye to wonderful warm Key West today. Caught the city bus to the airport and the crazy thing went all over the city for an hour. Passed by all the cool places I had eaten in and walked by and drawn the last two days. And there were several joyous, highly animated black hotel workers, hollering and laughing in a happy way with the driver and other passengers. They all seemed to know each other on that Saturday morning and one of them was wearing an amazing smelling perfume.

WAVING: On this trip I was waving at everyone I saw. One day, back in Oregon, after waving at some backcountry hillbillies on a porch, I admonished myself with, "What are you doin' fool? You can't just wave at everyone. They'll think you're gay or something." But I just kept waving. I waved at kids, old people, blacks, whites, truck drivers and business men, just anyone and everyone that crossed the trike's path. Except in big cities of course, where most people are busy frowning and not waving. I guess the reason I kept waving was for the look that would cross all those faces after I made the initial gesture to offer greeting. Each one would break into this neat little smile. A smile that I think is common to all humankind. A smile that is revealed when all humans forget their daily concerns for a moment and remember the simple joys of pedaling a tricycle. I'll bet some would have changed places with me at a moment's notice.

While walking around the port area there in Key West, I met up with Captain Len, who was sanding on a door panel of the historic Schooner Western Union. The big boat goes out on cruises several times a day and he invited me on the starlight cruise. At 7 PM I was back and enjoyed a ride out into the dark bay with Key West sparkling in the distance like a row of bright diamonds. An astronomer was along with his laser pointer that showed us all the constellations. It was a wonderful ride and great way to end that short stay in Key West.

Flew up and away in a twin engine prop plane. Was surprising to see how little amount of land there really is in the Keys. Just a bunch of sea level islands connected by seemingly flimsy bridges. Was surprised to see the rows and rows of water bound homes when landing in Ft. Lauderdale. Homes surrounded by watery canals and lakes and many with turquoise blue pools. And I was surprised again to see a blanket of white COLD snow in Chicago and then Grand Rapids, where I have come to meet up with the TerraTrike owners. It was 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Lots of surprises today I guess.

“Art, at its very best, is the representation of your very own sould, a reminder of who and what you truly are and therefore can become.” ~ Ken Wilber

Spent some enjoyable days checking out the TerraTrike assembly plant and getting to know the owners who I'd last seen in Vegas 4 months earlier. We enjoyed some big meals and one day rode a prototype tandem trike through the sub-freezing temps. Keep your eye on their website ([terratrike.com](http://terratrike.com)) for new exciting models soon to roll off the assembly line.

Caught a flight headed for my longed-for western state of Oregon. The flight was full and I was smished between two HUGE football players who made me feel small and insignificant even though I had just done this big and difficult trip.

To deal with the long, grueling ride, I closed my eyes and remembered back to some of the better things that occurred on that long, long pedal across our BIG country.

... and I think the best memory was one early morning along sleepy HWY 1 on the California coast. Just me and the winding road, no cars in sight, when I heard a woman's voice singing a mournful tune I did not know. Soon after I rounded a curve and there she was, standing at the cliff's edge, next to her camper, singing her heart out to the sky

and the ocean. I slowed some then pedaled on, not wanting to intrude, only taking the precious memory on down the road.

“You shall no longer share their misery, for in a world of solitude you have seen the shadow of eternity.” ~ Felice Benuzzi

Thank you for following this 3+ month journey during the winter of 2002-03. Without you, a faithful small legion of readers, I probably wouldn't be making all these notes and sketches. d. price

RECUMBENT TRIKES ... “For the ride of your life!”

Are you a  
**Kindred Spirit?**

If you enjoyed reading these three issues of **Moonlight Chronicles**, there are more, as Dan Price began writing and drawing them in 1992 ...

From that tiny hobbit hole in an Oregon meadow come the little illustrated journals of hermit d. price who continues to believe that less is definitely more. Also available is the **Radical Simplicity** book, where Dan leads us into a world free from the nasty and toxic encumbrances of modern society. The **Moonlight Chronicles** may be obtained by writing to: Moonlight Chronicles, Box 109, Joseph, Oregon 97846. The **Radical Simplicity** book may be acquired online at Amazon or in your local library.



I shall leave you with these final thoughts, written by [Ian Roberts](#) quite some time ago, as I ever promote the ways of [Radical Simplicity](#) to keep Earth clean and green, a planet where we all may enjoy our time on recumbent tadpole tricycles ... or even on our feet:

### **CAR WARS**

“War in Iraq is inevitable. That there would be war was decided by North American planners in the mid 1920s. That it would be in Iraq was decided much more recently. The architects of the war were not military planners but town planners. War is inevitable, not because of weapons of mass destruction, as claimed by the political right, nor because of western imperialism, as claimed by the left. The cause of this war, and probably the one that will follow, is car dependence.

“The US has paved itself into a corner. Its physical and economic infrastructure is so highly car dependent that the US is pathologically addicted to oil. Without billions of barrels of precious black sludge being pumped into the veins of its economy every year, the nation would experience painful and damaging withdrawal.

“The US transportation sector is almost totally dependent on oil, and supplies are running out. It is estimated that the total amount of oil that can be pumped out of the Earth is about 2,000 billion barrels, and that world oil production will peak in the next 10 to 15 years. Since even modest reductions in oil production can result in major hikes in the cost of gasoline, the US administration is well aware of the importance of ensuring oil supplies.

“The US economy needs oil like a junkie needs heroin, and Iraq has 112 billion barrels, the largest supply in the world outside Saudi Arabia. Even before the first shot has been fired, there have been discussions about how Iraq's oil reserves will be carved up. All five permanent members of the UN security council have international oil companies that have an interest in “regime change” in Baghdad.

“Car dependence is a global public health issue of which gasoline wars are only one facet. Every day about 3,000 people die and 30,000 people are seriously injured on the world's roads in traffic crashes. More than 85% of the deaths are in low and middle income countries, with pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers bearing most of the burden. Most of the victims will never own a car, and many of them are children.” - *Ian Roberts*



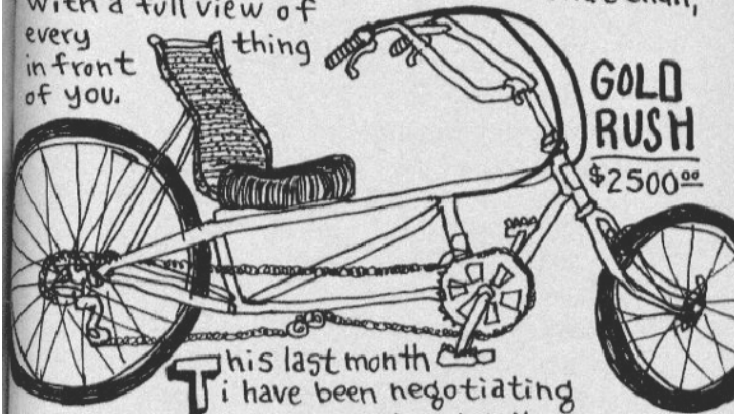


Dan's hand-built hobbit hole in the wild Oregon mountains, built into the side of hill – access by crawling through door

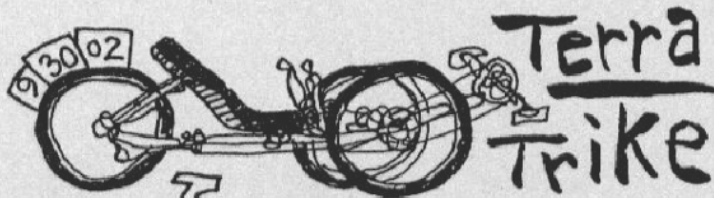
\* \* \*

Editor's Note: Dan sold Tera to a local fellow once he returned to Oregon, but has since acquired a new trike. The following pages contain a few select images from Dan's Moonlight Chronicles, which are much more fun to read than these typeset words! These are only a FEW of the pages of his books, thus many pages are missing in between the ones that are shown. Guess you'll have to send Dan your money if you want the three issues of your own (well worth it – I have my own copies)!

them. One in particular was very nice. It is made by Easy Racers. They have comfortable seats and ride like a dream. Imagine yourself in your favorite beach chair. Now imagine pedaling around town in that chair, with a full view of every thing in front of you.



This last month I have been negotiating with a recumbent trike company in the mid-west. The plan was for me to pedal one of their 3 wheelers from Joseph to their business in Illinois. I would be promoting the trike as i rode along, thereby creating new sales for them and a greatly discounted trike for me in the end. Now the company owners aren't so sure they want to send out a \$3000 model to someone they don't know.



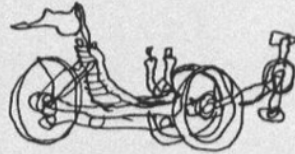
**W**ell that first Trike company did bow out of our negotiations to have me ride across the USA. But i didn't waste any time before contacting another called **WIZ WHEELZ** and they seem to like the idea alot. In fact I'm going to meet the owners down in Las Vegas on October 7TH to solidify our plans!

**T**he idea is to have me meandering thru the southern (warmer) states this fall, handing out brochures about the trike and doing Chronicle issues about the ride. I hope to get a bicycle magazine to also buy the story. And thru all the publicity i hope to end up somehow with a trike of my own. Now that I'm staying out of cars as much as possible, I need a better form of trans-

**[12]** see [WIZWHEELZ.COM](http://WIZWHEELZ.COM)

portation than the ole mountain bike.  
**W**ay back in Chronicle #12 there's a little story about getting to test ride a trike. And I've wanted one ever since. They drive like a race car, go faster than bikes and you get to look up and see the view!

**G**o to their web site and check it out, but

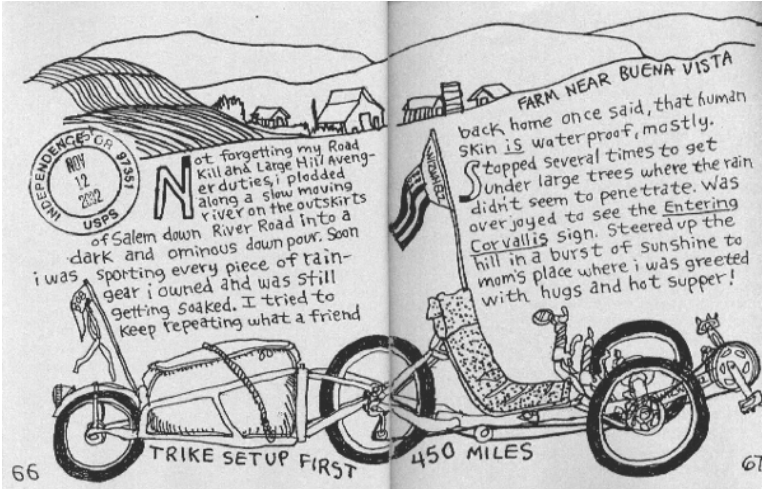


- Maybe you want to exercise more this year
- Maybe you're tired of polluting the planet on your way to work
- Maybe you want to enjoy the view when you ride
- Maybe you want to live out a dream
- Maybe you only have 20 good summers left

be forwarned: **YOU MAY GET HOOKED!**  
and find yourself out pedaling one your-  
self. I like the idea of lots more folks  
pedaling instead of polluting. I'm sorta  
even becoming a bike nut these days, so  
bare with me.....

- Maybe your back is starting to hurt

13



**THE TRIP**

U.S.A.

WIZ WHEELZ!

HOME

D.C.

AUSTIN

SAN DIEGO

OKEY WEST

**START**  
**NOV. 4TH**

I am planning on doing the ride in these segments. Stopping to rest in the towns above to get the next rapidly filled CHRONICLE printed and mailed off to you subscribers.

estimated # of bikes stolen per year

SAN FRANCISCO, CA ————— 28,219

And yes i have a pretty BIG lock. And a new tiny tent from Sierra Designs, a couple of warm jackets from Patagonia, lots of pens from Sakura and some free books from Ten Speed Press. Thanks a bunch to all you sponsors! 😊

47



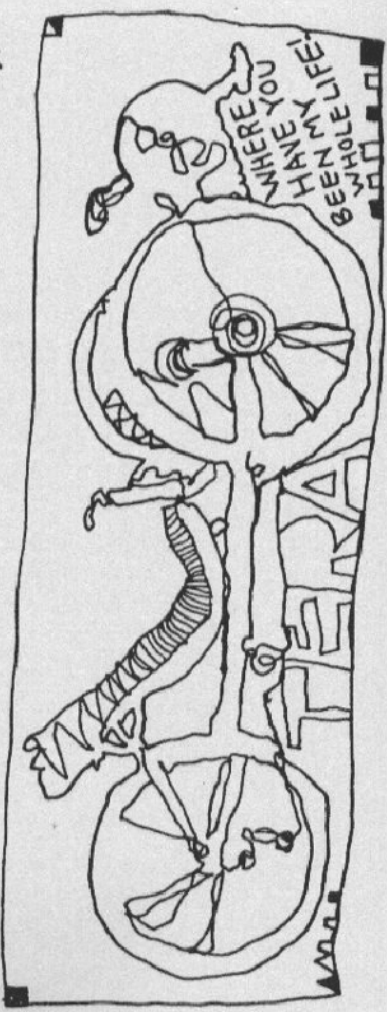
There sits Tera on the front porch at the kid's house, loaded with the bike trailer and ready to go. She showed up 3 days ago and we've been doing test runs all weekend. WHAT AN AMAZING MACHINE! So ground hugging, comfortable and fast! Truly the coolest thing I've ever ridden.

Rode 70 miles the first day. Down out of the piney mountains and up some hills and DOWN some hills! In looking and waving at the truck and car drivers, I'm pretty sure I was the one having the most fun. And they all stare at the trike, slow down, move way over and then smile. Like they were remembering when they were kids and how much fun bikes were.

49

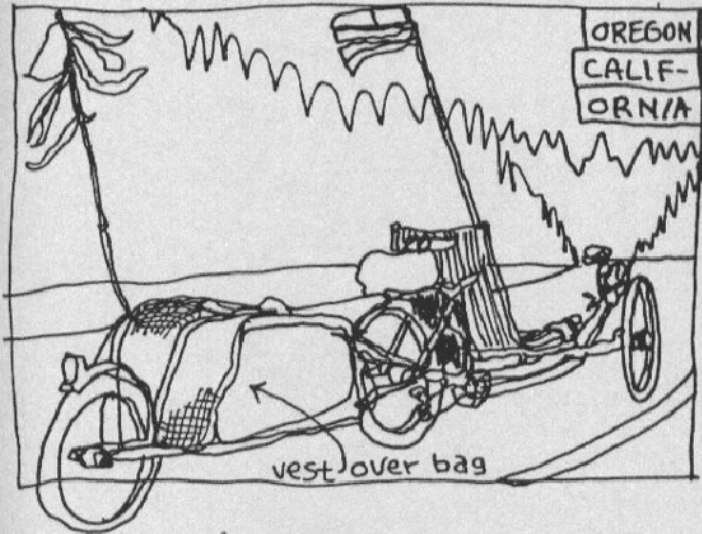


By comparison, the trike is perfect. You move along at a slow enough clip that you can actually appreciate what you're seeing. You get to have an intimate experience with all that is around you, even the COLD! I've seen, up close, young sprouts of winter wheat and many things of interest that I would have never seen from inside a car. And for us folks who admire highly crafted technological conveyances, riding a trike is so like being INSIDE the machine. You are the engine, the life force. Without me Tera just 55





told him where i was headed. Then they all  
tore outta there back to who knows where  
in those jungly woods to drink up all that  
beer.



\* lady at this  
check station gave me  
a bright orange vest  
so drivers could  
see me better.

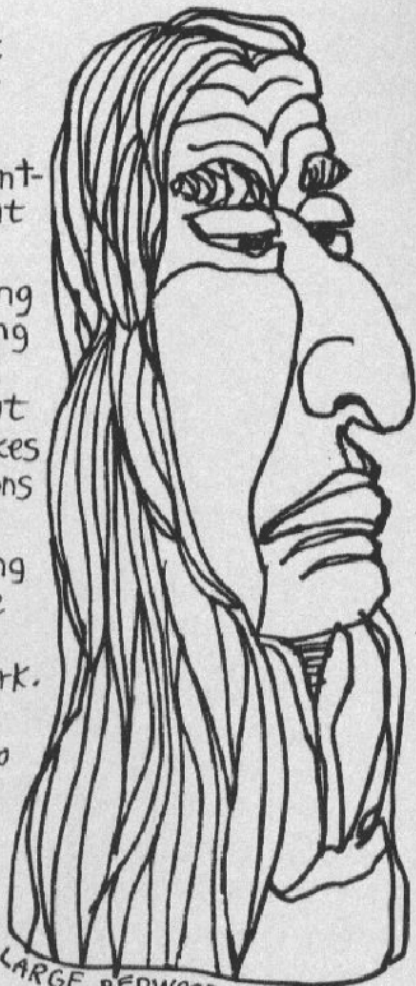
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

NOV 19 2002

DEPT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
REDWOOD HIGHWAY INSPECTION STATION

77

**h** SUNNY have been wanting to tell you what it is that i like so much about traveling on this trike. Living your entire personal and business life out of a duffel bag takes some planning and tons of organization. You are constantly taking stock of food, trike needs, shower stops, camp sites before dark. And throughout the busy day of trying to keep track of it all, i get a few sketches, so that each night i can write stuff all around them. But in the end i am



LARGE REDWOOD CARVING

85

# EQUIPMENT LIST



Yes i finally got a helmet. Everyone kept saying i was nuts to not have one.



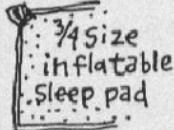
Filter water bottle. I never have to buy water!



TOOLS: patch kit, crescent wrench, allen head wrenches, tire pump, nylon string, screwdriver.



Down sleeping bag smished down into small stuff sack.



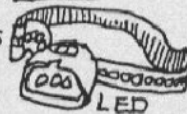
3/4 size inflatable sleep pad



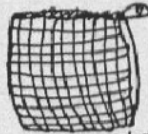
3lb Light Year CD tent by Sierra Designs. Very cozy.



state maps that are laminated and way more compact.



LED headlamp. YOWSA!



Lightweight raingear.

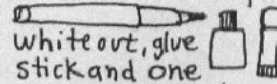


Huge two-gallon zip lock bags for food: Peanut butter, sourdough bread, lettuce, carrots (small

kind) dried fruit, candy, energy bars, nuts, dry milk, cold cereal and vitamins.



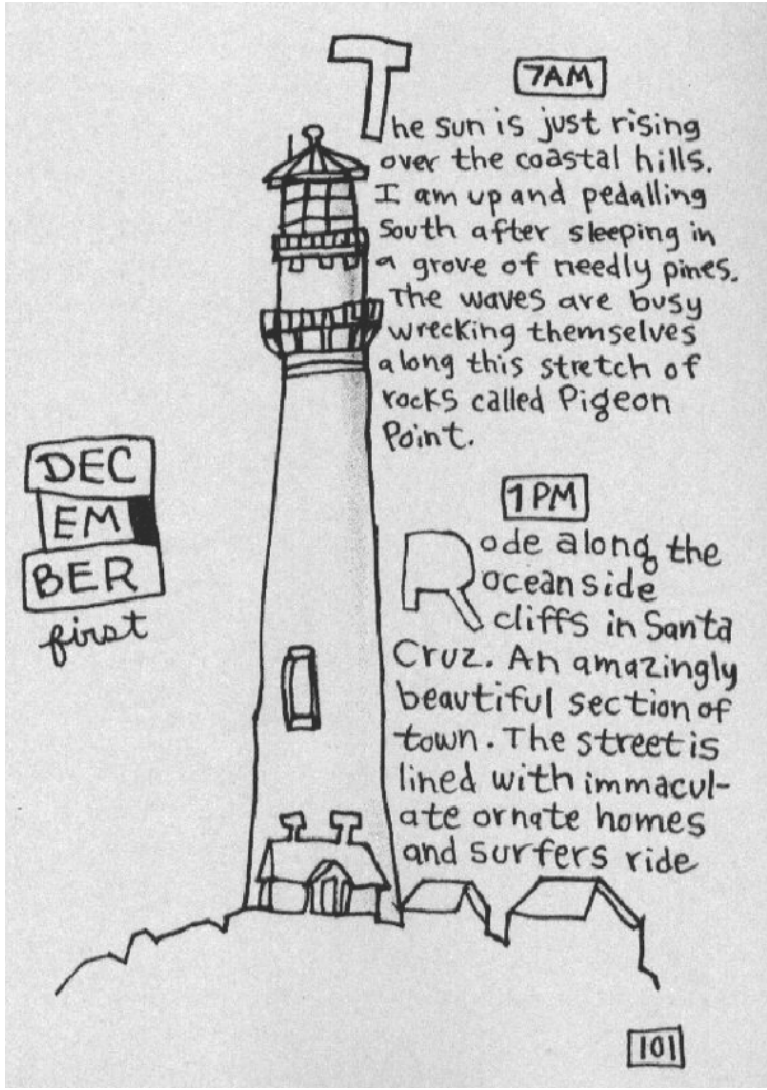
original Chronicles sketch book/journal and some Micron pens.



white out, glue stick and one change of clothes.

100

NOV 30



DEC  
EM  
BER  
first

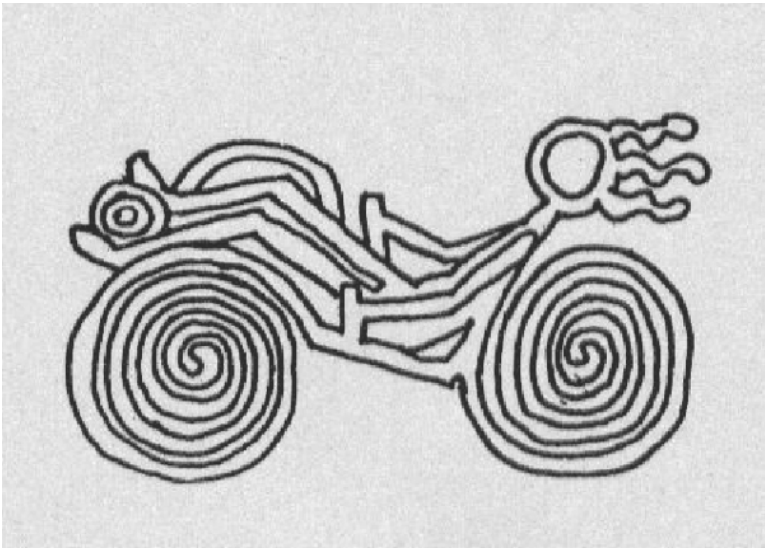
7AM

The sun is just rising over the coastal hills. I am up and pedalling South after sleeping in a grove of needly pines. The waves are busy wrecking themselves along this stretch of rocks called Pigeon Point.

1PM

Rode along the oceanside cliffs in Santa Cruz. An amazingly beautiful section of town. The street is lined with immaculate ornate homes and surfers ride

101

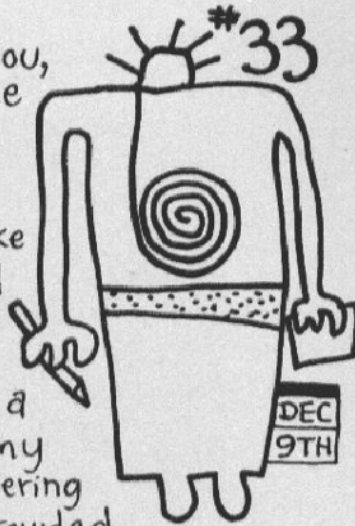


G

ood day to you,  
reader of the  
monksters  
search for  
truth while

pedaling a yellow trike  
across this vast and  
varied landscape we  
call the U. S. of A.

Issue #32 came to a  
close after leaving my  
cold home and meandering  
South down many a crowded  
highway. Down, down off the high frigid  
mountains in eastern Oregon, thru the  
wet Willamette valley and into a much  
warmer California coastline. After losing  
8 lbs and camping out for 30 nights, i  
met up with an old friend in San Luis  
Obispo and put the wraps on Chronicle 32.  
The following photo was made at a  
Christmas parade that we rode in with  
one hundred other decorated riders!



1

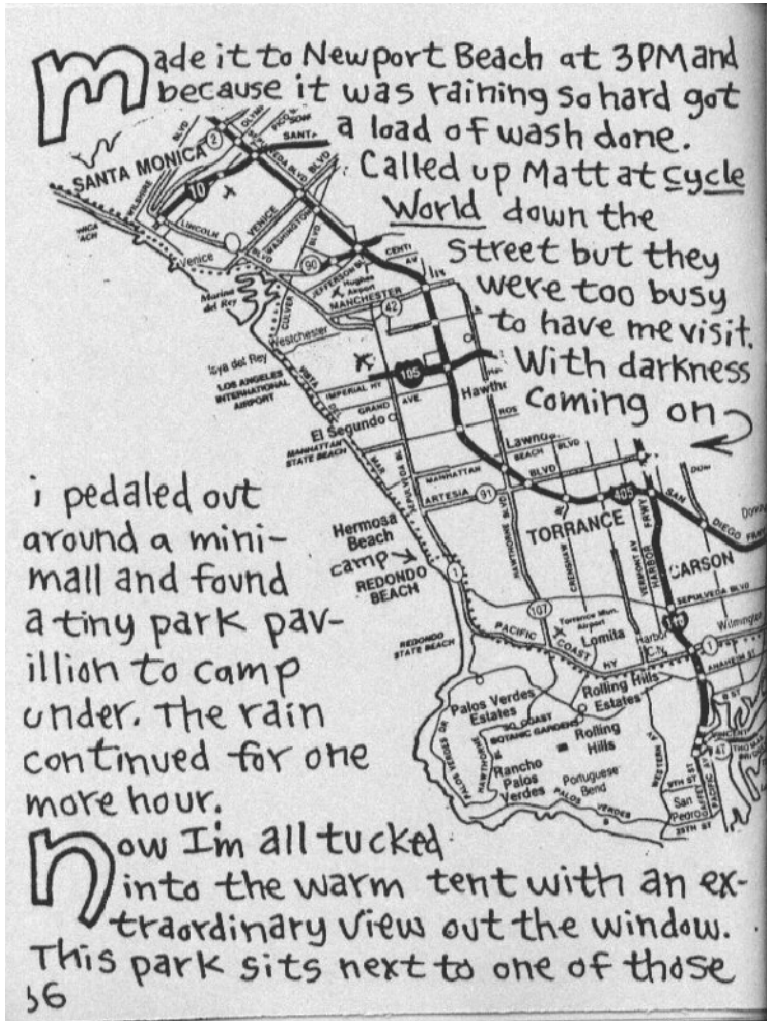
**M**ade it to Newport Beach at 3PM and because it was raining so hard got a load of wash done.

Called up Matt at Cycle World down the street but they were too busy to have me visit. With darkness coming on

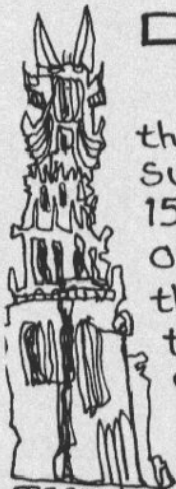
i pedaled out around a mini-mall and found a tiny park pavillion to camp under. The rain continued for one more hour.

**h**ow I'm all tucked into the warm tent with an extraordinary view out the window. This park sits next to one of those

56



# "EVERY MOMENT IS ANOTHER CHANCE!"



THE TWO  
TOWERS

Today was **8 MILE**  
the first day i slept in  
some. Rode up and down  
the coastal hills and into  
Sunny and HOT San Diego!  
1550 miles from my home in  
Oregon. Will meet up with  
the new chronicle printer  
tomorrow. Busted out and  
got a room at the  
local hostel, my  
first paid for room  
on the entire







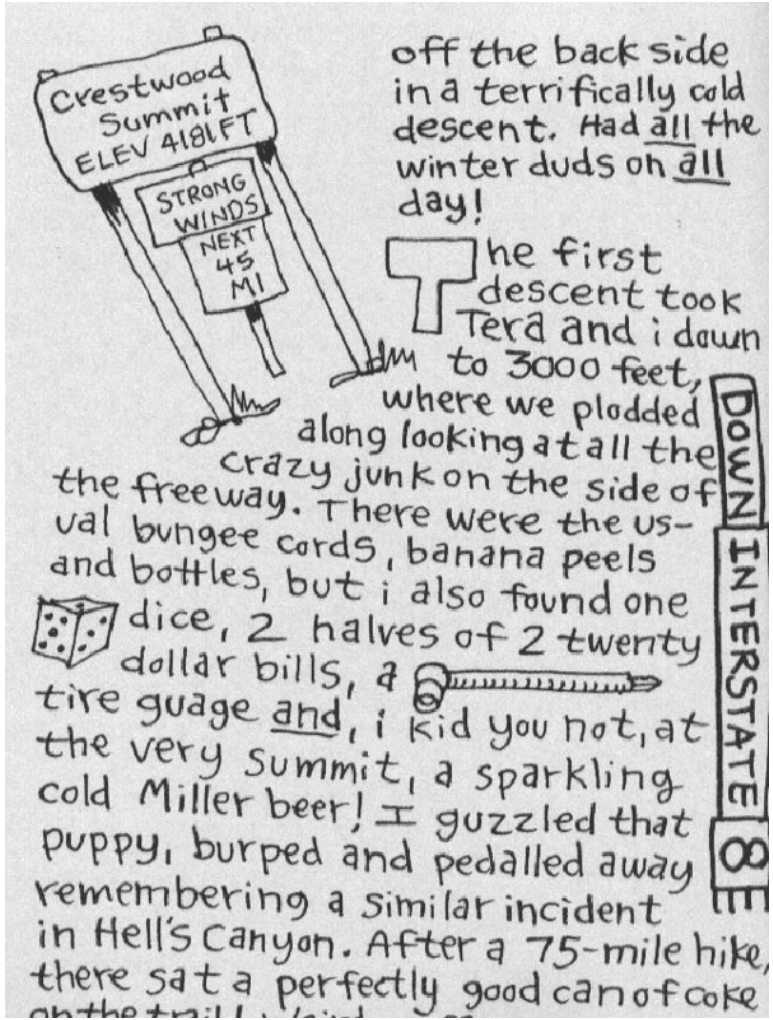
Want to go touring? No worries—load it up and it's still quite easy to ride. Have a balance problem and can't ride a two-wheeler? Just get on a trike and ride straight off! And those traffic lights—no need to unclip, attempt a trackstand, or find something to lean against—you're as steady as a rock, comfortable, all clipped in, and ready to go with both feet! And when you get to the end of your trip, or just want a rest, no need to get off the machine—you already have a stable chair for a rest or meal.

Ian Sims

from an article on Trikes



just before leaving today. Spent the next 5 hrs frustratingly trying to get out of this huge, car filled city. Now it is dark,



off the back side in a terrifically cold descent. Had all the winter duds on all day!

**T**he first descent took Terä and i down to 3000 feet, where we plodded

along looking at all the crazy junk on the side of the freeway. There were the usual bungee cords, banana peels and bottles, but i also found one dice, 2 halves of 2 twenty dollar bills, a tire guage and, i kid you not, at the very summit, a sparkling cold Miller beer! I guzzled that puppy, burped and pedalled away remembering a similar incident in Hell's Canyon. After a 75-mile hike, there sat a perfectly good can of coke on the trail.

DOWN INTERSTATE 89

# ARIZONA

GRAND CANYON STATE



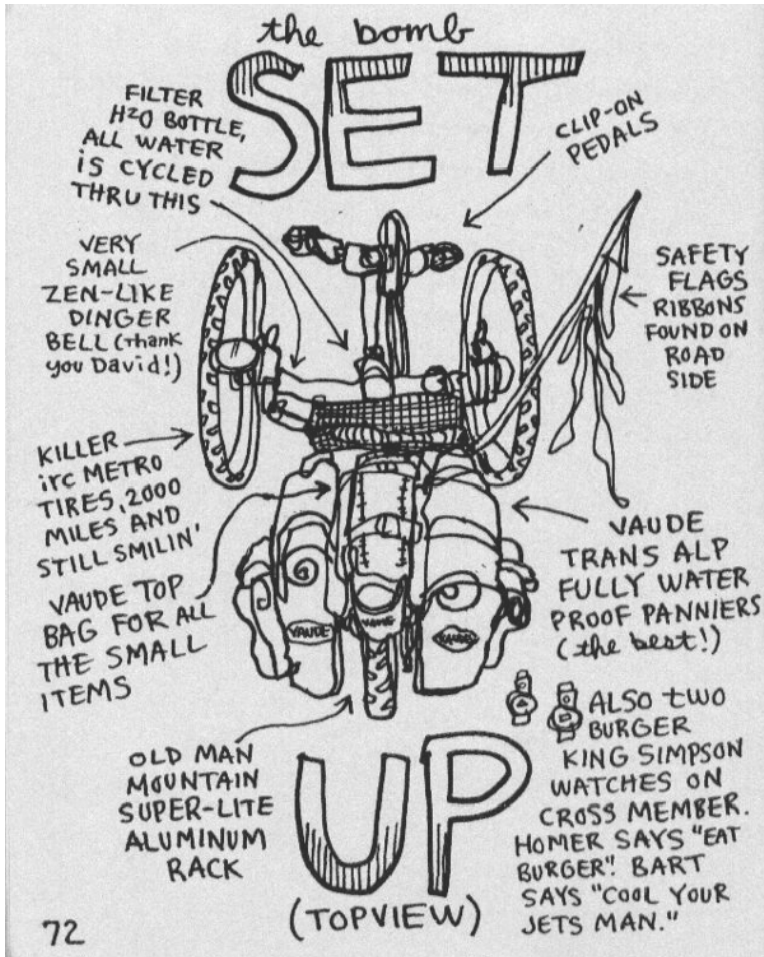
Christmas eve day i packed the bags and pedaled over to the KSWT-13 television station. Erica the news lady did a little piece on my ride for the 5 o'clock news. Rode all day east on Hwy 8, past the Gila Mountains and the Copper and Dome Mountains too. The desert is nice this time of year, sunny but not too hot. Got talking to retiree Leroy at the post office yesterday. He said that Yuma is the sunniest city in the world! "And you know they don't allow information like that on the T.V. if it isn't true," he added. All i know is it's darn nice to feel the sun on your bod in wintertime.

December 2002

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

62





**New Mexico**

**Date of Statehood:** January 6, 1912

**Sante Fe Elev.:** 6,989 ft.

**Dimensions:** N-S 390 mi., E-W 350 mi.

**Highest Point:** Wheeler Peak, 13,161 ft.

**Lowest Point:** Red Bluff Reservoir, 2, 817 ft.



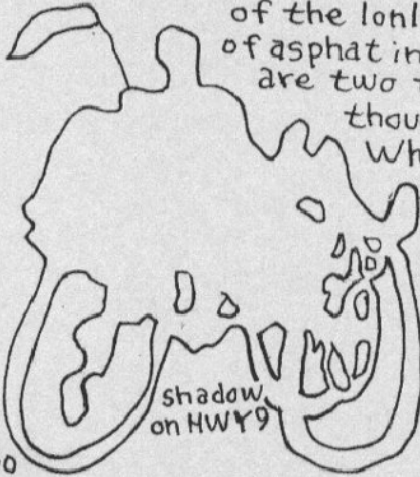
Know there's a majorly desolate one in Utah, but surely Hwy 9 here



in Southern New Mexico has to also be one

**JANUARY 1, 2003**

of the lonliest stretches of asphalt in the U.S. There are two tiny junctions though, thank God. When i was cleaning the stickers off Tera's tires this a.m. i discovered a good sized hole in one! Having for



90

Here are the groceries that keep those wheels turning....

# the FUEL



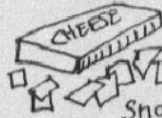
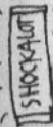
## GRAINS:

include bagels when available and those long, thinly sliced deli rye breads. Also eat dry, with no milk, granola with raisins. Use dry milk sometimes.



## CANDY: It's

what gets me down those last 10 miles of the day. The caramels and chocolate bars are my good friends!



## MORE GRAINS AND

## A LITTLE DAIRY:

cheese that is spicy and some snappy crackers like wheat Thins or FinnCrisp.



## FRUIT:

since eating my whole bag of homemade dried fruit i eat an apple or orange each day.



## VEGETS: Tiny

carrots (heavy but good for the headlights). Lettuce and sprouts make great cheese sandwiches.



GLUE: Yes, Peanut Butter! staple of all nomadic folks. On bread or by the spoonfull.

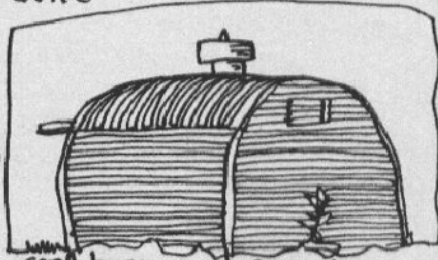
SUNNY 70° SMELLS SUMMERY



here's stickers and thorns on nearly every plant in these parts. I average 2 flats a

day. Made it into Ft. Stockton by 2PM, got a cold shower at the high school, washed clothes, checked for mail but there was none. I'm expecting 3 or 4 different packages so hope they show up tomorrow.

to all you terrorists and other crazy people out there: Don't blow up the world. We like it here and don't want to live on Mars. (Weird that i had on the trike today.) And now i will fall to sleep



cool barn in Balmorhea.

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# patagonia®



[www.o2day.com](http://www.o2day.com)

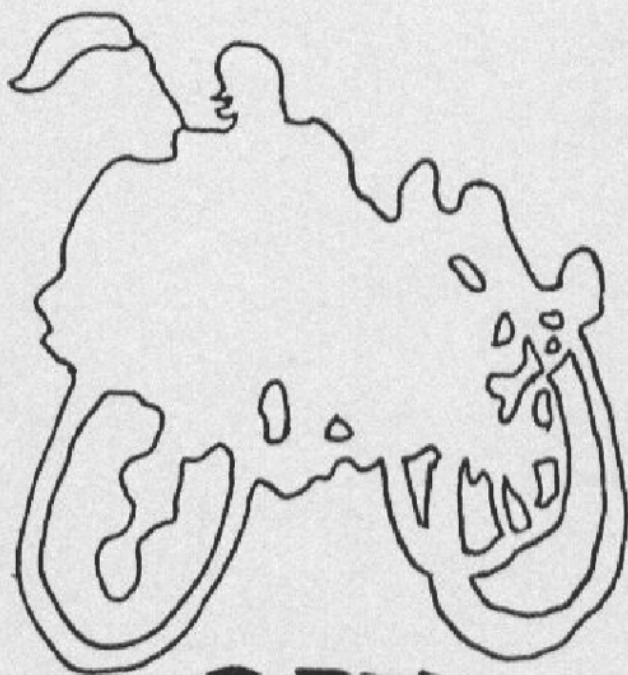
OLD MAN  
MOUNTAIN  
SANTA BARBARA, USA



ESTABLISHED 1965  
**SIERRA  
DESIGNS**







**DRIVE  
LESS  
PEDAL  
MORE**



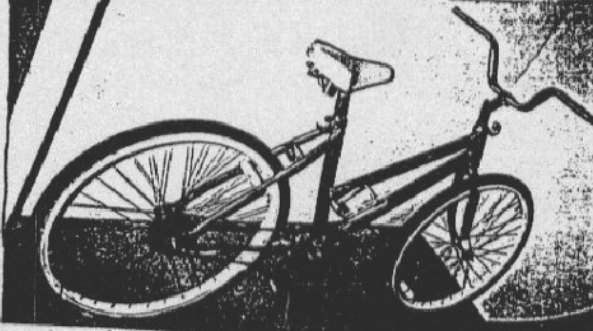
...ah yes,  
these journal  
notes and tiny  
**SKETCHES**  
being the further  
adventures of  
triker man d. price  
as he meanders  
thru the final leg  
of his American  
odyssey on that  
clever contraption  
known to all as Tera  
the Trike.....



**1132003** Yee Ha! The Great American Trike Tour continues here in the heart of the lonestar state. It's been a wet, cold, hot and wild ride so far and i hope to pull into key west by the end of February. I've missed my family and my beloved hobbit house over the last 2 1/2 months, but keep at the pedals, spreading the good word about 3 wheeled transportation. Tell all your friends to **DRIVE LESS** and **PEDAL MORE**. Our kids will thank us one day. d-price 1

# WANTED

REWARD



— \$ \$ \$ — NAME: Bike — \$ \$ —

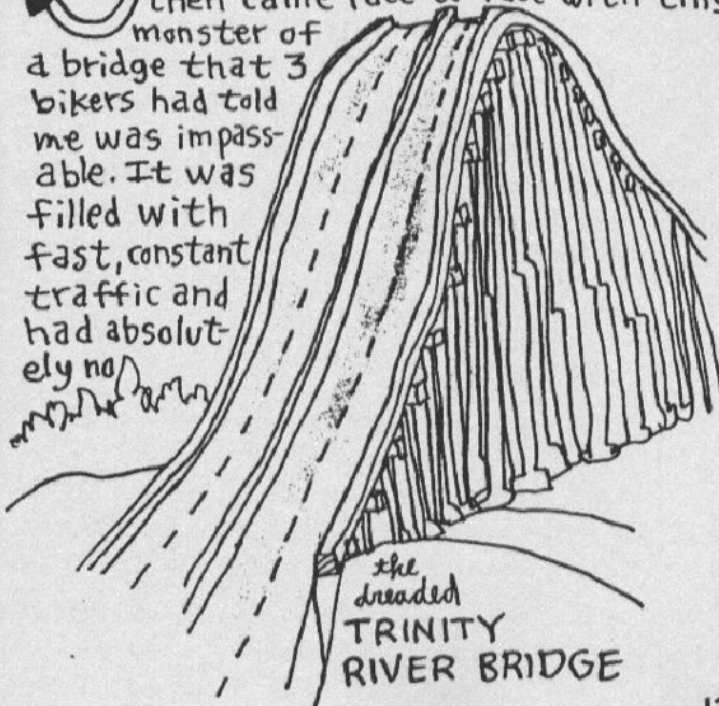
WANTED FOR BEING A THREAT  
TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY BY  
PROMOTING LESS OIL CONSUMP-  
TION, HEALTH AWARENESS, AND  
OVERALL THRIFTY BEHAVIOR.  
IF SPOTTED, IMMEDIATELY SHOUT  
AN INSULT OF THE WORST KIND.

7

there in front, but i declined continuing onward towards I-10. I guess i must have seen 2 dozen churches, all filled and some even emanating thumping musical noises as i passed by.

3 PM rolled around and i had escaped the city, caught a \$5 shower at a KOA, then came face to face with this

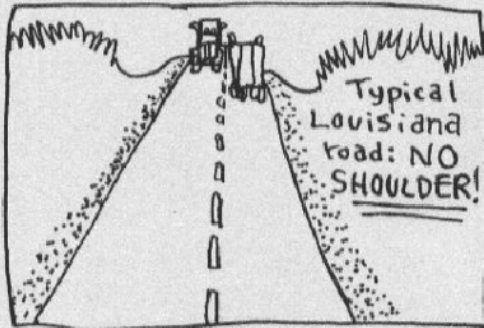
monster of a bridge that 3 bikers had told me was impassable. It was filled with fast, constant traffic and had absolutely no



13

30's or 40's America, when things were more classic and stylized. Now it seems that everything's just a mish-mash of this, that and the other and nothing matters but this endless race to garner greenbacks. When you are on a bike, all the

rest of the world seems to be in a mad dash, like in the gold rush days.



And only us bikers and the little roadside creatures know how incredibly loud, aggressive and obnoxious all those speeding cars and trucks really are. Last night as I slept in that barn with the road about 30 yards away, it literally sounded like a train or hurricane was

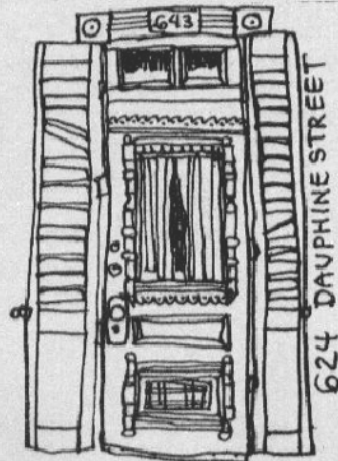
in the front hallways. And in the middle of the divided street ran old fashioned, dimly lit street cars. This whole entire scene filling my eyes as i spun along in the twilight looking for the schools, Which i eventually found but was too tired to search for the locker rooms, so set up camp in the frigid darkness of nearby Audubon Park.



Well i got a big welcome to New Orleans last night at 12:30. I was sleeping soundly near some bushy bushes when a spot light

went on all over the tent and i experienced my second visitation on this trip from policemen. Even though it was dipping into the 20's, they still made me pack up and leave but told me of a nearby spot

33

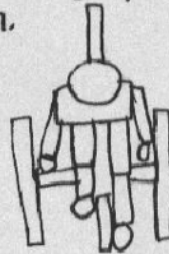


**AFRICAN PIGMY**  
Hedgehog babies for  
sale at wholesale  
prices. Also, big va-  
riety of baby guinea  
pigs. Nice Pets. Call  
228-872-2012.

Believe it or not, ROAD WORK AHEAD signs are a welcome sight for a weary biker. First off it slows the traffic down which eases the tensions between slow going biker and high speed autos. Secondly it sometimes offers the biker a fully protected and sometimes even brand new road surface to ride on. It's funny, cause when you are in a car it always bums you out to see CONSTRUCTION AHEAD signs, knowing you'll have to slow down.

Fishing All Year!

Let's Go!



The fish we catch include shark, trout, redfish, flounder, tripletail, sheepshead, cobia, snapper, grouper, bluefish, bonito, jack crevalle, king mackerel, spanish mackerel, and tarpon.

40



Surfed on the side wakes of passing semis all afternoon crossing the bay. You see, when you're getting all your locomotion by pedaling alone you dream of ways to enhance the momentum.

Hills are a happy occurrence. If they're going down. But as they say, for every big

you have uphill ride

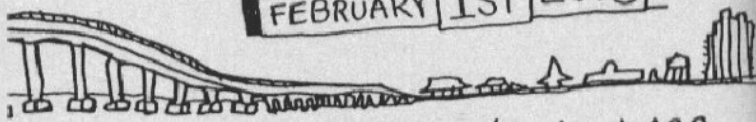
jured sails, electric and all crazy



downhill to climb an too. Oh this i have con- up portable sun powered motors sorts of ideas. But

today i was surprised to realize that i once cringed with each passage of the menacing semis, whereas now I'm watching in the mirror and going "okay truckers, where are you now. I'm needing a two-gear boost here. Okay, bring it on!" And that's just about what you get when one **53**

FEBRUARY 1ST 2003

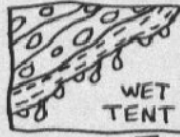


Biggest mileage day yet. Went 100 miles along the gulf on Florida's panhandle. A sunny but cool temperature day. There's way too many cars here in this state. Tourists from up north come by the thousands wishing to escape shoveling snow and icy roads. Have been having interesting talks



58

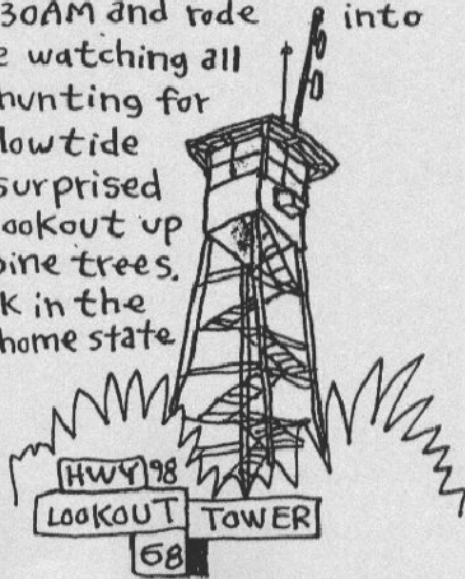
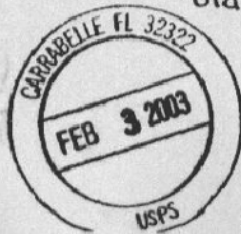
# 3 REASONS WHY



## CAMPING ON THE BEACH SUCKS.

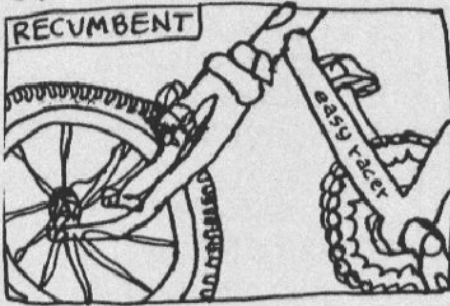
**FEB 3 2003**

There was a great sunrise on that beach though. Pulled out about 7:30AM and rode into the fog while watching all the herons hunting for food in the low tide areas. Was surprised to see this lookout up above some pine trees. Just like back in the old home state



wonderful ride! Rode all the way down to Seminole looking for a shower or a motel or something. This high humidity can sure leave a biker feeling sticky.

Came across a great bike shop called Bicycle Outfitters and met the owner Gerry Beland. They sell lots of recumbents and he offered to ride



with me over the big sunshine Skyway bridge tomorrow. I might have also drummed up some interest with the local

NBC television station, so we'll see if they send a cameraman out. Finally found a KOA campground and got a shower. The lady said that tent sites were \$38!! So I'm camped just off the bike path hoping the cops don't show up tonight and tell me to move. Its supposed to rain.

The dick had squealed on us! Can you believe that. So i packed up and went back to that KOA and slid into the darkness behind one of their \$59 a night cabins and slept soundly.

**N**ext morning i got to have another shower and dried my damp clothes at the laundry. And oh what happiness a hobo biker feels at moments such as these. Pedaling away in clean, dry clothes and just washed body. Down the foggy bike path i went under all those singing birds and buzzing power lines. what a joy to be riding at 6AM in a t-shirt!!



FREE REAL ESTATE PAPERS LINE THE STREETS

**W**ent out to breakfast with Gerry and his friend the postal worker who delivers mail on a bicycle! We all rode down to the very

FEB 8

A real nightmare  
day of riding.  
The cars  
here seem

to come relentlessly, even  
early on a Saturday morn-  
ing. About half of the 70  
miles i rode were in the lane of  
traffic because there was no  
shoulder space. It was like  
being one of those guys  
running ahead of the bulls  
in Pamplona. The rear view mirrors on  
Tera constantly full of overeaten snow-  
birds from up north with coronary cat-  
astrophy written all over their tan faces.  
So it goes here as i make my way down  
Heart Attack Alley. Never knowing if the  
next minute will mean death to old  
Smootchy here.



P assed the Church of the Lutheran  
Confession about 2PM then saw  
a sign for the Sunseekers RV Park.  
The last 2 RV parks i had tried to get a  
shower in gave me a flat out NO, but for  
some reason i pulled in anyway. And what

87

Some of what's been swimmin. There's  
Seafood places at every pit stop.

**R**ode really hard all day,  
stopping only to bathe in  
the cool waters under some  
bridges. Was so hot  
i drank 3 soda  
pops and then  
collapsed in  
a ratty  
motel room.

Went nearly  
100 miles.  
And came  
across  
the  
absol-

ute **SMALLEST POST OFFICE BUILDING**  
worst **IN THE WHOLE UNITED STATES**  
road

on the whole trip so far. A  
narrow, truck filled, speed-  
ers delight called HWY  
997 from Sweetwater  
to Homestead. 22 miles  
of total hell.



95

I've come to the Atlantic  
I can see oceangoing  
sail boats and  
big catamarans  
anchored off shore.



**100 MILES TO GO** And whole  
newspapers  
are devoted exclusively to sport  
fishing and have photos of fishermen  
from all over with their big catch.  
One paper was filled with columnists  
writing about recent catches. While i  
waited for darkness to fall before putting the  
tent up in a small park, i heard a guy on the  
radio goin off about all the latest fishing  
news.



FEB 11 2003

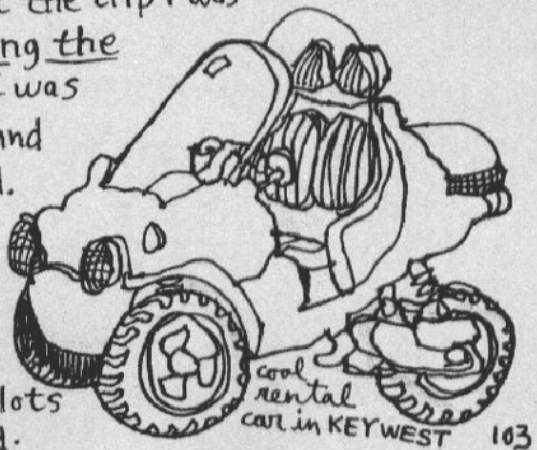
97



FEB 14 2003

You know one of the things i enjoyed the most about the ride was getting the chance to test out some minimalist ideas I've been thinking about for a very long time. When you look around at America you see some amazingly rich people. People who have all the extravagance one could imagine. Fancy houses, cars, boats, planes even! There are millions of people who lead lives that the pharoahs would have envied. And there's also extremely poor folks and lots in between too. But what I'm getting at is it seems that the trip i was

on was "living the good life." I was challenged and never bored. And it all had nothing to do with material possessions or having lots of money.



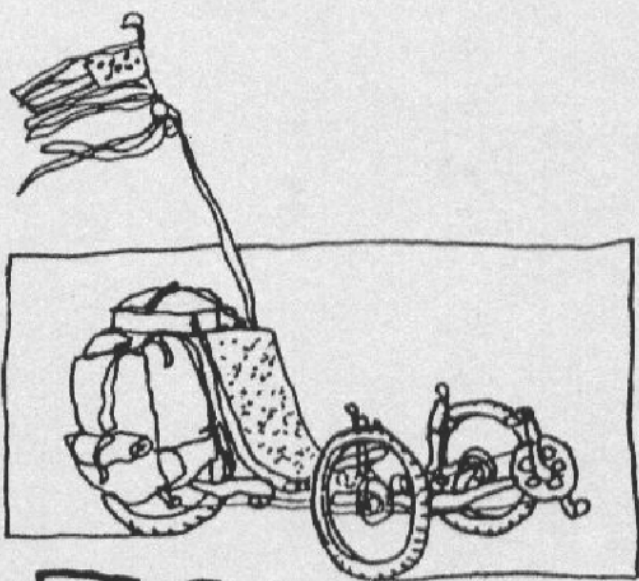
Art, at its best, is the representation of your very own soul, a reminder of who and what you truly are and therefore can become.

— KEN WILBER —



Spent some enjoyable days checking out the WIZWHEELZ assembly plant and getting to know the owners who I'd last seen in Vegas 4 months earlier. We enjoyed some big meals and one day rode a prototype tandem trike thru the sub-freezing temps. Keep your eye on their website for new exciting models soon to roll off the assembly line.

109



FOR the  
ride OF  
YOUR LIFE



*the*  
**CHRONICLES**

**YES** please sign me up for the next issues starting with number

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### WORD FIND PUZZLE

A	B	I	C	Y	C	L	E	M	A	N	A	C	A	M	P	C	O	O	K
R	A	I	N	Y	D	E	N	I	S	E	L	A	N	I	E	R	J	H	Y
F	R	I	E	D	R	I	C	H	S	A	T	A	X	I	A	A	A	O	L
C	F	T	A	S	Y	L	U	M	P	K	E	S	S	A	D	N	N	S	E
O	Y	P	A	N	N	I	E	R	D	E	R	S	E	J	V	K	E	T	B
T	T	R	I	C	Y	C	L	E	P	R	N	I	A	O	E	S	T	E	R
E	H	E	L	H	C	A	T	V	E	R	A	D	M	U	N	E	B	L	Y
R	I	P	F	A	S	T	R	O	D	E	T	E	A	R	T	T	U	S	A
R	N	O	V	I	K	R	J	L	A	L	I	W	R	N	U	T	C	H	N
A	G	E	O	N	Q	I	D	T	L	A	V	I	C	E	R	L	K	O	T
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I	E	O	T	H	P	S	P	A	A	T	Z	E	F	O	T	E	L	E	Y
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G	P	P	T	A	E	N	C	R	O	G	O	N	E	I	E	E	R	E	E
R	E	I	R	N	R	Y	E	O	L	E	O	S	M	L	E	R	O	E	N
I	E	T	I	E	B	A	R	K	E	L	M	S	E	O	L	K	O	D	T
P	D	O	K	D	E	R	A	I	L	L	E	U	R	T	H	E	M	O	H
I	N	N	E	S	E	N	T	I	M	A	M	A	I	N	F	R	A	M	E

#### FIND THESE WORDS, NAMES, & PHRASES:

arkel, berserker, bicycle man, catricle, dan price, denise lanier,  
 greenspeed, hostel shoppe, ice, innesenti, janet buckwalter, kerrel, kyle  
 bryant, rans, sidewinder, terratrike, tryx, utah trike, tricycle, fast, trike,  
 asylum, free on three, pannier, alternative, journey, human power,  
 recumbent, tadpole, friedreich's ataxia, derailleur, chain, crankset, idler,  
 spd pedal, mainframe, freedom, adventure, revolt, boom, tandem, usa,  
 cockpit, pilot, xseam, triker, grip, camp, cook, rain, sunny, cot, tent,  
 room, settle, mama, elms (*and more*)



A lone trike pilot lives the free life!



**Part Five:**  
**Trike Pilot Profiles**



**FREE on THREE**

FREE ON THREE



*I trike, therefore ...  
I am ... Tri-Angular*



# Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Schram, Rodney

**TRIKE:** TerraTrike Zoomer



## AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 52

Location: London, Ontario, Canada

Rodney is what I respond to in a crowd and I'm a very new owner of a TerraTrike Zoomer. My interest in the recumbent tadpole trike has been ongoing for over a year now and it wasn't until the opportunity to purchase this trike became available, that I have come to realize just how much I was missing.

I was told my trike is a 2008, and the price was the remarkable factor, \$600. It was from a motivated seller who had moved out of province and was selling 4 Paths and this Zoomer. The Cateye velo that came with it had an odometer reading of under 500 km and I have no reason to believe there were many more kilometres ridden on this trike.

I replaced the original tires due to a flat on one of the originals,

a piece of chord inside the tire had pricked the tube and would have continued doing so, thus I opted for new tires, a larger, higher-pressure tire. I live in London, Ontario, and Schwalbe tires are unheard of around here, so I purchased ASM Animals, a tire made for the BMX crowd. They are quite slick, made for the road and 110psi potential. Aside from getting easily dirty, they are a great tire. I put 1.9" on the front and 2.1" on the back and wow... does this thing roll!!!

I have been riding bicycles for most of my 52 years. The wrists, back, neck ... you know the story.... it just wasn't a fun thing to do anymore. I have well over 100 km on my Zoomer, just purchased this 6 days ago, and love every minute. I can be out for several hours at a time without any stresses to my body. This will be my commuter, pleasure vehicle, as I do not drive cars, trucks, buses or anything else that involves \$\$\$\$ on a daily, weekly basis.

I have every intension to open a business selling and servicing recumbent tricycles in my city. I have been working on this idea for almost six months and when the finances become available, it will happen. The stares, the thumbs up, the questions and interest from others just reinforces my commitment to get my business rolling.

Last minute update:

A few changes over the winter included the 26" rear wheel, new chain ring and crank, cassette, chain, bar-end shifters, rear derailleur and cables, 3 wheel fender kit, right mirror and magic shine front and rear lights. Still waiting for my purple sky flag and will be looking into new pedals (undecided which ones).

I find that every time I am riding, I am always stopped and asked questions, at the very least a wave or a "cool bike" comment from half a dozen people.



\* \* \* \* \*



# **Trike pilot profile**

Classified Information

**NAME:** Bunting, Gary

**TRIKE:** 2010 Catrike ROAD



## **AUTOBIO SKETCH:**

**Age:** 66

**Location:** San Gabriel Valley, California, United States

## **Trike Components:**

Cateye EL-530 LED Headlight

Cateye TL-LD1100 Taillight

Mirrycle-Incredibell Brass Duet (right handlebar mount)

Fastback - 4.0 Hydration Pack w/Camelback 100 oz. Omega Reservoir  
22 oz. Camelback Performance Bottle in Heavy Duty Mountain Bike  
frame-mount cage on boom

Old Man Mountain Sherpa Rear Rack

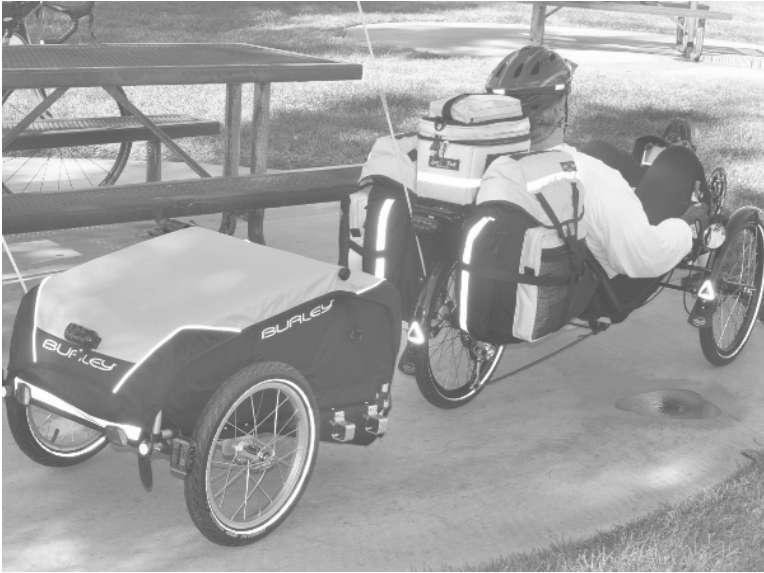
Catrike [Arkel] ROAD Frame Bags

Rear Rack Trunk and Panniers from Lone Peak (Salt Lake City, UT)

## Reason for Triking:

Age - Upright riding causes too much pain in my hands, wrists, forearms and neck - headaches often ensue. The seat on an upright now causes me too much discomfort in the 'nether regions'. I can ride the trike for much longer distances without feeling the need to rest, even in an 'out-of-shape' physical condition - much more comfortable overall. Plus...there is a feeling of being seated in a Formula 1 race car - I LIKE IT!!!





My trike trainer rollers for winter riding in the living room

\* \* \* \* \*

# Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Stuart, Brian

**TRIKE:** Inspired Cycle Engineering Custom Adventure 2FS in Blue



## AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 43

Location: Chicago, Illinois, United States

I began my research into recumbent triking in 2008 after reading about the concept in a biking journal. At that time in my life, I was riding conventional 2 wheel upright bikes (Mostly a Trek FUEL, as I loved the ability to go anywhere on or off road). After a few years of the Trek FUEL, I began to notice I could not go the long distances I would have liked and it was difficult to take the necessary items needed with me on a trip of any distance.

I am a career Fire Department Lieutenant and Paramedic with a

very busy agency and with 24 years of abuse to my body, I needed to find a better way to cover the distance I wanted, but without the pains to my neck, shoulders back and knees that I regularly experienced after a long ride. Recumbent Trikes were the answer!

After spending almost 11 months researching these machines, several things became very clear:

One, Inspired Cycle Engineering out of the UK... Of the many manufacturers out there, ICE was the one that kept re-appearing conversation after conversation. “It’s the Cadillac or It’s the Rolls-Royce of the Trike industry I was told time after time”...

Two, “These are very VERY EXPENSIVE”...

That being said, I traveled to several custom trike shops in the region to look at these machines first hand. Throughout my research I also noticed another recurring theme, and that was although these are expensive, “Don’t CUT Corners”. What I came to realize was trike experts (much more experienced than myself) were telling us “If you can’t afford it, save your money until you can!” Many Trikers made that very clear and some even had the horror stories to back it up. Several people said they settled for a different trike than what they really wanted just to have one, only to find out a year later they had a pile of junk, or were very unhappy with their purchase. The old saying is alive and well even in the recumbent trike business... “You get what you pay for.”

I could see this was going to be a very expensive investment, and with that I was also in the market for the perfect dealer, someone who treated me like I was the most important customer they ever had... I found that with The Bike Rack in St. Charles, Illinois. Hal and his family-owned custom shop were outstanding. Their entire staff treated you as though you ARE their most important customer. My new ICE Adventure 2FS arrived in March of 2010 and was then customized in their shop with several changes and additions I requested. Needless to say, they did I great job! The trike rides like the wind and was custom adjusted to my personal body type and riding style.

My preference for riding sits between rural black tops and semi-flat bike trails. Although I am in Chicago, I enjoy the open road and scenic beauty of a county ride. I keep my trike at the ready and take it with me most everywhere I go, securely locked to my roof top Yakima rack. This way, no matter where I go, I can grab a ride or be ready to ride if the opportunity affords itself.

Recumbent Triking is the best thing in the world! I can’t think



of anything more suited to promoting the human spirit, freedom and relaxation of man. It totally frees your mind and soul of all of the stresses of daily life. Try it and you will be hooked, I Promise...

Happy Triking!



Rear suspension and disc brake





ICE on the roof rack



## Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Newman, Linda and Bill

**TRIKE:** TerraTrike Zoomers (2)



ready-made seats at the concert

### AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 52 (both Linda & William)

Location: Omaha, Nebraska, United States

LINDA: Hi, my name is Linda Newman and I am 52 and live in Omaha, Nebraska. I ride a TerraTrike Zoomer outfitted with Axiom bags that I use for commuting back and forth to work during the spring, summer and fall. I just can't bear to get it out in the winter snow, salt and slush and risk it getting ruined. Other than the bags and some lights I really haven't done any customizing ... I haven't really needed to as the trike has everything I want already on it. My husband and I both have one and we commute to work on them together.

We previously commuted on our regular recumbent bikes but it

was hard stopping at street lights, balancing on my tiptoes and then trying to quickly get my foot up and get clipped in and going when the light turned green. I feel so much more confident and relaxed when riding my trike as I don't have to worry about keeping my balance, and I can ride up hill as slow as I want without worrying about falling over. The seating position is great as I can look around and watch the world pass by with ease. This is a method of keeping in shape that I expect to be able to do well into my retirement years!

BILL: My name is William Newman. I'm also 52 years old, live in Omaha, Nebraska, and am a League of American Bicyclists League Certified Instructor. So, as you can imagine, I've had a lot of bikes over the years and have a real love of cycling. In 2002 my wife and I purchased a couple of "Lightning P-38" recumbent bicycles from Lightning Cycle Dynamics in California, as we were looking for something more comfortable, lightweight and fun to ride. We were also tired of wrist and lower back pain that is so common on an upright bike.

We really loved our recumbent bikes, and a couple of years ago began using them for commuting to and from work. The only down side was stopping at street lights, unclipping and trying to balance the bikes while stopped as the seat height requires using your tiptoes or leaning over to one side. So, after a couple of years of that, we started looking at recumbent trikes so we could keep the comfortable seating position we loved, but add a sturdy, stable feel with an easy stopping and starting ability.

After reviewing some different types we settled on the TerraTrike, as we liked the adjustable seat recline ability to allow us to sit more upright when riding. We received our TerraTrike Zoomers the end of June, 2010, and began using them every chance we got. We used them for commuting to and from work, for riding to summer concerts in the area parks, attending cycling events, exercise and when ever time permitted, just for fun!

I love the stability, and the fact that no matter where I ride, I already have a comfortable chair with me, and that the nice Axiom rear bag and rear panniers can carry my work clothes, laptop, and lunch (or for an evening concert at the park, a bottle of wine, wine glasses, plates and some cheese and crackers).

We have added Cygolite TridenX Li-Ion Xtra headlights that have never failed to get drivers attention even in broad daylight! Using those with the bright and colorful "flags" we fly and the bright flashing tail lights we use makes us very visible to fellow commuters in their

“cages”. I’ve had more than my share of co-workers mention that their attention was drawn to my lights and flag well before they even realized the light was coming from a trike as they passed me on the way to work. At night the reflective trim on the Axiom bags more than makes up for the harder to see flag. In fact, when I’m following my wife who has the same exact set up, the reflection of my headlight off of her Axiom bags is so bright it’s almost blinding.

We haven’t yet taken any long trips on our trikes, the longest of our rides having been 40 to 50 miles, but we’ve only had them for about six months so far, so who knows what we’ll do this year! We put them up when the snow started to fly this winter as we didn’t want to get them covered in slop and road salt, but I’m planning on getting them down and taking them to an area bike path for some winter riding in some fresh snow when the opportunity presents itself.

Anyway, thanks for taking the time to read our stories! Hope to see you on a trike!







\* \* \* \* \*



# Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Newbauer, Steve

**TRIKE:** silver 2009 Catrike Trail



photo courtesy Gazette Journal

## AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 64

Location: Fort Wayne, Indiana, United States

I started riding recumbent bicycles as a result of wanting comfort and painless cycling. I got into riding a trike as a result of wanting to be able to keep riding during the winter time. Once I rode a tadpole trike, I enjoyed it so much more than a bike that I prefer it now over a 2 wheeled bicycle. They are just so much fun to ride and far safer than 2 wheels. It is like driving a sports car or go cart as they handle great.



I thought I would mention further that most of my riding is on our local paved trail system. I first started riding on these trails on a mountain bike back around 2005. In 2007 I made my first 2 wheeled recumbent bike and rode it on the trails followed by my factory made 2 wheeled recumbent bike and then my homemade tadpole trike in Nov. 2007. In late May 2009 I bought my Catrike Trail. From the start of it all in 2005 until now in January 2011, I have ridden a total of about 11,500 miles ... mostly on the local trail system.

I became a volunteer Greenway Ranger in Oct. 2010 for our trail system. I thought I might as well make it official since I was already heavily involved doing the job of a ranger. We have excellent trails and they are hard at work expanding and connecting them together in a master plan that is well suited for cyclists. Of course, with the current economy and forced government cutbacks, things are challenging.





\* \* \* \* \*



# Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Saito, Don

**TRIKE:** Inspired Cycle Engineering ICE Qnt (narrow track)



## AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 54

Location: Oakland, California, United States

I rode my human powered recumbent tadpole trike around the contiguous 48 United States from March 1, 2009 until November 14, 2009 (almost 8.5 months). The distance pedaled was approximately 12,614 miles. If we contemplate that distance as a straight line, it's more than halfway around the world at the equator! For the full story about my experience, look for my book in a few years from now, around 2014. Search online with: "Saito cycle America".



Delorme map company headquarters

\* \* \* \* \*



# Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Baird, Will

**TRIKE:** T1X Suspended Trike, like those sold on ActionBent



## AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 67

Location: Apple Valley, California, United States

I have ridden this trike over 1,000 miles since February 2009. It is a T1X, suspended trike like the ones sold on [actionbent.com](http://actionbent.com). It comes with: a shock absorber, 20 inch front wheels, 26 inch back wheel, composite seat, fenders, and a luggage rack. 3 x 8 gears. It required some assembly. A friend and I put it together in a day.

I have added: a mesh (Ventiseat) set, a rack for my security gate opener and a Garmin Navigation Unit, an Otivia cargo trunk on top of the luggage rack (purchased from Steve Greene), Power Grips on the pedals, and a flag.

Things I have learned:

1) The Power Grips, or something like them, to keep your feet on the pedals are very important. If a foot comes off (might happen if you hit a bump) it can hit the ground while you are moving and your leg can be injured as your foot goes under the trike.

2) I use a towel to put under the Ventiseat to support my lumbar area. I found that after a few hundred miles my lower back was tight and my feet got numb after a few miles. The hand towel under the Ventiseat really helped those problems.

3) The Garmin is great. Not for navigation, but for accurate trip info. You can set it so you can view you current speed, direction, distance traveled, top speed, and average speed.

4) Make sure your brakes are adjusted so that there is equal pressure on each front disc. If one stops faster than the other it could cause you to turn sharply and tip over.

5) Proper inflation of the tires makes a lot of difference in the performance of the trike.

6) I like to carry a walking cane with me at all times. Although I don't need it for walking it can be handy if you encounter an aggressive dog or person along your way.

7) Most rear view mirrors are designed for bicycles and do not fit well on my trike. The best thing I have found is a little mirror that fits my sunglasses. It works great and by turning my head a little I have better coverage of the space behind me than a mirror can provide.

8) I have found that the trike is a great way to exercise the dog. My dog loves to go with me on rides. He gets great exercise in a short period of time. If you try this make sure to go slow at first. Always make sure that you do not hold on to the steering handle with the hand that is holding the leash.

9) A small velcro strap near the hand brake make a good emergency brake for parking your trike.





\* \* \* \* \*



# Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Nieberlein, Norm (aka: Easy Norm)

**TRIKE:** Catrike 700 (formerly owned an ICE Qnt)



## AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 76

Location: Florence, Oregon, United States

I have been riding bikes for 30 plus years, the last 13 on recumbents. My bike stable consists of: 1) a Gold Rush long wheel base recumbent that I use for long fast rides and also loaded touring, 2) a Bike Friday recumbent that I don't ride very often, 3) a Cruzbike front wheel drive recumbent that I just purchased. It has a big learning curve to learn to ride it. I'm told it takes about 500 miles to get proficient. And 4) my Catrike 700.

The Catrike 700 is my second recumbent tricycle. It's fast and comfortable and really a lot of fun. Many fast bicycles sacrifice comfort for speed, but the Catrike does not. I have made the following four modifications to the trike: 1) mounted water bottles in an upright

position on the boom where they are easy to reach. 2) modified a flashing taillight to operate remotely from a switch on the handlebar. 3) The seat is laid way back, which caused neck cramps, and the stock headrest was not satisfactory. So, I purchased one from “Power On” cycling. I modified it with some extra foam and covered it by stretching an old arm warmer over it. Works great, no more neck cramps! 4) The Catrike 700 is quite low to the ground, so I made a skid plate to protect the chain idler pulley.

Age is catching up with me, and my coordination and balance are not what they used to be, so I feel safer on the trike than a two wheeler. Besides, its really fun to ride. Actually you don’t ride a trike, you drive it!

So what happened to my ICE Qnt, you may wonder? Well, I sold it to a fellow who was a trike newbie, never had been on one before. Said he needed a trike to ride to Death Valley, of all places. Sounded pretty strange to me, but he had the money and I had the trike, so I parted ways with the Q to try the 700. Turns out, the guy who bought it had so darn much fun with it on his trip that he started a trike website called Trike Asylum, and then decided to publish a book all about human powered recumbent tadpole trikes. You guess his name.



Arkel’s Catrike side cargo bags



Custom headrest for the old man



Skidplate to keep the metalflake pristine



Bar end electric switch for the taillight



Custom made aluminum water bottle holder (holds two bottles)

# Trike pilot profile

Classified Information

**NAME:** Shaver, Bob

**TRIKE:** 2008 Catrike Speed. Modifications: upgraded bearings, added fairing for winter riding, studded rear tire in winter, gear storage tube under seat, tactical flashlights for lighting, clear lexan LED flagpole, Air Zound horn, 56 tooth front chainring



## AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 60

Location: Boise, Idaho, United States

My name is Bob Shaver, 60 years old, a lifelong road bike rider, who has recently converted to trikes. I ride a Catrike Speed to work every day, and have not missed a day of riding due to weather since since I got the trike 3 years ago. I ride in rain, fog, snow, wind, and heat, summer and winter. The only time I miss riding the trike is if I'm sick, or have an unexpected flat tire.

It all began when I saw a trike in downtown Boise about 5 years ago, and immediately knew that was the platform that would work as an all weather vehicle. I was recovering from a back incident that had

taken me to the brink of surgery, but I opted to work through it rather than risk the surgery. Suddenly, after years of riding an upright bicycle, I did not trust myself to not fall down and hurt my back again. I saved financially for quite a while, and then bought the Speed just as I finished restoring my 1973 Motobecane road bike.



The Catrike was so fun to ride, I never got on the Motobecane again. Now with the back doing fine and pain free, I only ride the classic Motobecane if I have a flat tire on the Catrike.

To the stock Catrike Speed, I have added an Arizona Whip lighted flagpole. This is made by a client of my patent law practice, for use by dune buggies. I figured if it would work for dune buggies, it would work for trikes, and it has. The Arizona Whip has 10 LED lights on the front side, and 10 blinking LEDs, yellow and red, on the back side. My neighbors and friends have told me the lights make me look like a UFO at night. I tell them that is what I'm trying for.

As a patent attorney in Boise Idaho, I get to see some cool inventions, and some of them, like the lighted flagpole, work well for the trike. Another one is an LED flashlight that puts out an intense 240 lumens of light. It runs on rechargeable batteries, and each charge is good for about 4 hours of light. I have one with a yellow lens pointing backwards, and one with a white light pointing forward. Besides being a great bike light, it's a great flashlight for around the house and backpacking. It can easily light up the side of a mountain 100 yards away.



Another innovation on the trike is a storage tube under the seat. I wanted to get rid of the bulky rack and panniers that made the Catrike look like a truck, and thought to use the space under the seat for some kind of storage. Thinking first of a PVC pipe, I ran across something far lighter: a blueprint tube. It is super light, and has a screw on cap so its totally waterproof. It is wide enough to carry the office mail, to carry a raincoat and rain pants, and other extra gear.



A final addition is a larger chainring on the front, a 56 tooth that gives me a little more top end speed. Its only useful on downhills or level with no headwind, but when it works, it works very well!

The trike is not particularly fast compared to a road bike, but I have ridden the Catrike in the bike portion of one triathlon, and on a 60 mile group ride. In the triathlon, my teammate (my wife) posted a good time in the swim, and the bike riders that lined up to start riding were flabbergasted that a trike was getting on the road before them. They were fairly quivering in disbelief as I made my way through the crowd to the start line as my start time was called, carrying the trike. Not to worry, lots of them passed me later in the bike ride. But when I passed a racer type bike rider, he could not help but mention that they had just been passed by a 60 year old on a trike. As his 9th grade son would say, BURN!





The high powered headlight

Trike riding saves me money in gas, and gives me some aerobic exercise every day. It results in me talking to many more people than I would have otherwise, as they inquire about the trike or the lights. I have taken on the mission of eradicating goatheads (a thorny weed that thrives here) from my riding route, and I have harvested about 20 garbage bags of goathead plant, with thousands of seeds, over the past two years. My route is a popular riding route, and it is nearing being goathead free.

I maintain blogs about my passions: the outdoors, bicycle technology, and the history of technology, at these online addresses:

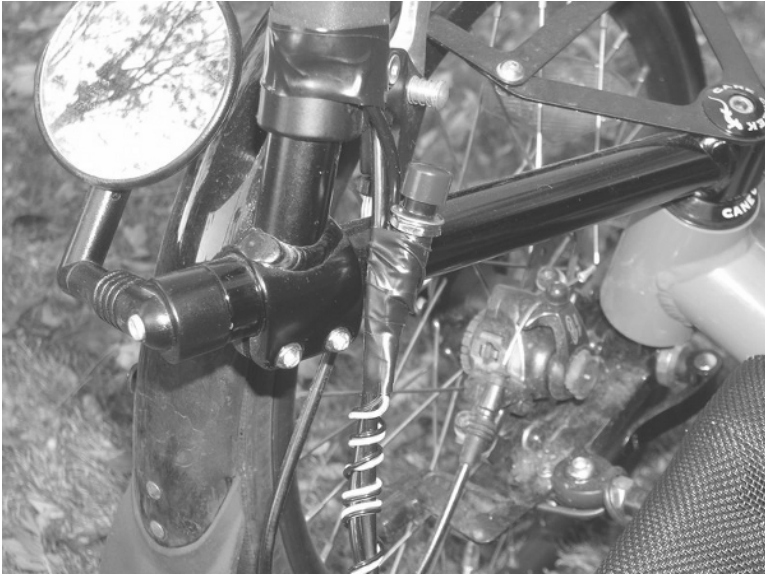
<http://bicyclepatents.com/>  
<http://backpackingtechnology.com/>  
<http://patentpending.blogs.com/>



Computer mount on boom (above), Antenna mount behind seat



Antenna attachment to rear frame



Arizona Whip light activation switch on left handlebar

\* \* \* \* \*



# Trike pilot Profile

## Classified Information

**NAME:** Payne, Adam

**TRIKE:** 2010 Catrike Road. Aside from removing the fenders from the front and putting a fender on the rear plus a rear rack I haven't made any changes. I still have the 20' tires all around. I upgraded to skinny (1.35) tires because I like triking as fast as I can. My main problem has been tire wear. The front tires on my trike can wear out fast so in addition to two tubes, I carry a spare tire with me because when it pops, no one else has a spare.

### AUTOBIO SKETCH:

Age: 40

Location: New York City, Manhattan, United States



On a ride with Kyle Bryant in Oregon & Washington

My name is Adam Payne, I am 40 years old and I live in Northern Manhattan. I am a licensed social worker. I have been diagnosed with Ataxia for about 14 years, and have been riding trikes since about 2000. I ride a trike because I love to ride. Ataxia can slowly

take away so many things. For me it took away my ability to go hiking and camping, which I loved. I was unwilling to let it take away my ability to cycle.

In the spring of 2000, my brother sent me an article from the NAF (National Ataxia Foundation) newspaper *Generations*. The article was written by Charlie and Jan Channel from East Palo Alto, California. The article, entitled *Lay Back and Pedal*, talked about the author's wife Jan who suffers from Josephs Disease. It starts off with a quote that I could readily agree with. "What I really want to do is ride a bicycle, but that's impossible now." Mr. Channel talked about researching alternate forms of biking for his wife. The answer for them was a trike.

I learned later that nothing's impossible, some things are just harder than others. I don't have Friedreich's Ataxia as Kyle Bryant does. There are 28 known variations of Ataxia, and I don't have any of those. There are several Ataxians who ride trikes. Most of them know Kyle personally and then meet me. I met Kyle in 2006 when he rode his trike from San Diego to our NAF Convention in Memphis, Tennessee. I was walking through the hotel lobby, saw his trike and we started talking.

I like to trike because it allows me to ride. Because I live in New York City, I don't really ride for daily errands. New York is becoming more cycle friendly, but it can still be dangerous out there. Until this year I rode in AIDS Rides, which are multi-day, multi-state, 300-450 mile bike rides.



With my cycling group in Yonkers, New York

A while ago, a friend and I were talking about the number of centuries (hundred mile rides) I've done and honestly I couldn't say. It's somewhere between 10 and 20. I live by the saying 'disability doesn't equal inability'. For me this means that I spend my life trying to disprove what people think a disabled person should do. Every summer I ride in the 5 boro bike ride plus many other sponsored rides around NYC. I also rode in "Ride Ataxia 3" from Portland to Seattle. Summer weekends usually find me off riding somewhere.

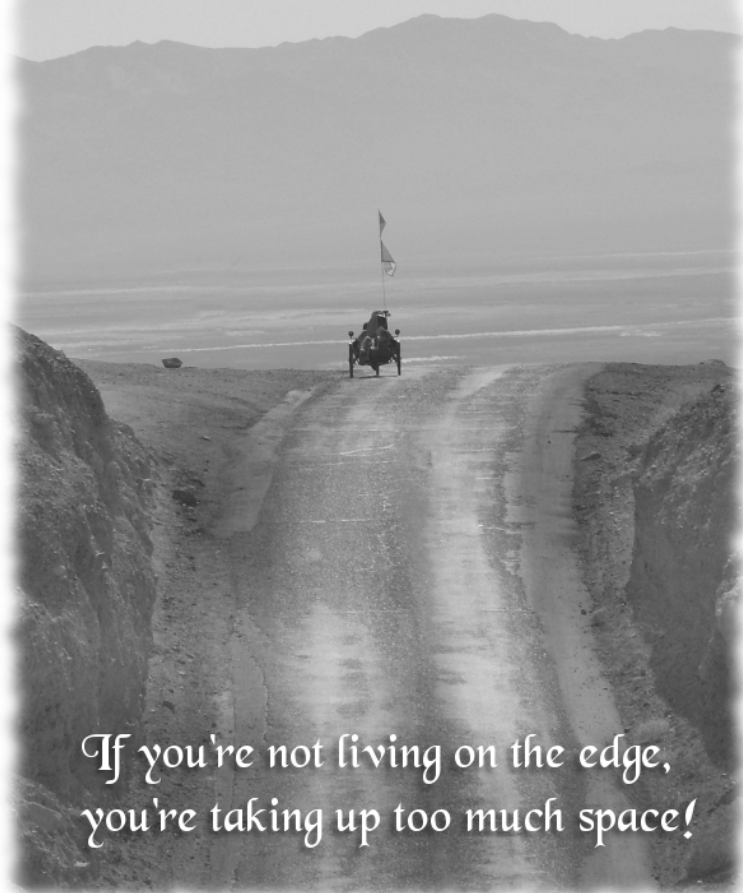


<http://bikingwithataxia.blogspot.com/>  
<http://www.ataxia.org/>

**Part Six:**  
**Steve's TriAngular Realm**



# FREE on THREE



*If you're not living on the edge,  
you're taking up too much space!*



*“You know, a heavy snowstorm rolled in last night at the higher elevations. The plows are out in full force up there clearing the roadways right now. You might want to think twice before trying to go over the top with your trike. I had trouble in my car. They’re calling it a winter storm warning, and it’s only the first week of October!”*



## **The First Eleven Days**

*by Steve Greene*

My old man, Bob, was a widely read automotive journalist, with such career achievements to his credit as publisher and editor of Hot Rod Magazine, along with the executive editorship of Motorcyclist Magazine. I was brought up around motorized transport all my youthful life, so when I sold my final petroleum powered vehicle in December 2008, everyone who knew my background thought I had lost my mind.

To replace the types of toxic mechanical transportation devices I had driven for 42 years, I acquired a human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle, a vehicle that would improve my health, longevity, and the condition of my planet. It was the right move for me, even though it further positioned me in the eyes of the masses as a bizarre outcast of a human being who was stubbornly set on resisting the status quo of traditional expectations. Fine with me ... I like living on the edge. There are less people here.

Six months after selling the car, I was invited to be a guest speaker about my newest published book, something that all authors dream will happen. Since the scheduled event was going to occur

roughly 900 miles from my home, I faced my first test of commitment: Should I rent a car, take a bus, buy a motorcycle? My answer came swiftly after about one day of serious contemplation. I would remain true to my naturalistic ideals. I would pedal a tricycle to my Author's Breakfast presentation in Death Valley National Park in southeastern California. Then, I would pedal back home. Simple enough, I figured.

This story you are about to read chronicles my first eleven days of this overland odyssey, a place in my mind, in my spirit of adventure, where the unknown was my constant companion. This was my first such trip in my entire 58 years of life, and it has set the tone for my current enthusiasm regarding tadpole trikes ... and it has also led me to initiate a trike website, forum, and now this book you are holding in your hands. Here is how the first eleven days unfolded, day by day, as written in the story [Silent Passage](#). Twenty-six additional days followed. A link at the conclusion of this chapter will guide you to the entire story online if you wish to read more and see all the photographs.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **DAY ONE – THURSDAY, OCTOBER 01, 2009**

(central Oregon coast to Bunch Bar river landing – 51 miles)

At 6:30 AM on Thursday, October 1st, a reporter from central Oregon's largest newspaper parked his car in front of my abode. I had eaten a granola breakfast, rechecked all my gear that I had packed the night before, and was now nervously chatting with my friend Matt in the garage. Departure was looming its head as a dragon would stare down a knight. There was no turning back on this journey I had crafted for myself, my first cross country trek on a tricycle ... alone, except for the first 20 miles with Matt on his trike.

The reporter had already taken a few notes, and was now snapping some photos with his large digital camera. First light had fallen upon the landscape outside the garage, air was cool, the time was 7:00 AM to the minute, and there was no further reason not to start pedaling. As I strapped my feet onto the pedals, and pushed the right one forward to begin the journey, a powerful surge of momentary fear coursed through my consciousness as reality truly made itself visible. There was no more talking of this trip in the future ... it was now! I was leaving for a long solo ride laced with countless unknowns.

I've heard it said that courage is not the absence of fear, but

rather moving forward in spite of it. I kept moving towards that emerald city. Matt served the role of tin man, scarecrow, and Dorothy, creating an immediate sense of safety in numbers. I wasn't in Kansas anymore.

It all seemed so surreal to me. I was aware of pedaling out of the driveway, yet it was almost as though it really wasn't happening. My senses barely captured anything around me, so intent was I on reconciling the impact of what I was in fact beginning to do. The reporter ceased to exist in my mind. Even though I had planned this to the nth degree, and wanted to do it, a voice within yelled that I should stop, albeit only for the briefest of seconds. I was now pedaling a tricycle to Death Valley's Badwater Basin, a destination only thought possible via automobile by nearly all rational people.

A well-wisher sent her final verbal thoughts of safe travel to my ears as Matt and I crested the hill to begin the slight descent to the coast highway. I did not look back. Not only is it difficult to do on a low-slung recumbent trike, but to have done so would only extend the emotion-laden transition.

In an instant, the comforts of home were gone. In an instant, my world was now the open road and nature. Just like that! Everything changed in a few heartbeats! My survival now depended on me and what I had brought along. The sting of this conversion was lessened within a few blocks through chatting with Matt as we pedaled our tricycles south. He is a seasoned cross-country solo cyclist, so his reassurance and calm voice played heavily on soothing my spirit ... a spirit that had just been traumatically torn from its daily routines.

Mental survival automatically kicked in. My mind focused intently on bringing to reality what had heretofore been only thought as the city blocks rolled by. With each passing street corner, I slipped into the "now" of my actions, seeing the brightening eastern sky, hearing the birds, feeling the cool air against my face, and deciding how to route my trike out of town. I was happy to have Matt riding along to the next coastal town with me. While the first miles are the easiest physically, they are by far the most demanding mentally, so his presence kept me together throughout the morning.

Within minutes after leaving, we crossed the first river on an old bridge built in the 1930s. It had deteriorated with the years, so a state work crew had recently begun a year-long refurbishing project. Traffic was nearly nonexistent this early, so Matt and I rode leisurely across in the center of our lane. As we passed two Oregon Department Of Transportation (ODOT) workmen, I happily waved and spoke a

cordial greeting to them with a smile. The second man, overweight with a cigarette in his mouth, replied: “You guys are fuckin’ idiots!”

Well, that was not exactly the type of reception I had expected, and certainly not the best way of starting off my trip. Hopefully, this was not a harbinger of things to come. It was an odd feeling to think that a fellow human being could be so blunt and nasty, especially considering that he was a state worker and had been greeted appropriately by me. It was even more intimidating because he was walking on an elevated sidewalk, and I was sitting in a recumbent trike cockpit only nine inches from the pavement. He was an insulting man, his face looming several feet above mine. He was also not worth spending an instant of my life force worrying about, because I refuse to let toxic people erode my spirit. The problem was his, so I left it on the bridge!

Miles of forested coastal landscape rolled by while Matt and I talked about trikes and touring. His rig was unfettered by the weight of touring gear, so it required conscious effort on his part to adjust his speed closer to my slower pace, especially when the uphill came along. Downhills were a different story however!

As we neared our separation point, a long and steep downhill portion of coast highway presented itself, perhaps a mile at least. Our speeds quickly passed the 40 MPH mark, a well deserved break of exhilarating and adrenaline-pumping excitement. Matt closed in behind my trailer, saying that he could feel my draft of air causing his trike to accelerate. He shot out beside me, and then pulled away at a speed far too fast to pedal. Yet, as he was now back in the full force of air resistance, it was only about five seconds before my trike again took the lead, due to the extra weight of my rig. The fascinating thing about this little fun exchange was that it was only dependent on the laws of physics for how it played out, and had nothing to do with either of us pedaling our trikes.

We rolled into Matt’s turn-back point with huge grins on our faces. The sun was now fully upon us, as the Coastal Range forests were cleared by the little harbor town. Matt treated me to an early lunch of a vegetarian burrito and chips. The waitresses were curious about our odd modes of transport, and even came outside to see them close-up since the lunch crowd had not poured into their Mexican restaurant yet.

After lunch, I faced my second little traumatic test. Matt pointed his Catrike 700 north, and rode back home. I continued east towards the summit of the coastal mountains, along the beautiful

Umpqua River. I had enjoyed his company, but now was truly on my own. He had delayed this final feeling of oneness at least for the majority of the morning, perhaps easing me into this journey in a kinder and gentler way ... two steps instead of one giant one. He and I had fun riding together. Now, the authenticity of the trip came to the forefront of my mind.

Where would I sleep tonight? No bed awaited me. Would it rain? No house would shelter me. Would I be safe? No locked door would protect me. Could I find a place to camp legally? Governments do not design roadways for cyclists' convenience. Questions filled my mind, and answers, in one form or another, were only hours away.

A flock of geese flew along the surface of the Umpqua for a period, and my road was just alongside. What a treat to see and hear the magnificent birds so close. Up ahead, a flagman stopped me. The highway was being refinished. Soon, a long line of automobiles was stacked up behind my diminutive tricycle. Amazingly, my nervousness had diminished enough that I realized the road also belonged to me, and happily, the State of Oregon agrees with their "share the road" law. Not only that, but motorists had been very respectful thus far on the trip, so fear of cars was, as Matt had predicted, lessening in my mind.

After some chatter on the walkie-talkies, the flagman motioned me on ahead to give me a long lead on the metal monsters that would follow. He told me to ride on the newly refinished pavement because my rig was so light. I did not have to wait for the oncoming traffic to clear like everyone else did. About half way through the construction zone, some workmen said I had better get out on the old pavement, as the newly surfaced asphalt was about to get too hot for my tires. I had to pass the oncoming line of motorists in only one lane, but because I was so small, my rig easily fit by.

Finally I came out the other side of the construction zone, and still no cars behind me! How refreshing. It was as though I had the forest road to myself. A lady driving a Toyota Prius the other way slowed as she passed and said "Hello fellow cyclist", which put a smile on my face. Perhaps I was not truly alone after all.

I stopped wearing a timepiece about twenty years ago ... didn't need one ... clocks everywhere I went. So, my only clue about when it was getting near to the time I needed to stop and set my camp was that which the natural world provided me, most notably, the sun. This road was very much in deep forests however, so I could not be precise in the sun's location, but I had been pedaling now for about 51 miles and felt

like calling it a day.

Living on wilderness time is my preferred way. Go to sleep when the world gets dark. Awaken when it gets light. Simple. Less stress. This journey was to be experienced wholly on wilderness time. I was now in an alternative realm far from those folks speeding by in automobiles ... suited me just fine!

Up ahead a huge turnout right on the river became visible, called Bunch Bar. It had a portion that was hidden from the highway, which would provide an excellent place to pitch my small tent. A nice concrete block toilet facility was there, but, as motorists and myself would learn, had locked doors. Go figure! The sky was cloudy now. I erected my tent on an area of cedar chips, ate my first meal from the trailer, brushed my teeth, used the bushes, and then climbed into my sleeping bag, content with a solid day behind me. After a short journal entry to record the day in words, off to sleep I went.

## **DAY TWO – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 02, 2009**

(Bunch Bar river landing to Wilbur, Oregon – 35 miles)

Last night it rained lightly on and off. I did not completely stake out the tent's fly, so it contacted the tent material in places, allowing moisture through. Where my sleeping bag touched the tent at my feet, it became damp. The tent was an REI Arête ASL (all season light), a two-person tent that provided ample space to keep my panniers inside at night, on one side, while I slept on the other. It is not a big tent, and if two people really used it, quarters would be very cramped. I would more realistically classify it as a one-person structure, where you can actually sit up, dress, write in a journal, and stow gear (with absolutely no room left over).

The morning was mostly cloudy and damp, but the temperature was comfortable with a jacket. From my trailer's 50 pound supply of food, I pulled out some Crunchy Nuggets, a generic brand of Grape-Nuts. Into the bowl with the nuggets went a handful of raisins, some high fiber cereal, and water (since to carry soy milk would make the load even heavier). It was a tasty mix, not my favorite, but the easiest for me to bring in bulk. This was to be my breakfast for nearly every day of the trip, along with a couple of dried plums as a treat.

After the panniers were placed back on the trike, and the tent and sleeping bag stashed in the trailer, I hit the road at about 8:40 AM. Around an hour later, as the sky was clearing, I passed through the tiny

mountain town of Elkton. After a quick use of the restroom at the local library, I eagerly resumed my pedaling through the coastal range.

South of this town, there are some steep and long uphill grades, which have no effect on people being propelled along the asphalt by gasoline engines, but really slow down cyclists ... especially those laden with over a hundred pounds of additional cargo. It was a low gear affair to the top of each hill, with a top speed of about 3-4 miles per hour. Fortunately, the scenery is top notch, passing rolling hills with farms, pastures, and quaint old barns mixed amidst the evergreen forests.

On an Oregon bicycle map, Highway 138 is shown as lightly traveled and bicycle-friendly. For the most part, this is true. The apprehension came occasionally at curves in the steep road that had absolutely no shoulder, thereby forcing me into the automobile lane. Normally, this is not an issue when the road is open, as cars can see a cyclist ahead of time. However, when a cyclist enters into what I term a "blind right" curve on a shoulderless road, he is in danger if a car does not see him enter.

A blind right hand curve is anxiety producing when one is cycling at 3 miles per hour on a steep hill because a car can come speeding around without knowledge of the cyclist's presence. Well, on this stretch of road, precisely this happened to me with a huge motorhome, and was to be the only incident on this entire trip where anger was clearly demonstrated towards me. Due to my slow speed, I was necessarily in the curve for what seemed like eternity, and I heard the behemoth vehicle's engine heavily straining to maintain speed as it labored up the long curvy mountain hill, soon to overtake my diminutive trike and trailer. In fact, I knew this noisy box was coming long before I could see it, hearing its engine get louder and louder, becoming an ever swelling blight on the serenity of my silent passage.

This road is one lane in each direction, and it is narrow. This particular blind-right was in a section that was cut out of the mountain on both sides, meaning no leeway beyond the lane whatsoever. As soon as I saw the motorhome in my rearview mirror, the driver saw me, with only feet to spare. Obviously, he was not expecting a ten-foot long trike and trailer to be here. The driver adeptly slowed and moved over the center line, and there was no honking of horn or anything to indicate he was upset. His wife, on the other hand, had different ideas.

It all happened so fast that I did not understand a word she said, but my experience as a human told me that she was clearly not a happy

passenger. For the briefest of split second, her hateful and obnoxious voice showered down upon me like poison-tipped arrows from the sky (good thing I had a helmet), but since hubby didn't want to slow his trip, they were gone in mere seconds around the next left-hand curve. My trike was so close to the rock cliff face on my right that I was darn near scraping it at this point. I guess she was unaware of Oregon's "Share the Road" law. Some good the law does though, when governments pay little regard for the life of people who use human-powered vehicles.

My ride returned to the silence of a primitive forested world once again, thus one of the reasons for the title of this tale. A notable upside of trike travel is passing through the natural countryside in silence, as no engine or tire whine spoils the sounds of nature. It is indeed a silent passage. At nine inches from the roadway and slow speed the norm, a trike pilot's realm allows for true appreciation of all that unfolds in this mystical forested world. Happily, automobile traffic is indeed light and scattered, so nine out of every ten minutes are enjoyable.

Another aspect that is readily appreciated when triking in mountainous terrain is this: For every long and taxing uphill, there is often an equally long downhill. What may have taken well over half an hour to climb, can easily require only a few short minutes to descend ... and the descent is clearly an all-out adrenaline pumping delight.

Tadpole tricycles (the two wheels in front) inherently make for a very stable and safe platform for quick curvy downgrades. Serious speed can quickly be attained on steep grades, speeds easily passing the 40 miles per hour mark. If the hill lasts long enough and is steep enough, another ten can be realized. There have been enough downhills so far on this trip, and in my training rides, for me to know that I find them a thing to be coveted. Of course, from a health and longevity standpoint, it is the slow pedaling up the hill that delivers the goods, and strengthens my physical body, whereas the downhills essentially strengthen only my happy and playful spirit.

Once over the crest of the Coast Range, there is one ultra-long downgrade into the town of Sutherlin, which straddles Interstate 5. By the time I reached the town, I was well rested, but weary of sitting so long. The town's visitor center lawn made a nice place to spread out my tent fly so it could dry in the sun. I met Bernie Sigmond, the happy elder volunteer, who was surprised to see my mode of transport, and amazed by where I was headed. Outside at picnic table, I ate my second



night's dinner, a convenient one-pound pouch of rice and veggies, happy to be relaxing in the pleasant afternoon light. A fair amount of traffic motored by on the road behind me, but I paid little heed to it, tired as I was. Recumbent trikes are very comfortable, but like car, it feels good to stop and stretch.

After this half-hour interlude, I figured I best get packing on south and east, for the sun was sinking lower towards the mountains, which were now to my west. I had no desire to locate a camp area here in a town environment, because to do so would mean a fee-based campground, which I prefer to minimize whenever possible. My way is most often what is termed "stealth camping", where I find a nice piece of public, but concealed, earth where I can be at one with the natural world. So, off I pedal on a side road to the interstate for five miles until I reach the tiny village of Wilbur.

The sun is still up when I arrive. I locate Road 200, locally known as the North Bank Road, in mid-Wilbur that cuts east, and I make the turn. This road skirts the northern bank of the Umpqua River, and will take me up and over many miles of rolling hills dotted with stately oak trees, on the way to Glide, Oregon, at the western base of the mighty Cascade Range, a volcanic wonderland of tall trees and cascading waterfalls.

From past experience on this road with a car, I know the hills are steep, and if tomorrow is sunny, it will be a very warm experience, as there are no large forests to shade me like I had been riding through so far. I also know that the property alongside this country road consists of huge privately-owned ranches, and there is only one large turnout midway where I could probably pitch a tent, but even then, I would be readily visible to any passing motorists. My mind seeks solutions, and seeing the Wilbur United Methodist Church up ahead, I pull into the paved lot, park under some shade trees, and decide to do an early dinner.

I chose not to set my tent here, so as not to draw attention and possibly be asked to leave, so after dinner and a short walk, I decided to sleep on the trike. This is relatively easy to do, with the low and reclined seat. I just straightened my legs out in front of me. The night was working up to be a nippy one, so I donned some warm coats and a polar fleece hat to settle in. It had been a 35 mile day, not as many as yesterday, but considering the numerous steep grades, it was all right with me.

Sleep is intermittent and interrupted due to the close proximity

of train tracks and the interstate ... not to mention the barking dog 15 feet behind me in a neighbor's yard, which led to him wondering if I were some unsavory transient. Once he felt secure that I was an educated traveler with a legitimate agenda, I was left to myself. Of course, here in a town, there are bright street lights to keep the evil spirits away, so it never really got dark enough to sleep soundly.

Finally, around what must have been about midnight, it dawns upon my restless mind that the sky is perfectly clear and the moon is perfectly full ... and very bright!

### **DAY THREE – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 03, 2009**

(Wilbur, Oregon to Susan Creek Campground,  
Cascade Mountain Range. – 31 miles)

I am cold. Having been sitting on the trike seat for the past several hours attempting to sleep, the lack of movement has led to a chilling of my bones, even though not a wisp of wind was present. My down vest, polar fleece jacket, all-weather rain jacket, and polar fleece skull cap, have done an admirable job retaining my body heat considering the chilly night air, but they don't take the place of a toasty mummy bag in a tent.

Gazing towards the full moon, I started to debate the wisdom of just leaving this little berg of Wilbur right now, in the middle of the night. Even though I was under a large tree, the nearby streetlights kept it bright enough that sleeping was a challenge. And when a freight train would slowly rumble by, it made me wonder how long it took the neighbors to get used to it. I figured that remaining here would probably not get me much more in the way of restful sleep, so I might as well be pedaling, especially since it was so bright out that a headlight would not be necessary.

All things considered, I decided to resume my journey. Since I was already dressed and not in the tent, it was a simple matter of putting my feet on the pedals and heading out, and since the trike is noiseless, no one would even be aware of my departure. The road out of town is straight and uphill, so warming up came quickly. It was cold enough though, that I wore my water and windproof motorcycle gloves instead of my lightweight cycling gloves.

Within a few minutes, I felt confident that traveling this stretch at night was a good idea. The moonlit sky was so bright that I kept my headlight turned off unless a rare car motored by. I did keep the flashing

red tail light operating however, as well as my marine rescue strobe on the back of my trailer. With this setup, I was as visible at night as in the day. My tail and head lights were manufactured by a company called Cateye, and the products were doing a fine job.

Road 200 climbs in elevation as it proceeds east towards the Cascade Range, yet there are many downhill portions that make for rapid progress. Night travel required less water intake, but I still stopped atop one summit hill for a couple of energy bars. It was incredible ... the moon was so illuminating that I accessed my food supply in the trailer with no other lighting necessary.

I learned about an aspect of trike travel this early Saturday morning that I found interesting. Thermal regulation is something that must be constantly monitored and adjusted. When I was sitting idle on the trike at the church, I was barely able to keep warm with my clothing. After pedaling the weight of my heavily loaded rig up a few hills, my body temperature rose rapidly, and I had to remove a layer or two, even though it was the middle of the night. But then, on the downhills of the North Bank Road, with wind whipping me at 20 to 40 miles per hour due to my trike's speed, I quickly chilled once again. This led to the big question of whether to endure the cold on the downhill grades until the next uphill, or stop and put back on the warmer layers of clothing. I chose to endure the cool air, knowing that it wouldn't be long enough to become totally miserable.

Fortunately, being the first week of October, temperatures were still bearable at night. The still night air helped. Of course, the Cascades were yet ahead, where I figured it would be much colder. But then again, neither would I be riding at night up there – I'm not that crazy! I'd be all cozy in my tent by the time the sun left my sky. I prefer staying warm, and my mummy bag does a top notch job of seeing to it.

The plan for Saturday night is to camp at Susan Creek Campground, on the western slope of the Cascade mountains. It is a nice campground on the river, with amenities like warm showers. I have stayed there before, and the huge forested canopy makes it a pleasant temperature in the warmer summer months. It sits just off Highway 138, which I will again intersect once I reach the small town of Glide. I have a pass to camp one night at Susan Creek gratis, courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management, which opted to contribute this small memento towards my epic expedition to Death Valley. I am happy for their generosity.

Up ahead, I spy what looks like a large black cat in my lane, but

this one has a wide white stripe spanning its length, telling my sleep-deprived brain to take the oncoming lane and give the skunk a wide berth. Along the 17 mile route from Wilbur to Glide, I encounter a number of animals, most of which I either hear or see a glimmer from pairs of eyes off to the side of the road. None chose to examine my trike or me up close. A small part of my mind wondered about mountain lions, so I did keep my knife in the jacket pocket, but these beasts did not appear.

Had I been traveling this road tonight in an automobile, I would have missed many sensory delights. I would not have heard the rushing Umpqua River down below the embankment, nor would I have noticed the moon's distorted reflection on its churning waters. I would not have listened to the crickets' melodic notes for mile after mile, nor would I have even been aware of animals at all. I would have missed the owl's hoot, and as I neared Glide, the rooster's early morning call would have deflected right over the top of the speeding car. Seated only nine inches from the roadbed, out in the open air, many new experiences awaited me, things that could only be possible from a trike.

First light had not yet appeared when I rolled into the outskirts of Glide, a landscape dotted with nice homes on acreage. I crossed the river and came to Highway 138, where cars were already active even this early. My appetite was again calling, so I sought somewhere to dine ... primitive style.

Mister moon was beginning to play hide and seek with me behind increasing cloud cover. I found a truck scale station with a street lamp above it, so chose to pull in to the unmanned area to get well off the highway, behind a three-foot high concrete wall, partially hidden from the road. Down the thorny embankment to the north was a property littered with many junk cars. I ravenously chewed through two more high-calorie energy bars, and could have easily eaten a third, but realized the value of modest rationing.

Matt had told me a few weeks ago that during my trip, I would be expending between 5,000 to 7,000 calories per day. I was beginning to believe it. By my calculations, my planned daily allowance of food would supply about 2,000 calories at most, which indicated that I would be in at least a 3,000 calorie deficit each day at the current rate. Since the human body requires a shortfall of 3500 calories to lose a pound of bodyfat, I wondered what the future had in store. One thing I already knew was that the number of bars I was now consuming exceeded what I had planned ... and my morning bowl of Nutty Nuggets was destined

to overflow with those tasty barley crunchies. Well, I had a lot of nuggets in my trailer ... and a lot of food bars ... and a lot of rice and veggie packets ... the big reason for my slow progress.

More than once, I started to wonder if the over stuffed 50-pound Cordura bag of caloric fuel I was pulling in my trailer was self defeating. In other words, would I require the extra calories due to my extra labor each day in pulling them along behind me? Or, put another way, if I had not brought along all that food, would I easily make it to the occasional country store or market quicker, thereby negating the need for the bag? When you're riding a trike up long hills, you have considerable time to ponder these really important questions of the world.

Standing still, I had to put back on my down vest under my jackets. The bright orange-tinted street lamp above me lit my panniers so I could locate the vest. As the rotation of Earth continued towards first light, I just hung out for a while, as I didn't wish to start riding Highway 138 in the dark, due to the increasing number of cars speeding by. I would wait until daybreak, taking a stroll down some side streets in the meantime. It felt good to walk.

Finally enough light painted my world to proceed. Back into the recessed cockpit of the trike I lowered myself and pedaled on eastward, towards the imposing mountains that stood between me and the dryer hinterlands of desert country, all the while slowly gaining altitude.

As I rode out of Glide, one of those places where if you blink, you miss it, I was glad to see the sun poking through the misty shroud at long last, but I was concerned about the large mass of blackened clouds that seemed poised to swallow the bright orb. How long would my heat source and lighting last at a comfortable level? Would it warm up as the morning progressed? Or would the specter of precipitate-laden moisture command the day? I was heading right into an increasingly darkened world.

My answer soon grew clearer, as I was eventually under a sky with no visible star and no visible blue. It was only October third, I reminded myself, and was convinced that things would clear up for my summit push, making for a gorgeous ride over the top of this volcanic range of peaks. Wet and cold weather typically doesn't inundate the region this early in the season. Sure, I would expect such on my return trip five weeks from now, but not today.

This highway is a beautiful drive regardless of weather. Long straight stretches slowly prepare travelers for the mountains, as the trees

become gargantuan sentinels on either side of the asphalt, making it clear that the forest of all forests is being entered. Highway 138 is called Oregon's waterfall road because there are numerous waterfalls along its Cascade length that draw thousands of tourists yearly to see rivers plummeting down through the air great distances. Some of the falls are visible from the road, while others require a hike to reach. I am hopeful to be able to pull in and see a couple on my way. Even though I have hiked to most of them, they still hold a magic grip about my memories.

Susan Creek Campground seemed ever elusive today, perhaps because I was comparing my arrival to the last time I drove here in a car. It was taking forever, yet the ride was magnificent, so I did not mind, especially knowing a hot shower, riverside campsites, and a pleasant rest awaited me. A few sprinkles kept appearing, not enough to really dampen my gear, but sufficient to make me wonder what was ahead on this portion of my young journey.

When I at last saw a sign for the campground, I was tired. The mileage to the camp was not much since my short stay in Wilbur, but it involved considerable climbing the whole way. Of course, that was minuscule compared to the Cascade Range, the lower slopes of which I was now ascending. Thirty-one miles is a short day by any cyclist's standards. Gee, I rode 50 mile training rides in 5 hours, so I had a realistic idea of my snail's pace so far. Of course, those rides were often unencumbered by an additional 100 pounds or more of cargo.

It had been raining at Susan Creek. The campground road was full of puddles and all the campsites looked very waterlogged, a far cry from my summer visits that led to an immediate appreciation of the high dense forest, and a natural desire to go sit by the rushing river. Today, with water dripping from all the branches high above me, I just wanted to pitch a tent before the rain restarted, and get myself a hot shower before completely relaxing.

No sooner was the tent pitched and the rain fly on, then the rain commenced. I looked across the way at the campground hosts, all cozy in their huge motorhome, watching television while the wife began preparing a snack. I quickly placed my four panniers (saddlebags) in the tent, gathered the needed clean clothes and supplies, and walked to the shower facility. The showers are all private little rooms, with your own lockable door, so once inside, I was sheltered from the elements.

Into the slots I placed my quarters, and the warm water began to cover me in needed bliss. Before my departure on this trip, I buzzed my

hair so that washing of it would take mere seconds. Turns out that was a good thing, because less than 60 seconds into my pleasurable cleansing, the unthinkable happened ... my nice warm water was quickly losing its warmth. I had figured that showering this early in the afternoon would get me plenty of hot water, but alas, there must have been a run on long hot showers today within the last half hour, and I was the chosen one to either take a cold shower or get out. I slapped water as quickly as I could to clean up, yet I wasn't fast enough. No soap, little water, minimally cleaner, and definitely cold once again.

Well, life doesn't always go as one would wish. After drying off and getting into a couple of jackets and raingear, I warmed back up and headed out to the tent ... in the drizzles.

While the rain fell, I just lounged atop my sleeping bag, waiting to hear it stop. When it finally did, I ventured out, opened my trailer's food supply, and had a pouch full of rice and veggies. To make up for all the abuse I had suffered today and at the campground so far, I even indulged in a Cliff Bar for dessert, along with a few dried plums. There has to be some justice in this world!

Soon, John and Brian Massey, from Salem and Coos Bay respectively, came back to their camp next to mine. They saw me eating cold food, and invited me over to their roaring fire to spend some time before hitting the sack. It felt good as the heat penetrated my clothing. I was offered a beer, but declined. John and Brian are father and son, who came here for a few days of camping. Once it got dark, I excused myself, climbed into the tent, and wrote about the day's events in my journal. One thing about the rain that fell all night – the sound of it hitting the tent put me right to sleep!

#### **DAY FOUR – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 04, 2009**

(Susan Creek Campground to high Cascade Range – 35 miles)

Sleepily, I open my eyes enough to determine whether it is still night. The mummy bag is so cozy and warm, that once I realize the day is beginning its earliest stages of dawn, I hesitate to crawl out. Water drops continue to hit the tent's fly, but not from a constant rain, rather only from lingering drips falling off the evergreen branches and needles above, for the rain has stopped at long last. After getting dressed, I peak out the tent door to discover everything is still very wet and soggy. Fortunately, the ground beneath the tent is not muddy.

Having a complete bathroom only a 20 second walk from the

tent is a nice convenience. On this trip, I am not shaving, for I have found that doing so can be uncomfortable in cold weather with only cold water. Besides, it takes time, and I prefer to concentrate on being out in the wild instead of maintaining a cultural expectation. Out here on wilderness time, the beard seems apropos. A warm shower would be nice to make up for last afternoon's failed attempt, but I know the Cascade traverse occurs today, so I best not linger any more than necessary.

My mind ponders the diverse landscapes I am and will be crossing on the journey. My senses experience the towering evergreens, large leafy ferns, misty fog, churning river, and heavy dampness. It all seems a world away from my arid and warm destination 282 feet below sea level. Here, I struggle to keep dry and warm. There, I will yearn to be wet and cool.

The reality of the trip is still sinking in, as I am only three days and about 119 miles from home. Other than rain, the ride has been mostly uneventful from a commonly-perceived negative standpoint. My perception of this grand spectacle of nature varies somewhat from the masses though, who traditionally call rain "bad weather" or some other downbeat label. In many ways, I enjoy witnessing and experiencing all that nature offers. It has been told that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad preparation. This rings truer in my mind. Today I have donned raingear in response to the moisture-laden heavens. Fortunately, my body is waterproof anyway, so I don't have to worry one way or the other.

The plan is to camp at Diamond Lake tonight, a picturesque body of water that is around 50 miles distant. This certainly seems doable, even with the steep grades ahead. The Cascade Mountains are large and wide. Getting over them will take slightly more than one day, I reckon, as Diamond Lake is still shy of the highest road summit by a few miles.

The tent has to be packed wet this morning ... no way around it. I'll dry it out later, or hopefully pitch it next in dryer weather and it will dry naturally. After attaching the fly, which is the wettest piece, to the top of my trailer so that it can get air flow as I ride, and pulling the rain covers over my Arkel panniers, off I pedal eastward on the long straight section of highway. Sprinkles come and go the first several miles, and then ...

Once the road starts climbing more, the sun pokes through to greet me for the first time this Sunday. I am ravenously hungry because



I did not partake of my normal bowl of cereal this morning, choosing instead a quick bar because the campground table was soaked and I had hoped the sun would come out for a later breakfast. Well, now was the time! A nice outcrop of rocks up ahead allowed for full sun exposure as I ate a couple more bars. Yeah, I guess I prefer sun like everyone else. It just feels so nice to get warm from the air.

When I park the trike on a hill like this, I engage the two parking brakes, one on each brake lever. They consist of two metal tabs that push in and keep the handles secure. They are not foolproof however, especially considering how heavy my overall rig is, so usually I face the trike sideways if I can, or, since that's not possible here on this narrow dirt parkway, a rock behind a tire works well. With the trailer extending the trike's length from 6 to 10 feet, parking choices are not always very many. It would be nice not to have this trailer, but then again, when it comes time to eat to my heart's delight, it sure is nice to know that I have a never-ending source of calories (or so it seems when I gaze down at the gear bag containing my 50 pounds of food).

Continuing on, my coats are mostly unzipped to allow the heat buildup to escape ... amazing how much the sun can affect this so quickly. Just as quickly though, after a few more miles, away goes the sun, the clouds once again thicken, and the rain begins anew. The jackets get zipped. Good thing I kept my rain hood on under the helmet. I had left my rain pants on, kind of figuring this might happen.

It rained lightly all the way to a place called Steamboat, where a cozy lodge with rooms and restaurant awaited mountain tourists. By the time I rolled in, my world was wet and dark. After finding a parking place in the tight lot, I walked in, trying not to look too conspicuous, but knowing that dressed as I was, I stood out like a sore thumb to all the dry patrons and workers. The heated bathroom was a welcome relief, and I stood in the lobby for a while to warm up and see if the sun would return.

A Steamboat worker strolled up to my pathetic dripping body and asked where I was going. I told her my story, and after her surprise and admiration for my intrepid plan (or crazy idea perhaps), she offered me a weather update, having just driven from the eastern side of these mountains in her car:

“You know, a heavy snowstorm rolled in last night at the higher elevations. The plows are out in full force up there clearing the roadways right now. You might want to think twice before trying to go over the top with your trike. I had trouble in my car. They're calling it a

winter storm warning, and it's only the first week of October!"

Okay, this was serious news here. Snow? Sure, I figured that it was a possibility on my return trip a month and a half from now, but not this early. Of all years for an freak storm to slam into these mountains, it had to be today! Just my luck, of course. Normally, ski resorts pray for snow in November, and often don't get it, but this year just had to be the exception. I wondered how one-wheel drive trikes pulling a heavy trailer do in snow, although I could imagine well enough the scenario. I keep trying to remember that there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad preparation.

I thank the kind woman for providing a few moments of warm conversation, bid her farewell, and walk hesitantly back out to my trike. The sky is not clearing at all, and with this news, I decide to proceed with all due haste, hopefully to reach my destination before conditions make forward travel not possible. The open mesh seat of my trike is wet, but no big deal with my rain clothes.

Rested from my Steamboat interlude, I pedal with renewed determination up the increasingly steep grade. Then, wonder of all wonders, out comes Mr. Sun once again! Mentally transformed, I launch into a grand appreciation of all that surrounds me, speaking audibly to the trees, rocks, birds, and the marvels of nature, thanking them all for providing me this unsurpassed paradise through which I may pedal. I speak loudly and grandly in formal tones, in a manner that could be construed as consistent with the way the first primitive Americans may have beheld their surroundings during past centuries. Out here on an open tricycle, unprotected from the elements, I could only be closer to the natural world if I were backpacking on a dirt trail. Never in a car would I have felt like performing this unique spiritual ritual of communication.

There is no traffic. Only the ears of animals hear me. I receive pleasure from this bonding.

There is no odometer on my trike. There used to be when I bought it, but I gave the \$50 marvel away because I chose not to get boxed into a technical world of human electronics that keep me posted about everything I do, including average speed traveled. I am here for the sheer enjoyment of the ride ... mileage is not important. Thus, in this telling of my story, precise figures are not generally a part. The method I use to have a rough idea of my progress is by roadside mileage markers, which keeps my mind active always performing the math.

Around 15 miles from Susan Creek Campground, having just climbed a very steep grade, the Dry Creek Store appears on the left, an old log building. It has a gas station, restroom, and small market. A number of pickup trucks are parked around, mostly from area hunters, judging by the clothing many of the men are wearing. I needed some bananas, and buy three for \$1.80 (the first money spent on this trip so far), which I ate on the front log bench. A fellow sees me taking a picture of my trike, and offers to take my photo standing in front. I take him up on the offer, smiling and waving for the camera, even though the sky is again getting very dark, and the ladies inside the store have readily confirmed the hazardous weather into which I was currently heading.

The guy who took my picture, who had just come down from higher elevations, advised me to turn around. I thanked him, and then proceed east. Who knows what those hunters all thought of me. Must have a screw loose somewhere!

One thing I did notice while walking around at the store was an issue developing with my feet. This morning, I had put on a second pair of shoes, all leather waterproof Hi-Tec low-top hiking boots (that's a mouthful). This is my first time wearing them for any lengthy time, having only broken them in slightly by walking pre-trip. The back of each Achilles tendon is getting rubbed by the stiff rear of the shoe, causing a tender area. I tried to adjust my foot angle enough to mitigate the situation after leaving the store, but it didn't help much. I would rather have on my Merrill Moab Ventilators, which I have worn up until today, as they are super comfortable, but they are not waterproof, so I endure the Hi-Tec shoes.

So preoccupied was I with the shoe tendon thought that I failed to realize that I rode the first three miles from the store with my left parking brake engaged. Well, I wondered why the trike seemed to be handling a little odd! At least I figured it out fairly soon.

At the Dry Creek Store, I was told that during the next 35 miles east, I would experience a 4,000-foot elevation gain, up past the 5100 foot mark. This continually rising road kept my progress very slow. There was already increasingly deeper snow appearing in the woods around me, and by mid afternoon, it was right up to the road, where the plows had pushed it off the asphalt. The road was wet, but not icy. Into a winter wonderland I proceeded, with the evergreen branches feeling the weight of accumulated white stuff. Like a man with a mission, I pushed the pedals as powerfully as I could, hoping to reach Diamond

Lake by dinner. The thought of pitching my tent and crashing into a deep slumber was inviting.

Because the day had been heavily overcast so far, with occasional light snowfall, I could never get an accurate read on the sun's location, which is the means I use to tell time when I'm in the wild places. As the hours passed, it all looked the same, seeming like it was always some time in the mid afternoon. My slow speed led to an almost trance-like monotonous state, that pulled me into a dream world. At one point however, reality hit me.

I was overly warm on the grades, and very hungry. I needed a couple of high calorie energy bars soon. At a place where the road actually took a slight dip downward for a short distance, I pulled over to remove a jacket layer and access my food. I always kept a few bars handy in a side pannier that hung on the seat so I could get to them without the agony of opening the trailer, which involved keying the lock, removing the hold-down straps, opening the lid, and getting to the food bag. And agony it would have been now because it became abundantly clear to me that I had a situation developing.

Within seconds after stopping and unzipping my jacket to vent my body heat, the cold hit me in a most dramatic way ... I began to shiver and shake slightly. Having removed my bulky warm gloves so that I could eat, my fingers felt bitter cold all of a sudden. It was bad enough that I knew I could not take the time without gloves to even try to access my food in the trailer, but I had to so that I could replenish my handy food supply for quick eating along the way. It was not a choice. Now, I was truly starting to feel the cold sink in, which brought my thoughts to the time of day.

My mind had missed how dark it was getting. With clouds my companion for so long today, my thoughts subconsciously processed the darkness simply as heavier clouds, with little thought about the time. So deceived was I that just moments prior to this stop, I was still hoping to take a short hike to one of the many beautiful waterfalls along this Oregon waterfall scenic route. One was only a couple of miles ahead, the tallest of all, and I wanted to see it again. Yet, this was not going to happen. My mind focused clearly upon my state of affairs.

Thermal regulation, energy maintenance, approaching darkness, and more miles than I wished to contemplate filled my immediate thoughts. I had to put on my goose-down vest now, because later it would prove even more challenging, having to remove my rain jacket and polar fleece coat first before I could slip it on. Just the time it took

to take off the jackets to get the vest underneath resulted in increased shivering. If I overheated while pedaling, I would manage the temperature by how high I kept it all zipped. On my head I placed a cotton balaclava under the polar fleece skull cap and the rain jacket hood, both of which were under my bicycle helmet.

By my best mental reasoning, it was probably after 8 PM, having been snapped back into a more lucid state and roughly calculating mileage, speed, vague shadows, and such. How could I have possibly missed this gradual, but dramatic, change of setting? Still, I was feeling strong and felt that sooner or later I would reach a crest and then coast downhill to the lake, thereby making up for lost time. However, at the time, I had also forgotten that this Cascade crossing did not peak until after the lake, meaning that I had constant elevation rise ahead of me this evening.

Once it started getting dark, it happened so fast that I was in disbelief. Seems like it was just afternoon! I stopped again to actuate my marine emergency beacon strobe that I had attached to the rear of my trailer. Out here on this open mountain highway at night, I am the last thing a motorist would expect to see ... especially under these adverse weather conditions. Cyclists just don't do this sort of thing. I also turned on my ten-LED flashing tail light, and the super bright headlight, which allowed me to see mileage markers. Progress was so slow that I had plenty of time to head the trike at an angle so the light would fall upon the mileage marker posts ... keeping track of them would give me something to keep my mind active. It got to the point that I would rejoice with each number that would confirm my progress.

Seeing waterfalls and hiking faded into oblivion.

A couple of times, an Oregon Department Of Transportation's gigantic orange snow plow would pass going the opposite direction. I have no doubt that the driver must have been shaking his head ... that is, once he figured out what exactly he was seeing. Traffic was very light, even though this was a major pass road, most likely due to the winter storm warnings that had apparently gone public. Now and then, a motorist would slow to see if I wanted to signal for help, but then would continue on in his comfortably-heated metal box.

Around midnight, or so I figured, the clouds would part every once and a while, allowing Mr. Moon's full bright light to illuminate my wintry white kingdom. When I would realize this was happening, I would switch off my headlight because the snow-laden world around me was so incredible to behold in its naturally lit state. I may have been

ever entering deeper levels of distress, yet my mind marveled nonetheless in the beauty of this magical realm, seeing scenes in such a way that few would ever experience themselves. Here I was, pedaling a tricycle over the Cascade Range, in the middle of the night, while writing a chapter of my life that will always remain indelibly etched in my psyche.

**DAY FIVE – MONDAY, OCTOBER 05, 2009**  
(high Cascades to Diamond Lake Lodge – 15 miles)

Panic is not an option in my personal toolkit of life solutions. My logical mind searches for alternatives that provide me a reasonable chance at success. Although, as the hours progress into the early morning of Monday, and the temperature continues to fall, if a person were so inclined to enter such a mentally unstable state, this set of circumstances would quickly bring it on. I feel the fear, and realize that I have allowed myself to enter a potentially life-threatening condition.

I define a state of panic as fear out of control. We all experience fear, for it is an inborn trait that helps us define moments when action must be taken for self-preservation. It is akin to a red flag signaling our brain that something is amiss. The ironic aspect of this is that precisely when panic sets in for most folks is the time when rational and calm thinking is critical, for a panic response often does not contain a fair probability of a favorable outcome.

Around 2 AM or thereabouts, based on the position of the moon from last night's ride, and the amount of time I perceive I've been pedaling since nightfall, it becomes clearly apparent to me that I am truly out here alone on the high slopes of the Cascades ... and I am in real danger. Virtually no cars are out any longer. The snow level up this high is about two feet just off the sides of the highway. It is getting colder, and the rare sign indicating the mileage to Diamond Lake Lodge tells me I have at least a couple hours of pedaling ahead of me.

I wonder if I can sustain the climb. I am becoming weaker and colder ... that much is certain. I consider the possibility of creating a crisis bivouac camp, one where I would simply park the trike right on the road's shoulder, unfurl my emergency bivouac bag, slide my sleeping bag inside, rough out a little snow trench, and hunker down until daylight. My body heat is still sufficient enough that such a scenario would result in a controlled retention of warmth, or so I believe. Once settled in, I could at least be relatively comfortable. Such

action would have to be undertaken prior to any serious hypothermic condition to be successful. My challenge is to determine how close to that point I am.

The decision against such an option is reached after roughly three very slow miles of solemn thought. Unbelievably, during the time I am attempting to decide, I find myself dozing off, just like a auto driver might do having had insufficient sleep. This amazes me when I pull myself back to full awareness, because I am pedaling! How can I be going to sleep during active movement like this? And, just like a motorist who weaves from his lane, my trike heads over the center line since I am riding in the middle of my lane and not the shoulder.

An emergency bivouac is not totally out of contention, but for now I will go on. I believe I can make it. The road seems flat, but the fact that I am still in lower gears, and can't hold an upshift but for a fleeting moment, tells me that indeed I am still climbing. The coldest time of any 24-hour period is immediately before the sun actually shines on an area, so if I did bivouac, I would have to remain in it well into mid-morning; to leave at first light would gain me little, unless I had really warmed up a lot, and had consumed quite a few calories in the process. My hands are very cold even in my heavy winter gloves, and to attempt to use them without gloves to set camp and get to my food supply would seem unwise.

When the clouds cover the moon, I must switch on my headlight to see where I'm going. Since it sits just to the left of my head at eye level, the beam also illuminates the front of the trike. On my ride from Wilbur 24 hours ago, I found this allowed me to see my gear shift indicators on the handgrips, which was useful because after a long stretch in the same gear, one can forget where the chain is on the sprockets and rings. It also illuminates the front spokes, which in low gear, turn ever so slowly, a constant visual reminder that tonight's epic haul is going to be a long one.

I have rarely felt so alone, and yet, there is a certain indescribable peace in it all. Noise does not exist in these woods at this hour, and any infrequent vibrations that do hit my ears, do so after being muffled and absorbed by the thick snow everywhere. This period of the trip is clearly an exceptionally silent passage. Only rhythmical mechanical sounds emanating from the trike keep me company. This trike is called an ICE Q, mockingly apropos for the conditions where even if I could speed up significantly, it would be unwise due to intermittent road ice.

I am traveling to the hottest place on planet Earth, a world apart from here!

A furnace requires fuel to remain hot, and so it is with the human body. As long as I am pedaling, I remain just warm enough for comfort, but what is my heat source? Why am I remaining warm? Calories! For my furnace to heat the structure, calories must be consumed ... lots of them in a situation like this. I did not have my regular high calorie breakfast at Susan Creek, a place that seems oddly distant now. I did not consume my standard dinner, for it would have required manual dexterity not comfortably available at these temperatures. My fuel source on this Cascade traverse has been a few energy bars, which have fallen far short of replacing what I am expending in this ascent.

This caloric deficit is made worse by the fact that I have been riding well past my normally planned day of eight hours. In fact, by my estimation, approximately 17 hours have elapsed since my campground departure this morning, or as would be technically correct, yesterday morning, since today is now Monday, and I left Susan Creek Campground on Sunday morning. The bars I have eaten would have maybe been enough for an eight hour day ... maybe, but for not this duration. The lack of calories also is causing undesirable fatigue to set in, which further promotes the onset of exhaustion.

Yet, in spite of all this, I am happy! I am achieving a goal, the likes of which I have never come close to even considering, let alone doing. On a tricycle, pulling a heavy trailer, I am crossing Oregon's expansive Cascade Range by myself, and on a cold wintry night no less. Not too many folks could pull off something like this. Of course, not too many folks would even want to. I am enjoying the challenge, and the tougher it gets, with odds continuing to stack up against me, the better I like it. There is something primal in my being that seeks this extreme adventure, a phantom that drives me onward ... to find my limits, and then exceed them! These circumstances are the purest sense of my inner belief that only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go.

Inner peace fills me, and allows me to be fully in the now. I am not brooding over what happened in the past, as so many people always do. My past is what makes me who I am, but it does not control my present. Nor do I worry about the future, as most of what people worry about never comes to pass anyway, thus wasted life energy. I am perfectly in the present with all my spirit, realizing that I may be in over



my head, but taking pleasure in this matchless moment that will not again be duplicated during my life. The challenge makes me feel alive and full of purpose.

I am not a pessimist, one who habitually sees the bad in life's turn of events, nor am I an optimist, one who consistently sees only the good. I am a mild-mannered naturalist and a realist, one who dwells in the moment, assesses the situation, makes a decision, and sculpts my life into one that delivers inner peace and happiness. I see the bad and good, and I see how they coexist in my reality. Pessimists are typically anxious, frightened, and negative in their actions ... responses that short circuit their tranquility and longevity. Optimists often are disheartened, having faith that good will always prevail, and when it does not, as is often the case unfortunately, they face an emotionally depressed state. My objective is to take it all as it comes, and turn it to my advantage realistically.

I may be getting tired and bordering on a state of lowered body temperature, but I am far from dead, and far from out of my mind. I muster the inner resolve necessary to keep on trikin' out here in nature's incomparable wonderland. Besides, I think to myself, this leg of the journey will make for some very captivating story telling when it's all over. I have found that the need for armchair adventure is alive and well in our society, and many seek a surrogate explorer in order to live out a secret self-image of their inner conqueror. After all, such is the successful foundation of Hollywood's action movies.

Though I would not trade this experience for the world, truly, I am ready for warmth and relaxation after several more hours of cycling under Earth's full moon, thick clouds, and imposing evergreens. The last signpost indicates that the Diamond Lake Lodge is a mile distant, and I can feel my respite beginning already. The lodge sits on a side road that parallels Highway 138. The wheels of my trusty trike make a sharp right, as if the ICE Q knows where to go, and we begin a fast descent down to lake level and the lodge.

It's only a paltry half mile downhill to my salvation, yet since I am not pedaling, I am no longer generating inner body heat. The speed of the Q dramatically increases, and damn, I'm really getting cold all of a sudden! I mean, in a heartbeat, I am shaking as the bitter chill sucks what seems like my final vestige of heat from my destabilized carcass. A slight pressure on the two brake levers eases the frigid pain, and reduces the likelihood of skidding out of control on any icy patches that may be lurking. That's all I need ... to end up crashing a quarter mile

from the lodge.

I see lights through the stately snowbound trees. Looks like the maintenance plow has been working overtime here. I have been to this lodge once before, but still am not sure which of the many buildings is the office, so as I enter the parking area, I coast slowly and look for signs. Everything appears different tonight than it did before in the daytime.

Cautiously, I coast to a flat area near the main lodge entrance, sliding a little in the process. I set my parking brakes and ever so slowly arise from the low recumbent seat. My first priority is warmth. The front door is locked. I see an inside stairway off to the right, and find the doors to it are unlocked for guests. Up I go, into a multi-purpose room with overstuffed couches and about 70 degrees of splendid hot air. I can grab a few winks on this couch until daybreak, as all doors off this room are locked, so I return back down to the trike to retrieve my wallet.

Well, it seems like someone has indeed been aware of my arrival, for as soon as I reach the trike, the lodge door opens and Mike O'Sullivan, the night security attendant asks if I need assistance. With any semblance of charm remaining within me, I graciously reply in the affirmative, and we walk into the building. Wonder what he's thinking!

A few miles back, I had decided I would break my prime directive that keeps me wild on my overnights in a tent. I would ante-up the cash and get a room as a little treat for myself for surviving this epic crossing still in one piece, albeit a decidedly cold piece. While filling out a brief form, which asks for my car license plate (I write "none"), I relate to Mike a brief rendition of my trip. A room for one night is \$59.59, not too bad for a resort destination like this. Must be past the tourist season. Since it is Monday morning (4 AM by the way!), the rental is for tonight, meaning Monday night. But, I'm dead tired now, so Mike says to sack out on the huge couch ten feet from a massive stone fireplace and mantel, where the inviting flames are dancing wildly.

For a few moments, I sit on another couch and watch ESPN that he has going on the TV. We chat for a bit, as I fully enjoy every warm and comfy moment (talk about savoring the now), and Mike asks how long I've been riding. Well, I tell him, I left Susan Creek Campground on the western slope of the Cascades on Sunday morning around 8 AM. He is in disbelief, of course, because what kind of a nut would ride a tricycle for 20 hours in rain, snow, ice, and subfreezing temperatures? Hmm, guess Mike is looking at him!

After ten minutes of relaxing visiting, I remove my jackets and headgear, and go over to lie down in front of the fire. It's still dark outside when I sign off to a subconscious state. When I awaken, I notice two things immediately. First, I am hotter than a poker, and I must get up and walk away from the fireplace. Second, the initial glow of day is beginning to paint the window with an increasing radiance. I ask Mike what time this little lodge restaurant opens. He says six o'clock, which is only about twenty minutes from now. I decide to forego my Nutty Nuggets on this glorious Monday morning, and instead offer up a few more bills from my wallet to eat like a king.

Marsha O'Shea, my waitress, asks about my circumstances, seeing as how my dress and appearance is a little different than the average lodge guest. She is entertained as I continue to order food after eating a large Spanish omelet breakfast, including hash browns, toast, and a cup of hot chocolate. After that, I ordered a large bowl of oatmeal with butter, brown sugar, and raisins. It is my time for one transgression after another it seems. First, I get a room for tonight. Now, I am eating a non-vegan breakfast. It's okay though. I need calories, lots of them, and I need them now! My body will appreciate these animal products I am sending down. Darn, it has been years since I've eaten a Spanish omelet, and wow, does it ever hit the spot, especially since I top it with loads of salsa.

Matt was right again. I'll eat whatever I can find!

It was still early Monday morning when I wolfed down my final oat and guzzled the last drop of hot chocolate. No clouds were in the sky this morning, not even one tiny puff! The sun was now illuminating Diamond Lake, which was only a matter of yards from my picture-window view at the table. I must say that it was a striking scene, particularly after the past twenty hours of not seeing my world so brightly. Snow was already beginning to melt.

As I stood finishing up a final conversation with Marsha, and holding my jackets and helmet, my peripheral vision noticed another person patiently standing off to my right, apparently intent on the words being spoken, which, of course, centered around my risky jaunt. Marsha walked off and another woman introduced herself to me. This was Alex Grove, who, I came to find out, had been hiking for many weeks with her backpack ... enjoying portions of an epic walk along the Pacific Crest Trail. She hails from Nelson, British Columbia! Her adventures

certainly put mine in vivid perspective, seeing as how I only left from Oregon four days ago.

And I thought I had come a long way. Goes to show that there is always someone out there who is even crazier, more experienced, or both. Immediately, she had my total respect.

Well, Alex invites me to sit and talk while she orders up a hearty breakfast. Seems that she has been developing a notable lower leg problem during the past week and chose to get some R&R at the lodge for a couple of days. Alex has a hiking and biking website, located at <http://hikerbiker.org/home.htm>, which tells the stories of her cycle touring adventures, wilderness treks, and other ramblings of a hiking biking vagabond. In 2008, she did a North America solo bike tour. Okay, she obviously knows how to make a go of things in the wild.

She asks me to talk about what I am doing while she eats her steak, which, she assures me, is not her typical vegetarian fare, but she figures a massive protein infusion wouldn't hurt the healing process. So I tease her, but then let on that I just ate eggs, milk, and butter. We have a good laugh. Yep, food is survival in the outback, so sometimes homebound regimens take a back seat.

I am amazed at how quickly and completely human bonding occurs when kindred spirits cross paths on journeys that push the limits of endurance and survival. Within minutes, we are chatting like old friends, sharing our trials and tribulations, the joys of human-powered travel, and the wonders of nature beheld while unprotected in the midst of it. This is my first such experience, but it will not be my last on this trip.

Even though I am dead tired and sleepier than I have ever been, I remain relatively alert and continue our conversation while she finishes the feast. It's time for me to crash, so we bid each other a temporary adieu and I head out the door to the trike. With my room key in hand, I slowly walk over to the Q, which is still in the shade of the lobby on icy ground. The first thing I notice is that the trike's parking brakes, which I set at 4 AM this morning, are frozen in the locked position ... last time I do that. After some fiddling, they loosen up and I begin pedaling the Q up the asphalt parking lot towards my room, until the rear wheel just starts spinning freely on the ice. Time to go another way.

My room is in full glorious sun, but the air hovers around the freezing mark. I park the trike right next to the building in front of my

window. The snow from the roof is now melting quickly and dripping all over me as I take my gear inside. I spread out the tent and fly in the sun to begin drying, and later will take them inside for some heat. The first order of business is a short nap, followed by a shower, doing the laundry, and then another afternoon nap.

As I take off my shoes and socks for my second nap, I notice a problem. The Hi-Tec waterproof hiking boots I wore from Susan Creek Campground had caused tender spots on the back of my Achilles tendons, as the boots are much stiffer than my Merrills. I cannot wear them from here on out due to this issue, and since I am probably past all the rain and snow, I decide to mail them, and some other unused foul-weather gear, home after I awaken from the nap. I notice also that both Achilles tendons are considerably swollen, a manifestation that I simply attribute to the shoe irritation. Strangely though, the Achilles feel stiff, which I would not expect from an external rubbing by a shoe. In any event, I assume it's temporary, prop my feet on a folded pillow, and fall off to sleep.

Upon arising, I put on my flip-flop sandals to give my feet a break, and step outside. It's still perfectly sunny, now pleasantly warm, and most of the snow is gone, only remaining in deeply shaded areas. That was a quick melt. It costs \$8.30 to ship 6 pounds, 10 ounces of gear home from the post office substation that luckily exists right at the lodge. Not only was that gear weighing me down that much more, but now I have some extra packing room. I buy new batteries for the headlight and marine strobe, both of which were beginning to dim down after the pass crossing. The Cateye headlight advertises more than 90 hours of runtime, yet between the two night rides I have taken, the accumulated hours aren't even at 15 yet. So much for grandiose claims! Perhaps the subfreezing cold had something to do with killing the light so soon.

After chatting a bit with Brian Richardson, the front desk assistant who found my trip interesting because he had once worked in Death Valley National Park, a lady standing nearby says she heard me talking about the Achilles tendon problem. She then launches into a detailed story about how her athletic husband tore one of his, which resulted in it rolling up like a curtain into his calf muscle, something she relates as the most intense pain her husband had ever felt. After surgery and a long time of excruciating rehabilitation and healing, he finally returned to normal. Great! That's all I need to hear when my trip is still in its early stages. I wonder if my extra hard physical push to get to the

lodge in the wee hours this morning may have led to my inflammation, especially considering the cold air.

Well, I don't want to hear anymore horror stories, so after buying some overly expensive V8 juices, eating an early dinner of rice and veggies in my room, and writing in my journal, I slide into bed for a long night's sleep at 4:30 PM, with no concern about departure time tomorrow morning. The heater is making an annoying fan noise as it keeps me warm, but I am out quickly, happy that Tuesday's ride will be on dry pavement, hopefully with more sun! Man, does it ever feel good to relax in warmth.

### **DAY SIX – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 06, 2009**

(Diamond Lake Lodge to north of Klamath Falls – 50 miles)

Somewhere around four in the morning, nearly twelve hours after I went to sleep Monday night, I awaken to loud talking, the sound of a diesel pickup truck running next to my trike, and fumes infiltrating my room and lungs. I had left the window cracked ever so slightly last night for fresh air, but now had to quickly close it before the air grew any more toxic. With no back window to this room, I felt trapped like a rat. Diesel is 6 to 8 times more carcinogenic to human lung tissue than standard gasoline engine emissions, so I take inhalation seriously. The two road crew workers are also having a smoke as they discuss the upcoming day's project with absolutely no regard for other lodge guests still trying to sleep.

I dismiss the idea of speaking with them, knowing my trike is vulnerable outside, and wondering if such intolerably rude behavior may be indicative of people who could at least entertain ideas of malicious retribution should I upset them with a request to shut down the engine and their thunderous voices. I also consider calling the front desk, and just about the time I am sufficiently disturbed to pick up the phone, they get in the truck, drive off, and peace again returns to the otherwise tranquil lakeside setting.

After another hour of just lounging for the pure sake of it, I notice first light starting to fill the sky, so I decide to get an early start. It will take some time to repack everything that I have scattered all about the room to dry, so may as well get going on it. This morning, I just eat Nutty Nuggets in my room, while calculating that my elapsed mileage so far is roughly 169 miles, with 733 more between me and Badwater. I hope the last 50 miles were as challenging as it gets on this

trip. Ah, the heat of Badwater Basin now sounds inviting!

The sky above is again pure blue, with nothing whatsoever to impeded the warming rays of the sun. I predict that today will be a grand ride, what with full sun, the Cascade summit now only a few miles distant, and then one very long downhill leading to Highway 97. Last night, I made a spur of the moment route modification. Original plans called for me to enter Crater Lake National Park this morning after leaving the lodge, and take one of the most scenic routes in the state down to Klamath Falls. Considering the snow I already encountered Sunday and Monday, and the fact that the national park is quite a bit higher in elevation, it seems prudent to avoid any further brushes with hypothermia, not to mention the fact that I just want to go downhill for a change.

It may not be any warmer down below, for central Oregon around Bend and points south become very cold late in the year, but elevations of 3,000 feet and less certainly increase my chances of fairer weather. I am amazed at how quickly the scene has changed here. When I arrived Monday morning at 4 AM, this was a snowbound winter wonderland, yet now, about 27 hours later, much of the snow has melted. The evergreen trees next to my room were white when I parked the trike ... now they are green. It is still cold, but at least it's much dryer.

As I am finishing up packing the gear on the Q and in the trailer, Alex walks over from her room in the next wing. Seeing me prepping to shove off, she wants to say goodbye, as the chances of another meet in the future are mighty slim. Even though I am eager to start pedaling again, it is worth taking the time to talk with her, and share our common philosophies of natural world stewardship. In this world, relationships with others, even fleeting ones, are worthy of cultivation, for bringing a uplifting feeling to folks is one of my life priorities. Life isn't about money and power, at least not in my realm. It's all about being good to people and the planet. The other upside to spending a while chatting is that it is pleasantly warm in the room.

We finally hug and bid each other a final farewell and wishes of safe travel. Alex takes a digital photo of me by the trike, and then watches as I slowly coast down the hill towards the exit. The first several miles this morning are partially shaded on the north/south portion of highway, and the downhill portions are quite chilling while coasting. I dare not put on another coat or vest under my all-weather jacket, because I would really overheat on the uphill, so, I brave the

cold bursts, which are still short-lived with the summit yet ahead.

My Achilles tendons were both stiff when I began pedaling today, yet they loosened up after a couple of miles of purposefully light stress due to the cold. I think I will baby these things each morning until the inflammation vanishes. Bathroom breaks are easy up here with such a thick forest only a few yards walk from the pavement. Traffic is light. Shoulders are wide. The ride is easy. I survived the Cascade crossing ... well, I still have an hour to go, but I can see things will be just fine.

Not far past the entrance to Crater Lake National Park, where I was originally going to turn, is the Cascade Summit signage, which I stop to photograph. Maximum elevation on this highway is but a few feet under 6,000, and now my way down is clear. This pass, unlike the other Cascade passes, is straight as an arrow (literally) from the summit to Highway 97 below. There is not one turn or curve in it, and it's all downhill, steep enough for me to really pick up some serious speed and make up for lost time. Actually, since Sunday, I have put in more time than if the two days had been normal and unproblematic, but the total mileage for twenty hours of riding was only fifty, which would have translated into two 25 mile days. So, I will now make up for lost mileage, rather than time. Although, come to think about it, there is no way to make up the mileage. Oh heck, who cares! This is the journey of a lifetime, and I want to savor every moment of it, tough, easy, or in between. No need to make up for anything really.

After taking the photos, and cresting the summit, about ten miles below me I can see the speck of highway where I will turn south towards Klamath Falls. Ten miles will probably be my longest coasting distance of the entire trek. Other downgrades may last for several miles, but I don't think any are longer than this one. Realizing that I will not be generating much body heat while coasting on the trike, I go ahead and suit up for the cold and fast air that will be whirling by me for quite a while. The sun is out, but temperatures still remain a bit nippy, considering that I am totally exposed as I ride.

At one point in my preparations for this trip, I installed a Mueller Wind Wrap fairing on the trike. This would have been perfect for such an extended downhill speed run, but the framing of the fairing was precisely at eye level, and I didn't want to look at a black metal bar for hundreds of miles. The instructions said that if this were the case to simply raise the angle of the recumbent seat so that you could see over the bar. Well, I happen to like the seat reclined to 37 degrees off the horizontal, so I had no intent to change it. This angle of reclination is



super comfy, and it also allows for a lower center of gravity in turns, and for higher speeds due to less wind resistance. So, the fairing was shipped back to the manufacturer for a refund, and never made the trip. It would have surely cut the wind chill though!

Most of the pavement on the eastern side of the expansive Cascade Range is covered at around 40 miles per hour. Gee, if only I could maintain this speed everywhere ... but then again, I would be falling into the same mindset as automobile drivers who are always in a hurry (I know because I used to be one for 43 years). Even this fast on a trike though is better than a car because I am still in nature as I go by, and not sequestered away inside a heated steel and glass box, excluded from nature but for what my eyes would see. Out here on the trike, all my senses come into play. I feel the cold rushing air on my face. I smell the trees and bushes. I hear the sounds of wild life. I taste the occasional bug, and I see this world from only nine inches off the ground. People in cars probably look at me and feel sorry for my “deprived” condition. I look at them and pity that they will never know what travel could be. Yes, I’m on the edge, but I like it here, where I take up little space and enjoy the natural world instead of contaminate it.

I’m not trying to sound self-righteous here, for I have indeed done my share of defiling this air with expended petroleum fuels over the years, but I feel a certain inner pride now that I am finally making a difference in ways that soothe my spirit. Seen from space, the atmosphere is so unbelievably thin, it is a wonder we can even exist at all, with billions of miles of airless vacuum on the other side. Our atmosphere is so very finite. Once we ruin it beyond repair, we are done! I’m only one guy in the current six billion inhabitants of Earth, but there are others like me. Perhaps someday you’ll join us?

Three miles down from the summit there are two backpackers heading up across the roadway. But they have their backpacks off on the ground, and their thumbs extended. They have been walking about seven miles up this grade so far, and now they turn to watch me rocket past. We exchange a friendly wave and smile, and then I watch their figures shrink incredibly fast in my rearview mirror. It’s not often I’ve seen backpackers hitchhiking.

Never once do I use the brakes on this downgrade, until, that is, I reach the large stop sign at the intersection of Highways 138 and 97. In roughly ten miles, from 6,000 feet to about 3,000 feet, the temperature has warmed nicely. I remove some of my warmer clothing, turn right, and head south on 97, which is predominantly downhill all

the way to Klamath Falls. The mileage to that town is more than I can do today, so I know I will be seeking a stealth camp location later this afternoon. My pace on Highway 97 is rapid, and much of this portion I now easily remain in my highest gears, clipping along at a respectable average of probably in the neighborhood of 12-15 miles per hour. It feels good to see the milepost markers coming and going so quickly!

I have come more than 25 miles from the lodge, and it is not quite midday yet. The shoulder is wide so far, wide enough for at least two trikes to ride side by side. If I had a companion triker, we could easily be talking up a storm right now. Along the way, I occasionally stop for more energy bars, a seemingly endless supply of which is hoarded inside my large cargo trunk on the trailer.

At one point, there is a three mile section of highway striping in progress, as many miles of this road have recently been repaved (makes for superb riding on a recumbent, by the way – no rough jitters). The flagman tells me that the huge striping truck is northbound, and when it gets to the northern end here, will turn around and probably pass me heading south. He says I'll have to pick up my vehicle and move it off into the dirt by the woods. I don't like that idea at all, as I am heavily weighted down with supplies, so I shift up to high gear again and really stoke the pedaling fires. Slightly downhill, it is no problem keeping the large front chainring spinning quickly.

A half mile into the striping area, I see the gigantic truck pass me going the other direction, spraying a fine white mist onto the new asphalt. That means he is one mile behind me, so if I can keep up my current speed, and keep him from catching me in the next two and a half miles, I won't be breathing any paint fumes today, or have to lug all my gear off the roadway into the loose dirt. This provides extra motivation to keep knocking down the miles. As I pass out of the southern end of the striping zone, I cannot even see the truck in my mirrors. Oh yeah! I kept the monster at bay.

The day is pleasant. This trike freeway is the best cycling I've done so far, from a car/trike standpoint at least. I feel completely safe with so much room. The afternoon is finally wearing on, so I begin scanning for a suitable stealth camp area. The Cascades are to my west, so the sun will disappear long before dark this evening. I like pitching camp when it is still fairly warm because it is more pleasing not to have cold hands while performing typical camping chores.

There have been many miles of an old dirt road paralleling the highway, with short access roads to it every few miles. The highway

bed is raised quite a bit, so when I find a spot, it will necessitate riding down the embankment. I have been keeping mental track of my progress with the mile marker posts, and after about 50 miles today, I finally pull down into a promising forested area that should provide me some privacy from speeding cars and eighteen wheelers. The embankment is composed of little pieces of red lava rock since this is a predominantly volcanic region. The Q and trailer have no problem traversing it. The dirt road is soft, but I can pull through the somewhat loose material with a little extra effort in low gear.

Happily, I have these fat Schwalbe Marathon-Plus tires on the trike, which provide extra traction. With only one-wheel drive propelling 350 pounds through soft dirt, I need all the help I can get. I am also glad to have overbuilt my tire setup, and give nary a thought to puncturing a tire or tube on the lava stones.

I find the perfect spot to pitch, with a thick stand of ponderosa pines separating me from the raised roadway 25 yards distant. I want to turn the trike around before I set camp, as I prefer to be heading the right direction when I get up in the morning, when it will be too cold to be fiddling with such a maneuver. This is only a very narrow two-track dirt road, very old and overgrown in the center. My vehicle is ten feet long, so to turn it, I have to stand next to it, and manually steer and maneuver it, first forward and then backward. This necessitates me having to pick up the rear of the trailer numerous times to finally get it facing south again. The soft and dusty ground make a mess of my rear derailleur, covering it in dust. There is no way around it though. Doing this takes about five minutes. It is no picnic.

The tent gets pitched right in one of the old road's tire tracks, but there is little concern about anyone driving over me tonight. This road hasn't seen use in years. There are no tire marks of any age. The soft ground will make for a super soft sleep, especially with my inflatable air mattress under the sleeping bag.

This is a restful evening, taking dinner at my leisure, and enjoying the woods despite passing traffic out on the highway. No one will ever see me. They are all going way too fast even if they are looking into the woods. Besides, it's getting darker by the minute now, and I am becoming invisible. The air is beginning to get cold again. Might be colder here than up at the lodge. This central area of the state is known for frigid night air. I make a little doormat of pine needles for the tent. The panniers are all inside with me to keep little varmints from nibbling through the Cordura fabric. This happened to some trike

friends I know, and the wife had to stitch the hole in the morning.

A few minutes in my down mummy bag and my body is toasty warm. I am at peace.

**DAY SEVEN – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 07, 2009**  
(north of Klamath Falls to Altamont, Oregon - 45 miles)

It is very quiet outside. It must also be very cold, because if I extend an uncovered arm out of the sleeping bag to get my water bottle, I can feel the air quickly chilling my skin. I prefer to remain in the bag, so I do. No sense in rushing things. The water in my cycling bottle is mostly frozen anyway, so I won't be drinking that for a while. It should be an easy day. I'm only about 35 miles north of Klamath Falls - no significant uphill. An eighteen wheeler chugs by. There is frost on the tent.

Certain physiological manifestations cannot be delayed very long once they reach a given point of urgency, and since my healthy living dictates that I consume a fair amount of water on a regular basis, the impending consequences require an action I would rather not tend to in this cold. What goes in must come out, so out of the tent I go to obviate any further distress. After leaving the offering on reddish volcanic soil underfoot, one glance at the tent fly verifies that things are a bit on the chilling side, for it is covered in a thin icy veneer.

No sense in crawling back in now, as first light makes camp operations doable, so I grab all my warm clothing and initiate the layering principle. I wore my polar fleece skullcap last night, and had the mummy bag pulled up to further cover my head. As much as possible, I shake and knock the icy frost off the fly so that in a while I can hopefully pack things up easier. Pine trees shade me from the sun's first rays, unfortunately, so while eating breakfast, I move a few yards away to find a sunny spot, although so far, it's marginally warm even there.

My only food right now is a semi-frozen Clif Bar, which I must laboriously work on with my molars to break into bites. To fix a bowl of cereal would require dexterity of ungloved hands, and so I decide to pack up and ride for an hour or so before eating my full course. There is a lumbering wayside and museum with picnic tables not far south, and that will be my chosen place to dine. Breaking camp is done in spurts, for my hands become so bitter cold with each folding of the tent that I must warm them for about a minute or more after about 30 seconds of

messing with the tent. Finally, it is done, and I lower myself into the cockpit of the Q.

This old side road is soft dirt, overgrown, with downed branches here and there. I left the trike in low gear coming in last evening because I knew it would necessitate easy pedaling to get moving on the yielding roadbed come morning. With effort, my trike and trailer slowly arrive at the clearing that leads up to the paved highway, but when I attempt to pedal up the short twelve-foot hill, the rear tire just digs into the volcanic pebbles. No way one-wheel drive is going to get 350+ pounds up this grade. I'm stuck ... so close and yet so far! There is only one solution.

I walk to the front of the trike, and grab hold of the derailleur post. Hunched over and walking backward up the steep little slope, I pull my ten-foot long train onto the pavement. Fortunately, this early there is virtually no traffic, because I need to use the entire lane to get squarely onto firm ground. If I did not have a trailer behind me, it would have been a simple matter with a trike to lift the rear tire and pull it backwards while I walk forwards, which is a very stable method of moving a trike through deep sand. Pulling from the front, as I must do, is inherently unstable, as it unweights the front tires, which causes the trike to want to fall to one side or the other due to the single wheel pivot point in the rear.

Once pulled back onto the road's shoulder, I kick the red dirt off my boots and settle back in for some leisurely pedaling on this frigid morn. Highway 97 remains primarily slightly downhill all the way today, as I keep falling in elevation on the route to the Oregon border. At one point, there is a long and fairly steep section, perhaps a mile and a half, which allows for some quick mileage with no effort. I love these over-too-quick intervals when they happily appear. As the miles roll by at a good clip, the sun is reaching me through the trees with increasing frequency.

Up ahead is the Collier State Park Logging Museum. The gate is open, so I swing in and coast up to a huge log picnic table, now in the sun. There are full restrooms here, along with a small gift shop, which has wood smoke gently curling up from the stovepipe in the log cabin's roof. A retired husband/wife crew are staffing this tourist stop early today. It is about 9:00 AM, and I am roughly 7 miles south of last night's camp. The friendly couple in the tiny gift shop ask me how I'm traveling. Naturally, my reply arouses the same incredulity I've come to expect. They also say it reached a low of 23 degrees Fahrenheit.

After a fine dining experience in the sun on the logs, a thorough teeth cleaning, and partaking of the exquisite rest facility, I'm off to Klamath Falls. My early morning winter clothing is also all packed away again. As the morning passes into afternoon, traffic increases, but with the nice shoulders most the way, it is of little concern. Ground snow is nonexistent now. At scattered places along the way, a mammoth mountain called Shasta comes into view, and then again disappears behind the forest.

Seventeen miles north of Klamath Falls, I pull into an independent gasoline station that has an "Under New Management" banner stretched across the store front. I think a V8 juice would be nice ... haven't had any vegetables yet today. Within seconds after arising from my trike, I realize that stopping here may have been a mistake.

As I am walking into the store, a man who towers above my six-foot frame walks up from my left and asks if I need help. He is wearing full black leather clothing, has long hair and a beard, and is smoking a cigarette. Inside, with him behind me, I ask the man seated behind the counter if they have V8 juice. He sports an even more intimidating appearance, again in full black leathers, with an ample beard, chains hanging about his outfit here and there, tattoos visible, and an earring. He too is puffing on the nicotine. He informs me that they don't carry juice.

I say "thanks anyway" and turn to leave. The huge guy behind me, reminiscent of Lurch from the Addams Family television comedy many years ago, says I don't want a V8 juice. Rather forcefully in his voice, he "suggests" that I need some of their whiskey. My inner sensations are telling me that a situation may be developing here, and it would be best to depart with all due haste. Even with years of police training in my background that has taught me the essentials of surviving altercations with bad guys, I still would rather not have to deal with such thoughts, so I happily say "No thanks, I'm driving" and slide past and out the door. He follows me and continues to insist that I come back in and buy some of their stuff.

Seated in my trike, only nine inches from the ground, the goliath stands looming above. It's kind of a vulnerable feeling, so I waste no time in getting my cranks turning. At the highway, I make a fast hard right and put the coals to the fire for some rapid travel. The upshifts come quickly, as the road is level and my legs are powerful. Feels like I just left the twilight zone. Wonder what motorists buying fuel must think. Maybe those two had just knocked off the real owner

and were in the midst of a robbery when I pulled in. Perhaps they were simply posing as proprietors. I'll never know because I never looked back. Okay, that's enough excitement for today.

Klamath Lake is coming up to the southwest on my right. It's a huge lake that runs for many miles, and the road skirts it on the eastern shore. The water will be my visual companion for a long time this afternoon. Railroad tracks run between me and the big blue. It's a sunny day, with a few billowy clouds sprinkled about. Unfortunately, the wide shoulder that has graced my tire tracks since entering 97 yesterday has now disappeared. What shoulder there is certainly does not contain my 27.5 inch wheel width, and there are many times where it is no wider than about eight inches, forcing me to ride mostly in the traffic lane. The shoulder is also filthy, full of all manner of junk parts and sharp debris that constantly requires my attention to avoid ripping open a tire. This close to Klamath Falls, auto traffic has become quite heavy, so it's one car after another whizzing closely by on the one lane. Yet, due to the continual drop in elevation, I can at least keep up a decent speed, even with the trailer in tow.

When I get to a mass of debris such as the rusted steel cords from a trucker's blown-out tire, I must sometimes slow considerably if a car is imminent, so I can actually pull out and avoid the tire-eating metal. If I think I can beat the car, I'll pick up my speed momentarily to race out around the obstacle and get back onto the shoulder. It's kind of a cat and mouse game out here.

Entering Klamath Falls, the road gains elevation on a series of small hills. Up ahead there is a truck weigh station, and since I am hungry, I pull in. With hand signals, I ask the attendant weighmaster in the glass booth if my rig can be weighed. He motions "yes" with his head, so, just like a big rig driver with my tractor and trailer, I ease the ICE Q and Burley trailer forward onto the underground scales, and then stop. Looking up at the large digital monitor, the same number registers as did in Glide several days ago: 350 pounds.

An eighteen-wheeler pulls in behind me, so I park off to the side ... wonder what he's thinking as he looks down from his commanding cab to see me on a tiny weird conveyance. I chat with the weighmaster for a moment and learn about how the scales round off, and since this is for trucks weighing thousands of pounds, what would normally be a small margin for them is considerable for me. I may never know the precise weight, but surely it has decreased since I left the coast last week. My original figures at home came in around 350 to

375 pounds (closer to the latter), so again this has been confirmed.

Here I eat a bag of my rice and veggies dinner and finish off with a bar for dessert. I have covered a fair amount of ground so far today, have more to go, and have worked up quite an appetite. I watch the truckers come over the scales and see the digital readout really soar. Fortunately, there is an outhouse right here. This is good news because I'm still on the outskirts of town, and the road is kind of like a miniature freeway now ... no handy brush concealment anywhere close.

Once underway again, an "off ramp" splits to the right, and I must remain on the highway that stays to the left. This necessitates me getting right out in the lane of traffic to make the maneuver, but it's really no big deal, as cars are very accommodating. Besides, the road is now two lanes, so it is not difficult for them to pass me. With my 8-foot flagpoles and orange and yellow flagging, my rig is highly visible.

As I ride deeper into town, and then cross the boundary into the adjacent city of Altamont, it dawns on my calorie-deprived brain that it must be rush hour. The sun is in the right spot for it (my method of timekeeping), and the traffic just keeps getting heavier. I'm now on a main thoroughfare that connects the two cities, and attempting to follow the signposts that will direct me to California on Highway 39. At one major intersection, with three lanes in each direction, I must turn left, so out in the middle left-turn lane I pedal, with cars thick around me. My eyes are at headlight level, which makes me feel pretty puny out here.

There are no incidents whatsoever. All cars are treating my presence with the utmost respect, even though they are probably all eager to get home from work. Sleek new luxury sedans, old beat-up farm trucks, and large delivery vehicles honor my right to turn left. Still, I take every precaution, making sure to signal when necessary to move over a lane. I usually try to make lane changes in open spots when possible.

Now, I am riding eastbound on 39 through the Altamont business district, two lanes in each direction, tons of traffic, and a nice shoulder to keep me out of the flow. The downside is that the city saw fit to place large steel gratings and other industrial stuff in the shoulder, which means that several times per block I have to veer out left. I hope the motorists don't think I'm drunk.

Sun is getting lower, and my progress has been notably slowed having to stop at traffic lights. This is my first relatively big city complex on the trip so far. I must soon locate a place to pitch my tent, because I certainly do not wish to do it after nightfall. There is a church



right in the middle of all this ruckus, but I am hopeful that I can find something just outside the city limits a few miles from here. An Albertson's market is coming up. I want a couple of fresh bananas and some V8 juice (still), so I pull into the congested parking lot.

Okay, now where can I park? Since this is a big city, must I lock up the trike? I can still be ripped off from my zippered panniers, but it's just mostly clothing, nothing valuable. The trailer cargo trunk is locked, but of course, it could simply be lifted from the trailer if someone were determined. There is a large paved walkway about 15 feet wide in front of the store, so I swing around from the side and park about 30 feet south of the main doors, next to the building. My decision is to just park right out in the sunny open, where people are everywhere, and not cable lock the trike to anything. After all, no one hardly knows what this contraption is anyway, so why would they want it? And who would have the nerve to steal my wheels with so many rush-hour folks coming in and out of the market?

I abandon all fears and walk boldly away from my unsecured transport. The market is packed. I get my food, and return to my trike to eat it, keeping one banana for later. Then, it's back into the traffic stream to find a stealth camp if possible.

Things are not looking good as the road becomes increasingly rural and narrow on the southeast side of town. It's one house after another. The sun is not far from setting. Traffic is still heavy enough that my visibility at dusk will be declining very soon. Up ahead is a community college with a large parking area, so I pull in for assessment. I could pitch at the edge of the lot, where a large dirt field exists, but after walking around for a minute or two pondering this, I see that powerful street lights laced in amidst the trees will be coming on later, making me easily spotted by any police officer wishing to enforce the letter of the law. I assume it's illegal to pitch a tent on this property, so all things considered, I pedal on with an increasing sense of urgency.

The last thing I want is to get all settled in and then be ejected in the middle of the night. Not only that, but it would be nice to have a somewhat private place to offload excess water later when the impulse beckons. I value my sleep and privacy.

All the agricultural and ranching fields I am passing are privately owned and fenced. The only way off this road is on someone's private driveway. Not good for a trike pilot and a tent. My thoughts return to something Matt Jensen told me prior to leaving on this trip:

churches are always good bets. Apparently, he knew this from personal experience.

On the left up ahead is the Harvest Outreach Christian Center, with a generous swatch of lawn to the south of the parking area. It backs up to a farmer's field and fence. As I pull into the lot, a very well-to-do lady gets out of her car and goes inside. There is only one other car in the lot. I don't approach her because I feel my appearance would frighten her. We have eye contact, but I remain distant at the end of the lot, where I park the trike.

After removing my helmet and dishtowel from my head (the towel is used to keep me shaded from the sun), and sprucing up my social facade as much as possible, inside the double doors of this refined sanctuary I meekly stride, knowing not what I'll find. There is organ music coming from what appears a chapel area. It is the same well-dressed lady playing. A large stately gentleman in a suit is standing near her and the stage, so down the isle I proceed to meet him, attempting to structure my thoughts and needs into a presentation that will bestow pity upon my poor and unsheltered self. My look does not exude a feeling of confidence or safety in others, especially since I buzzed my head last week to keep the need for washing my hair minimal on the road, and my beard may make me appear even more publicly divergent.

Briefly, I tell Ben and Clara Wampler, the two pastors, of my journey, my former law enforcement background (to instill needed trust), and my need for a place to erect my night's shelter before darkness sets in. I ask if I could camp on the far south lawn. Happily, Ben agrees with a smile and hearty handshake, and even offers the restroom should I need it. Turns out a large communal gathering is about to begin here in a little over an hour, so I take my leave and try to become invisible in the grass.

The tent pitches quickly on the padded lawn. Ben assured me that no automatic sprinklers would be coming on tonight. I can hear the horses whinnying at the farm next door. Traffic is still heavy on Highway 39, only 25 yards distant, but I am safe at last in my temporary haven, with full permission. It is a comforting thought. I barely have time to eat some more food before the sun is gloriously setting across the fields to the west. It feels like nirvana after my Cascade traverse!

The cellular telephone service is also excellent, which allows me to notify one of my three blog correspondents of my daily progress,

something that does not happen every night due to lack of service. These folks are keeping a weblog updated during this journey to Death Valley, so anyone interested in my travels might follow along at home. The blog is named Badwater or Bust, the Death Valley Tricycle Expedition.

The weather is warm here. No snow. No rain. No wind. No cold hands. I will sleep well tonight after pedaling 45 miles today. The super thick grass underneath the tent makes for the finest of cushion. It is even warm enough that I lie atop the bag for a while as I write in my journal before calling it a day.

Tomorrow, I leave Oregon.

**DAY EIGHT – THURSDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2009**  
(Altamont, Oregon to Modoc National Forest boundary,  
California – 37 miles)

There is another upside to this thick deep grass on the field where I am camped, and as I am preparing for today's ride, it becomes apparent. It makes for an automatic cleaning solution!

My rear derailleur on the trike, the mechanism that changes the rear gears for those who are unfamiliar, was totally covered in dirt and grime during my previous camp. On that old overgrown road next to Highway 97, I had to pedal through soft earth, and turn the trike around, which caused the low derailleur to drag through the soil and bushes. Since the chain is lubricated, and the various sprockets therefore also have lubricant on them, the dirt immediately stuck to every exposed piece of metal. It was so heavy that I wondered if I would be able to shift properly.

I cleaned it off the best I could that night and next morning (because I had to ride to the pavement), but out here on the open road, I can't do the best job. Well, the grass at the Harvest Christian Outreach Center reached out and did what I could not. Thousands of green blades of the lawn, tall and thick as they were, essentially provided the ultimate cleaning with no added effort on my part. Just riding out to where I pitched the tent got the sprockets and chain fastidiously fresh once again. And this morning, I have to ride over to the parking lot, further cleaning the works.

It must be providence, considering my location.

The full and warming sun is up early here, as this is flat and

open agricultural countryside now. I am south of the mountains, but more will be coming later today and tomorrow. There is minimal dew on the tent fly and footprint, yet it dries quickly in the full unobstructed sun. Eating my Nutty Nuggets breakfast is painless here, as I watch commuter traffic and school buses whiz by on the Oregon/California connecting highway. The setting is so comforting that I almost hate to leave.

Almost, but not quite. Today's ride should prove relaxing, with few, if any, uphill grades. Later this morning, I will be entering California, leaving behind my home state. There is something about crossing borders, even if they are only arbitrary and imaginary human political lines on my planet. Today's crossing, which will probably only be marked by a sign, signifies that I am indeed a long way from whence I started. It may be considered short in the minds of fast paced petroleum powered humans, but in my human-powered world, this is clearly significant. It makes me proud to know that all these miles are achieved by my own sweat and muscle. What is mundane to the multitudes is monumental to me.

Perhaps after a few more long distance tours on the trike, I will see this distance as less important an achievement than I do now, but for my first cross-country ride, I find pleasure in slowly but surely attaining this personal success. I am making a difference for my world, a distinction that few people would even recognize. I am passing silently into a new paradigm of living for myself. Practically no one would choose to celebrate this quiet abandonment of my former transportation model, so I do it by myself, out here on the open road. It is a road with two meanings, the physical one of my actual travel, and the symbolic one that leads to new and harmonious horizons of my relationship to Earth.

It's easier to philosophize when the weather is warm and sunny. I best get going!

No one is at the church this early, so I cannot thank them for the fine lodging. I must wait at the road entrance of the parking lot for traffic to thin a bit before I pull out onto the narrow country road called Highway 39. Fortunately, from here south, the automobile congestion lessens quickly in the rural regions through which I will be pedaling for a long time now. I stick out like a brilliant beacon with my flagging, so the cars that do overtake the ten feet of my trike and trailer are not surprised; they can see me far in advance in this flat and open terrain. As has been my experience so far, nearly all motorists are courteous and

provide plenty of room as they pass.

What a way to see the countryside! Reclined a comfortable 37 degrees off the horizontal, the mesh seat of my ICE Q tricycle provides a show like I am sitting at home in the lounge. It's better than passively watching television, for this is real adventure unfolding, with no set script. It is a documentary directed by me, one where I actively participate and gain life extension benefits in the process. My spirits are up with the sun!

About seven miles north of a tiny Oregon town called Merrill, the last one prior to the border, I pull into a little business called Mac's Store. It's out here in the middle of farm country, with nothing much else than an occasional farm house and lots of roadside fences. There are two reasons for stopping. First, I desire to use a sit-down solid waste station, and second, I think I need some non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Or, put into the typical initialed vernacular so prevalent in our society, I seek SDSWS and NSAID.

The elder lone woman behind the counter directs me to the nearby plastic outhouse for customers, telling me that there is no such indoor plumbing in the small building. The large clock on the wall shows 10 AM. She adds that even she must use it each day. Oh well, when nature calls, one cannot always be picky. My diet high in grains and vegetables makes the business quick and easy, as I listen to cars rocket by twenty feet to my right.

Back in the store, I ask her if they carry any ibuprofen products, explaining about my increasingly inflamed Achilles tendons. Apparently, something is amiss with my foot situation, but I do not really have a handle on what it is. Each morning since my nighttime Cascade traverse, both tendons are stiff, and require increasingly more easy pedal time before they warm up for unhampered performance. It is an annoyance only, as once they warm up within the first mile or so, I have no negative sensations whatsoever, and only a visual inspection would reveal any swelling. I originally thought the rubbing of the Hi-Tec waterproof boots was causing the tenderness, but I must have been incorrect in that assessment.

Anyway, the lady says they don't carry Advil or any of the other types of these drugs. I started on self-prescribed aspirin therapy last night, but wondered if Advil would fix me up faster. Normally, I don't do drugs ... period, but I can't let this little issue obstruct my journey. Feeling sorry for me, she pulls a bottle from her purse. She uses it for her arthritis pain. In the spirit of helping a fellow human in distress, she

pours out a supply that will last me several days, and tells me how many to take. I am grateful for her willingness to assist, especially since this stuff is rather pricey compared to aspirin.

I buy a couple of bananas and a V8 juice, and sit down at their small table for a snack, which also includes a Clif bar. There is a daily newspaper here, but being a dropout from all the nastiness of habitually headlined human hatred, I opt to ignore it, and instead converse with the clerk. I am feeling no sense of urgency to get back on the road quickly. I am living in the here and now, reveling in the senses associated with this tiny entrepreneurial enterprise on the expanses of southern Oregon. I enjoy the hospitality, the rural atmosphere, the sounds of country travelers out on the road. I am very alive, and excited about my trek through life. I savor every sight, sound, taste, smell, and texture. I think a trike trip accentuates these sensory delights, at least for anyone open to accepting them with a happy spirit.

Once back on 39, it's a laid-back jaunt to Merrill, where I choose to again stop and experience the people and atmosphere. A couple more bananas make their way into my stomach, and at the larger store here, I also purchase a small bottle of Motrin, figuring that it will knock-out the swelling prior to the last pill. It is pleasant speaking with the small town locals, who eagerly come up to see my unusual mode of transport. Everyone asks the same questions at each stop, but that's okay, because I endeavor to be an enthusiastic ambassador for human powered alternatives to spewing lethal toxins into our finite air supply.

This is travel at its best, not only because of its clean and green consequences, but also because of the nice people I meet when not in a hurry to cover hundreds of miles in one day. By its very nature, the trike inspires me to take life slower ... physically and mentally. At the same time, the trike is making me healthier in the process. It's a win/win situation in all respects ... assuming the rider is willing to relinquish the need for speed. Slow down. Enjoy the details of my world.

Somewhere in the neighborhood of 1 PM, several miles south of Merrill, I see a rather large blue sign up ahead, held aloft by two metal supports. There are illustrations of poppy flowers on the sign, and large letters that read: "Welcome to California"

Now, I know precisely where I am! On that thin black map line that separates two states, I park the Q right in front of the border sign for a couple of digital photographs. After all, I have to prove to any skeptical folks that I really have ridden my tricycle at least this far. There is no one around to get me in the picture, and I don't recall how

to use the camera's self timer, so I just shoot the trike and trailer. I would have had to set the camera in the dirt anyway, as everything out here is flat as a pancake.

I am now leaving the Beaver State.

Roughly seven miles into the Golden State, I roll into the small village of Tulelake, an agricultural town by what I can see ... things like grain bins. I wonder if the "Tule" part of Tulelake has something to do with being out in the tules, for it most certainly is. Heck, I don't even know if tule is how the word for a remote place is spelled, but it sounds correct anyway.

I have to turn right and ride over some railroad tracks to reach the town's market, where I park the Q out front, to the curious stares and smiles of local resident shoppers. This is a very relaxing atmosphere.

My right shift cable, the one that changes the gears on the rear cassette of the trike, has been making a strange little squeak sound on my midrange shifts for a few miles now, so I check inside the store to see if they have anything that might mitigate the noise. Their hardware/auto section is very short on common supplies, so back out front I go, where I meet Fermi Sandoval, a sixty-something local handyman with a truck-full of supplies.

After explaining my mystery noise, he hands me a can of WD-40, which I squirt into the upper cable landing. I don't know if I'm supposed to be doing this, but if it terminates the faint, but annoying, sound, and helps lubricate whatever is amiss, then I'll be happy. I can only hear the noise under the most quiet of conditions, but it wasn't there for the first six days of this trip. I wonder if all the dirt at my Highway 97 camp had anything to do with it.

Fermi and I bid each other a cordial farewell, and he wishes me all the best in my travels. Back over the tracks to the main highway I go, resuming my southeast path to Death Valley. With this flat road, I am able to clip along in high-range gears at a decent speed, which is a good thing because with all the time I've been spending chatting with the small town folks along the way, I'll be lucky to get much mileage in today. For me though, the human relationships in the small towns of my journey are more important than just seeing if I can crank out loads of miles each day.

Not far out of Tulelake, a long pasture area is coming up on my left, and I see a black stallion heading my way, accompanied by perhaps a dozen other horses. He is definitely focused on me, as I am the only

thing happening out here. As I get closer, he begins to run towards me, as if to greet my silent, but very visible, passage. I call out a cheery “Hello horse” as I pass, ever enjoying my conversations with other species of animals, and I give the horses a wave. I also speed up some, because it looks like the stallion is rather frisky and wanting some play.

Sure enough, he, followed by his group, charge along the fence line only one lane removed from me. This goes on for roughly a half mile, as the fenced area is truly a large acreage. The stallion is moving his head left and right, snorting, and doing all sorts of actions indicative of an animal fully engaged with attempting to comprehend my bizarre appearance. The experience is truly exhilarating for me ... and I assume also for the horses, based on their behavior, which ends as I exceed the distance of their freedom. What a grand day!

Two miles later, a little red ladybug lands upon my left knee, moving up and down with the knee as I pedaled each revolution on the recumbent trike. On a regular bicycle, such an occurrence would not be so comfortably observable. This ladybug is right in front of my eyes the way I sit. A mile later, my red friend takes off to who knows where. I say goodbye, and wonder what the ladybug hears.

Highway 139 would be more aptly named Potato Highway, so that is the new moniker I bestow upon it as I cycle through California’s most northern reaches. Of all the farms and ranches in this vast Klamath Basin, potato farms seem the most prevalent for many miles here. The Wong Potato Farm must be the king of all such farms, as nearly every huge potato truck that passes me in both directions has the Wong name on the side. Potatoes are stacked up to overflowing on these monster vehicles, and some fall off.

The Potato Highway is littered with abandoned potatoes along the shoulder for miles. Sometimes I have to steer around them. If I were low on food, the free supply is ample, and I could easily snatch up scores of potatoes as I ride by. With my rear end only nine inches from the pavement, it is an easy matter to pick up anything lying on the roadway. Gee, I could even eat on the go! Some are pretty well dinged up from hitting the ground, but most are surprisingly intact. A simple washing would have provided me plenty of carbohydrates and natural sugars, but having spent so much time thus far today talking with everyone I meet, my focus now moves to reaching the distant mountains to pitch a tent later this afternoon.

Most of the potato truck drivers find my odd appearance amusingly curious, and wave or toot their air horns. We smile and wave.



This plays out for many miles and a few hours. I've never seen so many potatoes in my life. I should spear one on my front derailleur post for some light hearted fun, but my speed is up so I keep on chuggin' along.

The day is perfectly temperate for long distance trike touring. With the sun out, cold is a thing of the past. All I need on my torso is my long sleeve light cotton shirt. Too bad I don't have my Shimano SPD open-toed sandals now, for they would provide the perfect atmosphere for my toes. At least the Merrill Moab Ventilator boots are pleasantly cool. What a difference this is from several days ago in the Cascade Range! It's hard to imagine it's the same time of year. Autumn is usually very mild, but that uncommon snow storm sure surprised everyone.

The road ahead begins transforming from flat to hilly as the afternoon wears on. The elevation is now perceptibly increasing, and my speeds slow to midrange. Juniper and pinyon trees, at first scattered randomly about the countryside, thicken the farther I progress. Farms and ranches become less dense, until I see no more at all. The ground appears volcanic, with millions of the rocks everywhere. According to the map, I am not far from the northwestern Modoc National Forest boundary, and since it's getting close to camp time, my eyes start their search for the ideal spot.

Well, as luck would have it, a camp area with a wonderful view crops up on the right, so I gear down to low range for extra traction, and pull in on the soft and silty dirt road. It's fairly deep in spots, and requires aggressive pedaling to reach the perfect tent setting under a large tree. There is a large turn-around area of dirt road circling the tree, but to pedal my trike into facing the other direction would be far too tedious considering the nearly total lack of traction. Okay, it's up to my old tricks of turning the trike and trailer around by hand as I stand alongside. The maneuvering raises a dusty powder and gets my boots, the rear derailleur, and chain filthy again. So much for my grassy cleanup last night!

Perched high in the tree above me, out of my visual senses, comes the sweet sounds of a single singing bird. Is this little creature welcoming me to this remote realm? It seems so, and as I pitch my camp, I relax in the charming melody of primitive song. Life doesn't get any better than this!

Not more than 50 yards to my south is the large wooden sign for the Modoc National Forest, so I am easily able to pinpoint my precise location on the map ... right where the highway enters the green

shaded portion on the paper. The elevation is still relatively low, so no ponderosa pines exist here, only pinyon and juniper. Off in the distance to the southwest, I can clearly see a massive volcano called Mount Shasta. I have driven past this mountain many times in my life on Interstate-5, but have never seen it from this viewpoint until right now. In my mind, I can imagine the whole cartographic assemblage of features, and have an excellent sense of my current place in it.

I am just off the paved highway by a few yards, but there is little traffic this far out, so the sounds of nature keep me company with little interruption from whining rubber tires. My bird continues to serenade me, as I eat dinner and walk around my private camp, taking in all that the natural world provides my spirit. There is a stand of trees that hides me from the highway to a certain extent, but it doesn't matter. No one stops or bothers me. I feel totally safe and happy.

A half hour after the gorgeous sunset, I finally crawl into the REI Arête tent, write in my journal, and call it a day. That was an enjoyable 37 miles, well worth taking my time. Having left myself abundant time to make this trip, I feel no anxiety on lower mileage days. That is the best way. Other than whacking myself on the noggin with a thick low branch of my camp tree when I was pitching the tent, the day was without negative incident.

A warm breeze lulls me into a restful and long sleep.

### **DAY NINE – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 09, 2009**

(Modoc National Forest boundary to Canby, California – 44 miles)

Today, I plan to traverse the Modoc National Forest, drop out at the tiny town of Canby, and then head slightly northeast on Highway 299 towards Alturas, California. The map mileage looks doable, but of course, that depends on how the terrain dictates my progress. I won't know until I go! I should be pretty close to Nevada by the time the sun again sets, at least by automobile standards.

As I am still in the process of awakening, my mind reviews the expedition progress thus far. I'm about 640 miles out from Badwater Basin in Death Valley at this point, having ridden a little more than 300 miles up to last evening. Other than my potential disaster up in the Oregon Cascades, everything is coming along quite smoothly, yet still, I wouldn't trade that mountain traverse for anything. I felt more alive and thoroughly engaged in the now than ever that night. Yep, living on the edge makes for an interesting life, and makes us stronger in mind and

body.

Before I started on this journey, I did quite a bit of reading from other long distance trikers and bikers. One thing I found to be unfortunately common is the frequency that flat tires occur. My friend Dan Price took a 4500 mile trike trip on a TerraTrike a few years ago, and had so many flats between eastern Oregon and Portland that I wondered if there was a better way to do tires. The last thing I want to be doing is changing tires on the roadside!

This is why I opted to go overboard with my tire setup on the trike, as I mentioned earlier. If all the hype of manufacturers was right, I shouldn't have any flats, and so far, that has proven accurate. Three hundred miles and not one flat tire! All five are still holding air just fine. Of course, I didn't do the same tire setup on my Burley trailer because it already came fully tired, and I had no more money I could spend on tires at the point I acquired the Burley. It would have run another \$150 to outfit the trailer like I did the trike. I am hoping the trailer's Kenda tires and stock tubes go the distance, but I am more concerned for the trailer than the trike when I ride through heavy shoulder debris now and then.

I have one spare Schwalbe Marathon-Plus tire bungeed under the trailer, just in case I end up shredding a tire somewhere. These Marathon-Plus tires are like steel! Mounting them is one big pain in the neck (and thumbs), but having done so six times for pre-trip practice, I have full faith that they will get me to Badwater without incident. Those tires, along with the ultra-thick Q Tubes and EarthGuard tire liners ease my mind when the going gets tough.

This morning, the air is dramatically warmer than it has been earlier in the trip. I am in the Modoc National Forest, but the trees are still sparse and small at this elevation, so my camp receives full morning sun. This allows me to have my normal Nutty Nuggets breakfast right here ... after I break down camp and pull the trike by the front derailleur post out into the sun on the dirt road. I like the price of these roadside camps, and I like the peace and quiet too. Why pay a campground fee to be mixed in with a lot of people and feisty kids, when I can do this for free? And this camp has a glorious morning view of Mount Shasta, with its early reddish glow. If my inexpensive digital camera had a telephoto option, I could get a nice shot of the volcano, but it's too far away for the camera to do it justice.

Somewhere around 20 miles into the day, I arrive at a California State Agricultural Inspection Station, for inbound trucks and vehicles.

Locating a bathroom would be convenient right about now, and I figure they must have several up ahead. I brought along a folding toilet, which I have in my trailer cargo trunk, but have not used it yet. I considered doing so before I left camp this morning, but figured that sooner or later I'd come across a store or something. The toilet consists of a normal seat with four folding aluminum legs. It's very lightweight, and takes up virtually no room in the trunk because it folds nearly flat. Matt Jensen had a good laugh before I left, saying I wouldn't need such a thing. Well, I've carried it for years back when I drove a 4x4 vehicle through the wilds of the planet, and it can come in real handy at times. Not only that, but the views while using it surpass even the best of bathrooms!

Okay, so I pedal into the agricultural inspection station in lane one. Traffic is light to nonexistent. All the employees come out with their digital cameras and ask to snap a few shots of me. Guess they must not see too many trikers ride this road. Heck, maybe they've never even seen one, other than me, of course. Obliging, I sit and smile and tell my story. Then, in return for my patience and sharing, I ask where their restroom is located. I am told it is out of order, and no facility exists currently. This seems highly unlikely and illogical to me, for this station is seriously out in the middle of proverbial nowhere, and the employees must drive for some great distances to get here I reckon, unless they live in a small handful of log cabins just across the highway.

Even when I tell them I'm a retired cop, hinting that I'm trustworthy and in need, the answer is still the same. No amount of cajoling, even my pleading that on a tricycle my travel is so slow that I could be many hours from a toilet, improves my situation one iota. People in cars can be down to Canby in short order, as the mountains don't slow them. But my situation is radically different. You know how it is when you think you are about to use a toilet? Seems like psychologically the urge increases about five-fold, right? The closer you get, the more you have to go! Well, seeing I'm at a dead end with these folks, I hightail it back out on the highway, hoping for something up ahead.

Thanks California. You got your photographs and amusement this morning when I pedaled in. What did I get? Seems like it could have been a fair trade to me. They must have figured that if they let one use the throne, they'd have to let everyone else who asks. Of course, I was the only one here to know about it.

Oh well, within a half mile, my brain suppresses the need enough that I can carry on, especially after offloading the liquid portion.

It's still a long way to Canby via trike. If things progress to that point, I can still use my portable facility in the woods, which are becoming increasingly thicker and more user friendly from a privacy standpoint.

Around 17 miles farther on, I reach a high pass later in the afternoon. Guess my body has burned up all the extra food inside me, as I'm doing fine now, likely in a calorie deficit condition anyway. From the AG station to here, the mountainous road has been slow going, with uphill grades and increasing elevation. Stretched out below me are miles of downhill. Steep downhill!

Rest time has arrived. This will be one big-time coast to the distant bottom, probably about seven miles worth! The map indicates that I am soon to leave the Modoc National Forest, probably somewhere during this rapid descent. Down I go, faster and faster, and when a rare car does pass me, it's not going that much faster! I am traveling just under 50 miles per hour on this stretch, and the speed limit is 55. Now isn't that a hoot! Talk about a great adrenaline rush of pure excitement ... this makes all the uphill worth every effort needed to reach the top! Wonder what that last motorist thought when he saw me? Probably his first time! Surely, it left an impression!

The curves are mostly open and gradual, requiring only a little bit of body lean to maintain full tilt and not use the brakes. With my ultra-low center of gravity on this British ICE Q trike, along with the road-absorbing suspension system, there is nothing to slow me down. Even pulling this heavy trailer does not seem to affect my handling at all. Now, if the road curves were tight, then the trailer would be a hindrance, but here, and on most of these highway descents, the curves allow cars to maintain highway speeds, so the trike and trailer perform superbly. I like finishing off a day with a special treat like this.

The mountains are now casting longer shadows as I reach the 'T' intersection of Highway 299, having left the national forest a few miles back. I made it all the way through the forest lands in one day. This junction is where I now turn left, or east, towards Canby, Alturas, Cedarville, and ultimately the most remote and dangerous stretches of the northwestern Nevada desert, out where the alternative Burning Man city comes to life once each September. I lost an incredible amount of elevation in that descent, but realize that I will have to regain it somewhere along the route prior to reaching my objective in Death Valley. The journey started at sea level and is going to below sea level, but there are lands of many mountains in between.

Having made the turn east on 299, I can see buildings up ahead,

and in a half mile, I pass the Canby, California “city” limit sign, which reveals a population of 413 residents who prefer solitude in a serious way. This village is a long way from anywhere, as has been my journey since leaving Tulelake. I like it this way though ... much better than crowded city streets and hundreds of cars. Okay, they must have a restroom here someplace!

As soon as I enter the town, I can see the other end. It is only a few blocks long, what there is of it anyway. An old defunct motel on my right sits decaying in the late afternoon sun. On the left is a motel and bar combo business, so I park the Q to go inside and inquire about camping. There are a couple of twenty-something guys next door at an old gasoline station, one with tattoos and an earring, but they seem benign enough, as I assess my trike’s safety quickly in my mind. Even though I do my best to not prejudice folks, old teachings die hard, and the traditional markers of fear for well-to-do folk are all over.

I’m tired. I’ll take my chances. After all, what would they do with my gear anyway? I could scour the town in minutes on foot. I tell myself what a fool I am for falling prey to such ridiculous thought in the first place. Gee, if they look at me, which they do, I look a whole lot more suspicious and misguided than they do! And I bet I smell a whole lot worse too.

The heavy-set gal running the empty bar and motel puffs on a cigarette and watches a football game on the television above the bar as I walk in, taking off my cycling helmet. I inquire about camping or, in the alternative, a room here. She says all her rooms are booked for tonight (strange, as no other cars are anywhere around, and the town appears completely deserted but for the three people I’ve seen so far). She also has no idea of where I could pitch a camp, but tells me to talk to the two guys at the gas station. Maybe they’ll know something. I ask if I could use the restroom. She says “sure” and points down the hall to the back.

It’s a tight squeeze to get in the little room, and there are signs about how long to hold down the handle, and not to leave the faucet water turned on. Better late than never, especially considering I have no idea where I’ll be camping tonight.

Business done, I walk next door to inquire of the guys about a camp. The Q is still exactly how I left it. They are amazed at what I am out here doing, and how far I’ve come. Actually, they are both really nice guys. They just look a little ragged around the edges. The main fellow who runs the aging station points across the street to the town’s

park and recreation facility, which is but a miniscule building. He says that I can camp in the back, completely out of sight. He also adds this proviso: “Just don’t die back there, because you won’t be found for a long time.” Well, that’s just what I want to hear. It means I’ll have the whole place to myself!

I thank him and pedal on over, timing my ride to not get hit by the eighteen wheeler coming through. There are two chain link fence gates into the one-acre area. The one to my left heads through a paved basketball court, and the one to my right heads down a walkway and around the corner by a huge tree. Six to one, half a dozen to the other. I chose the larger of the two gates and head into the basketball area.

Being the fall, there are about seven inches of colored birch leaves all over the ground by this gate, which crunch as I ride through them. Once into the court, I can see it is completely fenced in, and entrance to the rear park area is not to be had this way, so I turn the trike around and head back through the huge pile of leaves. It’s about ten feet across, and I enjoy the sounds of pedaling through the crisp leaves. Through the other gate I go, but since there is a three inch rise in the paved walkway from the dirt right at the gate line, and it is barely wide enough for the trike and trailer, I get off and guide the trike through while standing.

This is when I notice I have a very unwelcomed problem that will have a dubious outcome ... a cyclist’s worst nightmare! Or if not the worst, right up there near the top of the list anyway ...

Just inside the gate on the walkway that leads to the large grassy park area, my keen eyeballs, tired as they are, pick up on the fact that my left front tire no longer has a black tread. It appears to now be a whitish beige. Pulling off my dark polarized polycarbonate sunglasses and stooping over a bit to get a clearer look, I am in disbelief of what I am seeing.

By the way, I got these polycarbonate sunglasses so that if a tire from a speeding motorist threw up a rock, I’d still have eyes with which to see. Polycarb doesn’t shatter like ordinary glass, or break up like traditional plastic lenses. My \$125 Serengeti sunglasses, with real glass, stayed at home this trip. When you’re cycling at tire level, can’t be too careful. I also have found that the polarization is a great feature! This is my first pair of sunglasses with this, and I am impressed with the difference between them and regular lenses. All the glare from the road, water, or darn near anything shiny simply disappears, making it much easier to see where I’m going. This feature also keeps me from

squinting so much, thereby prolonging my childlike facial skin texture (*Give me a break ... can we just get back to the story please?*).

Well, sometimes if I fail to mention something right when it crosses my aging mind, I might never mention it, so I take what comes as it comes. Okay ... yeah, back to the big brewing crisis in my mind at the Canby “city” park:

The reason the tire’s tread is no longer black (and that’s no fooling either) is due to the fact that the entire tread surface all around the tire is covered in a certain nasty portion of the *Tribulus terrestris* plant – at the very minimum I’d say at least 100 of these dreaded tube slayers, commonly known as goatheads, have firmly attached themselves to the tread like ticks on a deer. It’s unnerving! I have heard about them, and the horror stories associated with being so unfortunate to ride through a community of the merciless spikes, but this is the first time I’ve actually seen one personally. And I’m not just seeing one either!

It’s not a pretty sight.

I’m trying to ignore what my peripheral vision is sending my way, from over on the right side of the trike, but alas, I must glance over. Dang if the right tire isn’t similarly affected! Being the astute triker genius that I am, I deduce that perhaps the tires that came after these front two might also have been the unhappy recipients of this little Canby welcome souvenir, and a quick check reveals that the remainder of my afternoon will be laden with pulling chores. Yep, sure enough, the treads of all five of my tires are literally covered completely with goatheads. No tread is visible, period. It’s my lucky day.

Courtesy Wikipedia, here is a wee bit of background information for those not yet initiated: “It is a taprooted herbaceous perennial plant that grows as a summer annual in colder climates. The stems radiate from the crown to a diameter of about 10 cm to over 1 m, often branching. They are usually prostrate, forming flat patches, though they may grow more upwards in shade or among taller plants. The leaves are pinnately compound with leaflets less than a quarter-inch long. The flowers are 4–10 mm wide, with five lemon-yellow petals. A week after each flower blooms, it is followed by a fruit that easily falls apart into four or five single-seeded nutlets. The nutlets or ‘seeds’ are hard and bear two to three sharp spines, 10 mm long and 4–6 mm broad point-to-point. These nutlets strikingly resemble goats’ or bulls’ heads;



the ‘horns’ are sharp enough to puncture bicycle tires and to cause painful injury to bare feet.”

Okay, so here I am in a little remote berg called Canby, days from the nearest bicycle shop, with five tires full of nutlets! I hate it when that happens. I was also considering riding on to Alturas this afternoon, 18 miles east, as the light is still in the sky, but this seals the deal. I’m not going anywhere. Good thing I have boots on at least.

It’s a bad seed day – forget about my hair.

Right on the walkway, I begin carefully extracting these ugly horns from my tires with my Swiss army knife, and as I do, I kick them into the grass so that when I come out of here tomorrow morning, I won’t run over the same ones a second time. A simple flick with the blade dislodges all but the most stubborn. My back starts aching after quite a while of doing this, seeing as how there are literally hundreds of these nutlets in my tires, so I just kneel and continue on. I have to keep rolling the trike forward a bit at a time to move the next batch to the top. Most of them are gone now, so I go ahead and roll my rig to the rear of the building to begin setting camp.

What a beautiful little park this is. It’s all fenced in, with fields just outside the fencing. There is running water too, so I can refill my dangerously low water supply. Things are looking up. There is even an electrical outlet so I can finally recharge the cell phone I borrowed for this journey. I have no idea if the sprinklers will automatically come on tonight, so I set the tent up on the concrete area, underneath a huge old oak tree. With my air mattress, it won’t make any difference. A few feet away are recycling bins for cardboard, plastic, and glass. There is even a bar area, where the fire department auxiliary sells beer on hot summer days, or at least that’s what the signs indicate. Five large picnic tables allow for plenty of room to spread out my stuff as I prep my camp.

The tent is set, the sun is getting low, and all feels comfy and under control ... as much as it can be anyway, considering that I could have five flats sometime soon. Popping out the remaining goatheads, I see something that further gets my attention. A tiny little gray speck, about the size of a pinpoint, is on the tread of one tire. It looks no different than a minuscule speck of dirt, and I would normally never even pay it any mind. Using the point of my knife blade, I try to scrape it off. It doesn’t move. Now, I try carefully prying at it, and after a few seconds, my worst fears are confirmed. A spike broken off from one of the goatheads I pulled out earlier finally comes out with my knife blade. It is several millimeters long. Further investigation reveals that these

little specks are also all over the five tires, so when I thought the large head portion was all there was, I was wrong. Due to my inattentive and fast removal of the goatheads using a simple sideways scraping method, I had inadvertently broken off many of the spikes, which remain in the tires.

They are really hard to even find, but at least the soon-to-be-setting sun is brightly illuminating my treads. Every little speck I pry at is indeed another of these broken-off thorns, and when each one comes out, I am astounded at how long they are, certainly long enough to pierce a traditional bicycle tire and tube. Obviously, these things were under all those lovely leaves through which I pedaled at the basketball court. This entire mess is consuming a lot of my time because I have to keep rotating the tires to make sure I don't miss any that could continue to work their way into the rubber if I were to ride on them tomorrow. I'm getting hungry now, but I must finish this unpleasant chore before the sun sets, as it requires good light to see these nearly invisible gremlins.

At long last it is done! My treads are once again black, spic and span clean. I wonder to myself what local kids must feel if they come to the park barefooted. Ouch! These hideous things are seriously harmful to anything they touch. Amazingly, I didn't prick myself at all.

Now, all I can do is wait and see if anything develops. The three trike tires all feel solid as ever, holding their maximum 70 pounds of air. The left trailer tire seems fine also, apparently holding its 65 pound maximum. The right trailer tire seems a little squishy, but not bad. I'll have to keep an eye on it. Just to make sure by tomorrow morning, I get out my Topeak Road Morph pump and make sure all five are at max air. Then, I turn my attention to other things.

First order of business is dinner. As I eat, I can see the long road to Alturas stretching out east from here. The elevation declines in that direction, as Canby sits in the foothills of the northeastern most remnants of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. A fair amount of traffic, especially trucks, is traveling Highway 299 this evening. Tomorrow I will be on that road, which appears easy going considering the elevation drop. By tomorrow night, I should be somewhere past Cedarville, up in the forest near the Nevada border, and then by Sunday, my journey will doubtless be heading across the Black Rock Desert in Nevada ... the epitome of utter remoteness!

That northern section of Nevada desert presents my greatest food and water challenge, for one stretch is more than 80 miles of literal

nothingness, meaning no re-supply areas such as stores, houses, or people. On a tricycle pulling a trailer, 80 miles can translate into two days easily, especially since there are several small mountain grades out there, one of which a pre-trip telephone call to the local Sheriff verified was quite long and steep from a cyclist's viewpoint. If I break down out there, the cell phone will be my needed salvation. Here, the day prior to this section of the trek, I ride through a goathead patch ... Murphy's Law!

Jack Freer is the Chief Deputy with the Carson City, Nevada Sheriff's Department. Nearing retirement, he is a Death Valley enthusiast, and we met online a year or so ago when he began communicating with me about one of my Death Valley websites. He wanted to meet me out there on my next expedition, but little did he realize that I had sold my Xterra SUV. As things came to pass though, it all came together, and he agreed to be my failsafe squad in exchange for me showing him around the national park in his Jeep. Can't beat that offer, I thought, so I at least know that Jack's in my corner.

I haven't yet met him in person, but we have spoken extensively on the telephone regarding trip plans and preparation. We have a solid plan in place, which includes him meeting up with me in western Nevada just before I hit Death Valley National Park. We will camp together, and he will follow me in on a dirt road I have been planning to take from the northern boundary. Although, considering how poorly the trike performs in deep sand, I am now rethinking this dirt road idea, and instead considering using pavement, which will add about 45 miles to the trip. We shall see.

Anyway, Jack has instructed me to call him at any time if I hopelessly break down and am in need of assistance or rescue. He can be anywhere in the northern Nevada region in a matter of hours, and he assured me that he's got me covered. This eases my mind as I stare off into the vast expanse of tomorrow's ride. Jack is also one of three correspondents with whom I am sharing my trek as I progress. I call these folks on the cell phone, when and where there is service, tell them what the latest is, and then they post it on the Badwater or Bust blog set up for folks who have requested to follow along at home. I decided not to bring a laptop computer and do it myself, for I would never get anywhere once I started typing at a Wi-Fi hotspot. Not only that, but a tiny cell phone is a heck of a lot lighter than a laptop, and my rig is already way too heavy as it is. I can't afford to go any slower!

With all my camp chores complete, and dusk yet providing

light, I retrieve my charging cell phone and try to call a couple of people. It has been a day since I have had service, so I must make up for lost details. Each time I call, I have my journal handy to remind me of the events, and the correspondent has pen and paper handy on their end (which is all cozy in their homes while I am out in the open wildlands).

First, I call Desert Dune, the lead correspondent. After relaying all the latest for a new blog post, Desert Dune informs me that extremely hazardous weather is predicted for my intended path, and there has been a lot of chatter on the blog as people are worried I don't know about it yet. True enough, this is the first I've heard of it. Everything seems fine looking at the sky here in Canby.

Desert Dune tells me that I must immediately call Jack, because he has all the details printed out from the National Weather Service website. Apparently, a typhoon called Melor has been wreaking havoc out in Pacific Ocean, and it has made landfall. NOAA predicts that the remnants from Melor are striking northern California hard, with extreme winds, heavy rains, snow in the Sierras, and flash floods possible in desert areas. One hundred mile per hour winds are expected on the higher mountain ridges.

Okay, my ear is tired from holding the cell so tightly to my head to drown out truck traffic, so after the call, I set it down for a few minutes before calling Jack. I am sitting on a picnic table top, with my feet on the bench. I have my flip flop sandals on, and since my pant legs have somewhat inched up due to my seated position, I notice my Achilles tendons for the first time during the last 24 hour period. I am still taking my Motrin tablets on schedule, but wonder if they are doing much good. The inflammation has increased for yet another day, so either the drugs are doing nothing, or they are keeping it from getting even worse. I have no idea.

Both Achilles, the tendons that attach the heels to our calves, are puffed out in all directions. Looking directly from the rear, they are about double their normal thickness, and looking down the rear of my leg from above, instead of the normal sweeping concave look, they arch outwards enough that I am concerned. The funny thing is that other than about a mile's worth of stiffness each morning when I begin riding, they seem asymptomatic. However, if I push on them, I can feel an uncomfortable sensation. They are not slowing me down or hurting, but then again, they are continuing to disintegrate with each passing day.

Fortunately, Canby has excellent cell service. Must be a tower on a mountainside nearby. I call Jack. He and his wife just finished

dinner, and he is happy to hear from me. He asks if I am aware of what I am about to ride into once in Nevada, and I tell him that Desert Dune just told me a little about the supposed dangers. Jack, a level-headed man whom I completely trust due to his professional law enforcement background and calm rational thinking, says things are not looking good for my intended route. He reads me multiple warnings from the NOAA website, all stating clearly that this storm can be life threatening depending on one's location. Jack and Desert Dune have apparently been posting the warnings on the Badwater or Bust blog in the hopes I might somehow see it, since I have been out of contact via cell lately. I haven't seen a computer this whole trip.

Jack tells of flash flood dangers in the northwestern Nevada desert. He says according to predictions, the remnants of Typhoon Melor are calculated to arrive there the very days I will be pedaling through, and that it would be one hell of a wild ride if I continue on. At the very least, I would be drenched for a couple of days with monsoonal rains and pummeled by extreme winds, and at the worst, I would be caught in a flash flood, washed away down some nondescript sandwash out in the middle of an endless Nevada desert where people are aliens. I'd never be found or heard from again.

I like adventure! In fact, I love it. Moving forward with the odds against me somehow excites the essence of my adventurous spirit. Let's assess what's going on in my mind as I talk to Jack. Here's what I tell him:

All five of my tires have been seriously afflicted by goatheads, and any or all could be flat and useless by tomorrow morning. My Achilles tendons are both looking like sinuous yams. I am about to enter the longest and most remote stretch of the entire trip that has no water or people. And, to top it all off, a colossal deadly storm is going to overtake my slow little trike right in the middle of a place where I might as well be on the moon. Guess that pretty much defines some adventure!

Hmm, this has become quite a unique afternoon!

As Jack and I speak, I notice the sky is becoming increasingly smoky. One of those guys at the old gas station said they were having a prescribed burn to the west somewhere. Now I can finally see that they were right. Our conversation takes on a more serious tone at this point, for it's decision time. I am half a mile east of a road junction that allows

for another route if necessary. Progressing farther east tomorrow morning would remove this choice. We discuss options, and I ask his assessment. It's getting dark now.

Regarding my tire situation, I do have two spare Q Tubes, the extra heavy duty kind that are supposed to reduce the likelihood of punctures. I also have one spare Schwalbe Marathon-Plus tire, but that would only be necessary if I end up shredding or cutting a tire, which, as bad as these nutlets are, won't be a factor. If two tubes turn up bad tomorrow morning, having lost air during the night, I can replace the tubes, but then I would not have any backup tubes. If only one proves bad, I would still have one other backup tube. If three or more tubes are disabled by sunup, then I'm out of luck right here, unless the leaks are very slow, and I can still progress by the old "stop and reinflate" methodology from time to time.

After thinking for a moment, Jack advises me to modify my plans. He advises that I head southwest on Highway 299 tomorrow morning, which would put me on course to reach the northern California town of Susanville. He feels that to head east on 299 could prove a big mistake considering just the Typhoon Melor issue, let alone the tendon and tire problems. Seems like the three Ts are trying their best to bring me down: typhoon, tires, tendons.

My adventurous spirit is becoming dampened the more we talk. Jack is right. This is no time not to play it safe. This journey is not about proving anything to myself that could end up crippling me or, worse yet, killing me. There is probably not cell phone service anywhere out in that isolated northern Nevada desert on Road 447 to ultra-remote Gerlach, so calling Jack will probably not even be an option in those unforgiving hinterlands. There is too much at stake. After all, I have been asked to speak about my book, and I cannot lose sight of that objective for the sake of a thrill. I must get down to Death Valley in one piece.

I tell Jack that I will head southwest on Highway 299 tomorrow. He also advises that I probably need to let my Achilles tendons return to a normal state if I wish to continue on to Death Valley, still many miles distant in southern California, and offers to pick me up in his truck the day after tomorrow so that I can recuperate at his home for a couple of days. Glancing at my tendons in the dwindling light, I concede to his wisdom. Somewhere north of Susanville, we will meet on Sunday. He describes his truck. Obviously, he won't miss me, a lone triker on a long haul through the vast northern California forests.

We say our goodbyes, knowing that tomorrow I will probably not have cell phone service, and our next talk will, in all likelihood, be in person way up in those mountains to my southwest. The plan is set, we hang up, and I crawl into the tent after recharging the telephone for a few more minutes and filling all my water containers. I have total privacy here. No one bothers me the entire night.

**DAY TEN – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2009**  
(Canby to 12 miles south of Adin, California – 34 miles)

Sunrise comes early to this in-town camp, as the eastern horizon is relatively flat with distant mountains. My original plan called for descending into the morning sun on Highway 299 and ultimately Nevada Road 447 to Gerlach, but that changed last night after a lengthy telephone meeting with Jack. The weather is clear, the temperature is pleasant, and it should prove to be an enjoyable ride, now ascending into the western mountains headed for the small town of Adin, California on my newly planned route. Up to Adin from here, the highway will be a combination of 299 and 139, and then at the Adin fork, I will continue on 139 south towards Susanville. It has been said that the best traveler is one with no set destination. Well, that's not my case, but it kind of adds to the adventure making an eleventh hour route modification like this.

As I climb out of my tent, to a day that gives no hint of foul weather brewing, a quick glance at my ruthlessly attacked tires and tubes of last evening reveals that none appear flat. So far, so good, but only by squeezing them with my fingers and thumb will I know the rest of the story this morning. Looks can be deceiving.

All three trike tires, the ones I spent a fortune on to make sure they don't go flat, are fine to the touch. The left trailer tire feels somewhat low, even though it looks fine, and the right tire feels okay. Out comes my Road Morph pump, which confirms no air loss in any trike tire (all still fully at 70 PSI), but tells me that the left trailer tire probably has a slow leak, because last night I aired it up to a full 65 PSI, and over the course of the night it has lost enough to feel. So far, the right trailer tire is holding at 65. I will keep an eye, fingers, and pump on the trailer tires for a while.

I'm good to go!

My current location is roughly 80 miles north of Susanville, so somewhere up in these mountains I'll be pitching a Saturday night stealth camp. I am confident that it will be south of Adin however, a town only about 22 miles distant from Canby. I should make Adin this morning if I get moving soon.

On last night's telephone conversations, my correspondents told me that the third correspondent, David Wright, has been busy with his cartography work. Dave is a life-long explorer of the Great Basin and Death Valley regions, and maintains a complete website about all his travels. It proves useful for anyone wishing to know what particular dirt roads look like before they head out. Dave's eye for details leaves no stone unturned.

Anyway, Dave is a guy who has become quite adept at digital map rendering, and I asked him a few months ago if he would be interested in providing cartographic (map) updates periodically to show the progress of this trike journey. Well, he readily agreed, and has apparently posted a map or two on the Badwater or Bust blog. Guess I'll get to see his handiwork once I plop myself down in front of a computer, an electronic item with which I have had no contact since the inception of this trip. Actually, it's kind of nice to be away from it for a change! Thanks Dave.

After a leisurely and sunny breakfast on one of the five picnic tables of this quaint park, I'm off to see the wizard, and push my trike and trailer back out to the highway from behind the town park building, being careful not to run over any goatheads from last night. Traffic is light as I begin the tenth day of pedaling, now heading west on 299 instead of my originally intended east. The mountains lie directly ahead of me, and the first four miles out of Canby prove a slight uphill grade, but easy enough that I maintain a fairly fast clip of perhaps ten miles per hour. If I had not given away my fancy speedometer, I would know for sure, but since the natural world of which I am part is more important than human technology, I'm not the least bit concerned. Estimating is good enough for me.

The next five miles is a different story though. Here is where I begin extending my life span dramatically today, as pedaling up to the summit of Adin Pass keeps the wheels turning much slower. The scenery is magnificent, so the creeper speeds at times allow me unparalleled opportunity to soak it all up in great detail. It's fun to watch little flowers slowly pass to my right, just inches from my hand, realizing that motorists will never have this experience, and even



bicyclists aren't this close!

Trikes are great conveyances, for nothing else brings travelers closer to their world. There is no battle of balance on ultra-slow uphill due to the three wheels, so speed becomes less relevant. A trike pilot can simply stop at any time, take a digital photograph or get a drink of water, and then just take off again, all without swerving or reattaching to the pedals. I am definitely hooked.

I am gaining around 1,000 feet in vertical elevation on my way to Adin Pass, which tops out at 5,173 feet according to the sign at its summit. This is grand forested countryside, with hardly a car to be found anywhere this Saturday morning. Thermal regulation is always a consideration while triking, and as I climb higher, it gets cooler, and the shady areas could call for another layer of clothing, but then when in the sun, I'm fine, so I just keep the jacket setup where it is. Pedaling up to mountain summits pretty much keeps me warm, as my body is generating plenty of heat as it burns up its calories.

Good thing I had a full breakfast this morning!

On the summit, I get out my old Samsung 1.3 megapixel digital camera to capture the obligatory summit shots of conquest. A yellow diamond-shaped sign shows an eighteen wheeler icon on a steep downhill grade, a welcomed sight for nearly any cyclist who just made the grade. This means my work is over for a while as I get to rip down the other side, faster than a speeding bullet (or so it would seem – everything is relative). I was more powerful than a locomotive coming up, and I'm certainly up in the sky, but I'm not a bird or a plane, nor am I Superman ... just an ordinary trike pilot on a mission of adventure!

It's thirteen miles from the summit to Adin, a place that looks like a small country village based on what the map shows me. I eat a bar, chug some water, nestle into the cockpit, and off I go, flying down the mountainside with the wind furiously embracing my face and body. It's a thrill every time I do this. I wish it could last longer than these five miles, but at least once I come off the mountain, the land just flattens out into agricultural countryside, and I don't have to think about chugging up another hill. Roughly eight miles of Adin Valley now separates me from the town.

Arrival in the quaint rural community comes at 12:30 PM, a fact I know because they have clocks here. The road curves around at the south end of the valley, goes over a small rise, curves left, and then straightens out in as picturesque a rural setting as one could want. Large trees line the main street of the small parish, with their leaves beginning

to transform into fall's flaming colors and fall onto the ground. You just can't help but leave all your worries at the town limit, for this is truly a place of peace and serenity.

On my right is an old-time country store, so I park my trike and head inside for some food. The old wooden floors of yesteryear creak ever so slightly as I walk atop them, while gazing all about in every direction to take in all the marvelous antiques and lodge-like atmosphere that defines all that this business is. Here is a small market and a gift shop for all weary travelers who are fortunate enough to find themselves in Adin, California.

This morning's pleasant 22 mile ride is capped by a relaxing lunch of three bananas, two V8 juices, and one Grandma's chocolate chip cookie (the latter a rare treat for myself because they had them readily displayed at the old wooden checkout counter). As I sit at the small round table by the front window, I eat and write in my journal. In the restroom are photos of John Wayne and other country cowboy stuff. This whole place is done up with superb backcountry atmosphere. It is so pleasing to be here that I take a lot of time just hanging out. I also have one of the gals at the counter fill my water bottles. Everyone is polite and friendly, the weather is picture perfect, and life is most definitely good!

Having exhausted every legitimate reason for remaining in the store, I begin my journey yet again, but only get two blocks before I pass an ice cream parlor. I have no intention of stopping here, but a large team of high school basketball girls and their chaperones are sitting under the umbrellas eating their ice cream and clearly taking an interest in my unique means of locomotion. So, being the friendly ambassador for triking that I am, I turn my rig and pedal up to their tables to say hi and chat with their coach. I explain my trip, get the usual "wow" response, everyone smiles happily, and then back onto the main street I go.

Just outside of town, the road spits, and 299 continues on southwest. Highway 139 diverts here to the south, so I get into the left turn lane and commence my silent passage through a few miles of fairly flat crop land, fenced on both sides of the road, with ranch houses here and there in the distance, usually at the end of long driveways. My travel is so quiet on this trike that I can hear the air fluttering from the wings of grasshoppers ... literally thousands of them during the next few miles! This should be called the Grasshopper Highway, so I ceremoniously rename it such, just as I assigned the Potato Highway

moniker earlier in my travels.

Being a trike pilot bestows high privileges upon the intrepid spirits who chose this path, including the desired capacity to rename roadways without political debate or social deliberations. I christen whatever I wish at my whim. What a life! Now if I can just keep a grasshopper from entering my revered facial area that is surrounded by my dishtowel sunshade, I'll be fine.

My journal reflects a list revealing a few of my favorite things on this trip so far. They include hearing the birds sing, wide open spaces, little towns with friendly people, lack of automobile traffic, and downhills. There are more, but since I'm writing from the journal notes, that's all there is right now.

The day is so fine I decide to make camp a little earlier than usual. I have been climbing back into the Modoc National Forest again after I left the Grasshopper Highway phenomenon, and the trees are transitioning from juniper and pinyon to ponderosa pines. The uphill are also with me as signs of people diminish by the mile. Although I prefer a stealth camp, one that is private from the eyes of others, nothing is cropping up that fits the bill, so when I reach a point where the road obviously begins a very steep ascent at one point, and there just happens to be a generously large dirt turnout at the bottom, I seize the opportunity.

To my right is a rancher's fence line, and down below are fields and grazing cattle. There is a line of pines along the fence. I am at the interface of high rolling hill ranch land and mountain forests. The views are outstanding, and I am able to situate my rig over by the fence, far enough away from the highway that I feel secure. A few small trees partially block motorists' views of me, enough to give me a wild feel. I wedge the tent in between the trike and fence. But it's of little concern anyway, as there just is not that much car traffic out here this afternoon. Every once in a while a car or truck motors by, but mostly I have a peaceful vista of fields, cattle, a creek, and forested hillsides.

The birds are singing to me here, the breeze whispers through the pine needles, and the stream below gurgles as it flows lazily down the secluded valley. There are few sounds I like better than the wind in the trees of inviting forests. I feel at home when I hear it.

At one time, prior to my final itinerary decisions, I had planned to take this road to Highway 395 at Susanville, and then take 395 south through the eastern Sierras so that I could enter Death Valley from the west. I eventually decided to take the far more remote route through

northern Nevada instead so I'd have the road to myself more often. Yet, as it has turned out, I am now on this road anyway! Interesting.

A large highway sign grabs my attention after dinner, so I walk on down to it. The letter arrangement decodes in my brain, and the message tells me that tomorrow morning I will be entering a snow zone. Well, this is a big clue that the road really heads up to the high country again, so I best get a good night's rest tonight for some tough pedaling after sunup! I don't think I'll encounter any road snow up there, unless tonight brings a surprise from Typhoon Melor's remnants, but the mystery of it all increases the spirit of adventure. I am alive, living in and for the now, not worried about yesterday or tomorrow, and relishing every moment here in the wilds. This journey is the prize. The destination is just a little icing.

I'm out like a light once the remaining glow of the western sky darkens. I am alone, but for an occasional moo over the edge.

### **DAY ELEVEN – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2009**

(south of Adin to 37 miles north of Susanville - 17 miles )

The tent is still in the shade when I must arise to offload water. Mind you, I'm just a few yards off the paved road, and there is scant concealment available in the way of trees and shrubbery. Fortunately, I can see enough road in each direction, and any car is also easily detected by my ears in this quiet nearly-natural environment, that no sense of nervous urgency psychologically hinders the business at hand.

As I face the Highway 139, to my left, from whence I pedaled yesterday, is a foothill valley and gently meandering pavement that leads north to Adin, and to my right are steep mountains and curvy roadway that leads south into the Modoc National Forest. Straight ahead, across the road are transitional hills covered in pine trees, with the sun about to crest the eastern ridge, and behind me is a picturesque rancher's field and stream to the west, far below the rocky slope, with a roaming herd of cattle lazily dining on grasses.

It doesn't get much better than this!

Today, Jack Freer is scheduled to meet me somewhere south of here on this road. He has gladly volunteered to give my Achilles tendons a deserved break by scooping my trike, trailer, and me off the asphalt for a petroleum-powered ride to his Gardnerville, Nevada ranch. What a guy!

Although, I must admit a certain hesitancy about this whole

thing. After all, my goal is to ride my human-powered ICE trike to give my talk, and I am attempting to steer way clear of gasoline in the process. Now, only on my 11th day out, it appears that I will at least temporarily concede an impromptu setback of my best laid plans. Sure, a little company for a while is welcomed, and sure, letting my tendons return to normal would be nice, and okay, lazing out in a truck for enough mileage to replace several trike days has a certain tempting ring to it after riding and living on the ground for so long ... but still, I feel like I am about to cheat on a school test!

Not only all that, but who knows what would have happened to me helplessly in the path of Typhoon Melor's remnants in the vast Nevada desert. I have this vision of me pedaling for all I'm worth towards Gerlach, surrounded by the endless Black Rock Desert, and looking over my right shoulder to see the lethal clouds bearing down upon me, thundering their mighty roar of destruction as the rains pelt the dry sands, and the accumulating torrential waters cascade through a massive rocky sandwash. At ninety degrees off my starboard bow the water hurls towards me, and it is clearly evident that I cannot pedal fast enough to escape my entombment beneath several tons of earthen debris!

So, ego aside, I humbly opt to forfeit a few miles in the name of sanity. I could lie. The conspiracy would involve only Jack and me. No one else need be any the wiser. As far as the rest of the world is concerned, I'm lost anyway, and wherever I show up, my story would be believable. Yeah, I rode the trike the whole way. Never mind those Achilles the size of bananas. I'm a warrior, an animal tough as nails, one who never says die. One problem with that. It's not my way.

Nope, I'll document the entire journey just the way it happens. No dramatics or fabrications necessary. The adventure is adventurous enough as it is. No need to stretch things for an effect. I'll take a break for a couple of days. It's okay. After all, this is my first cycling trip. At least I have come eleven days and about 400 miles so far on my own power. Haven't stopped at a gasoline station yet! That's one heck of a lot farther than most folks could do, so I console myself with these thoughts as I begin turning the cranks of my Sugino XD-600, brushed aluminum, 152 millimeter triple chainset.

I'm really starting to get used to this life out on the road. The fact that it will be cut short today promptly brings home the point that I am most definitely cut out to be a wild trike pilot. There's something about making your own way, living by your own wits, and moving

efficiently over long stretches of ground that gets into your blood. I like the maverick essence of it all, coloring outside the lines of culture, living on the edge, never really sure of what the next bend brings my way. Yes, this is living!

I tried calling Jack a few minutes ago before I packed the cell phone away into the side pocket of my left Arkel GT-54 pannier, but the surrounding high mountains have thoroughly obliterated the signal. I'll try again later, once I am higher ... in elevation, that is. Just like John Denver's famous Colorado Rocky Mountain High song, I am in a mental high from the escapade unfolding right now in my life. These mountains aren't as high as those where I used to live in Colorado by a long shot, but out on my trike, anywhere is just as grand to me!

The air is crisp in the shade, yet as I round turns into the full rising sun, I warm up quickly. Then it's back into the morning shade, but since the road is steep and my body is stoking the internal furnace while I move 350 or more pounds skyward, lack of thermal comfort is not an issue. Even though I have been eating for days now, my chow bag still seems pretty full to me ... and pretty heavy. Water is constantly refilled at each little town, so that weight never goes away. Even when I drink it down from the Camelback bladder hidden behind my seat, or my twin front-side bottles, the weight is still there; it's just inside my body now.

What a fantastic way to experience northeastern California!

Roughly 17 miles from last night's camp, and only a few miles south of Earth's human delineation of the 41st parallel, I am on a very long, and seemingly endless uphill section, so I stop to upload some calories from a Clif Bar into my ever-hungry muscular machine. Gotta' keep feeding the boiler to make the train go! While I'm stopped in the warming sun, I whip out the tiny cellular device and attempt to converse with Jack. I wonder where on this road he is. No signal. Back to triking I go.

It's Sunday morning. The religious faithful are still in church. They haven't started their Sunday drives yet. And this far out, even if they had, it would be a while before I see them. I have the road to myself. Up ahead, the terrain seems to be telling me that I am not far from peaking before heading down the long grades past Eagle Lake and then down farther yet into Susanville. I work hard at these uphill gains, and I want to have the enjoyment of what's on the other side – downhills!

But sometimes, things just don't work out the way you want.

I can see a good half mile ahead up the mountain, and a little white speck emerges from the farthest uphill curve in my sight. It's a car, heading north towards Adin. Once onto the straight section, and close enough for my eyes to identify the minuscule object as a pickup truck, the vehicle makes a quick u-turn and comes to rest amidst the pines in a large pullout on my side of the road. Well, my trained police mind resourcefully assesses what my brain just perceived, and offers me two potential explanations for the sudden deviation of the car's path:

- 1) This is a lowlife criminal predator, who, deducing my helplessly alone state out here in the midst of nothingness, will soon rob me of all my cash, rip off my trike, and toss my formerly alive body into the roadside thickets.
- 2) It might just be Jack, who has also identified me at this distance, seeing as how no one else is out here, especially anyone riding a tricycle over these mountains on a Sunday morning.

Calling upon additional, and often untapped, cranial skills, I make a leap of faith by assuming option number two, and now get ready to chow down on my Nutty Nuggets. Oh yeah, I forgot to mention that I left camp with only a bar in my belly today, hoping to save time and get in more mileage before Jack would come along and spoil my game.

Well, a man now exits the truck, still a quarter mile distant, and steps into the middle of the roadway. He raises his hands up to his face, and seems to be holding something black. I knew it! He's lighting the fuse of a bomb with his cigarette! Surely, he's going to roll it down the road towards me. Maybe the pavement will extinguish the fire.

But wait ... no, it's not a bomb after all. It's a cannon!

But it's spelled Canon with a capital C, because it is a 10 megapixel digital camera (*which I will learn in just two minutes from now*), and Jack is gleefully snapping photographs of this deluded trike pilot as he pedals up for their first face-to-face meeting. The time is 10:00 AM as these two guys meet 37 miles north of Susanville, California. I know this because Jack has a watch. Albert Einstein once said that a man with one watch always knows what time it is, but a man with two is never sure. Good thing I don't have a watch.

We shake hands and exchange some greetings, exactly what I don't recall because all I can think about is putting down the tailgate so I can spread out my bowl, cereal container, raisins and all. I am hungry, so I ask Jack if he minds me taking a late breakfast break as we talk. He says not at all, and assures me to take all the time I want to relax and eat. After all, Jack has a fast gasoline burner, so we can make good time down this mountain. But on the trike, I could have made good time also. Okay, slower, but still good from my standpoint.

An hour and a half later, breakfast is over, my trike, trailer, and cargo box are all loaded into the rear of his truck under the camper shell, and we are off. It feels so bizarre to be sitting in a car! My body is so used to the daily travel by trike that this simply seems surreal now. Trees are speeding by at breakneck speed. I look over at Jack's speedometer ... gads, he's driving like a bat out of hell ... a whopping 55 miles per hour! What a maniac. Funny how everything is relative. Even on my longest steepest downhill, I never reached this speed on the Q. Came close at times, but still to attain an extra ten would have been a real adrenaline pumper.

All kidding aside, Jack is a cool guy, a few years younger than myself, but still about to retire from the cop shop after a full career. We get along great. It's like we already know each other fairly well from months of emails and telephone calls in preparation for this trip. But Jack is still a cop, and almost every normal cop has a serious drug addiction ... to caffeine! He needs his fix, and I come to find out that our first stop will be at Susanville's Starbucks. After driving down the grand pappy of all hills into town, which would have been an absolute blast on my Q (might have been able to hit 55 on this one), we pull into the crowded lunchtime parking lot.

It's weird seeing so many people again. I hate it.

But, it gives me the opportunity to stretch my legs as I walk around seeing males in business suits and females in business dresses chatting on their cells while they down their midday lattes. A professional woman, smartly dressed with cell phone in hand, parades from the counter with her caffeine towards the comfy couch by the front window. She sits down, crosses her legs, and revs up her heart with the java, prepping for the afternoon's client meeting. Those nylon covered legs and high heels wouldn't get her too far on a tricycle. I've gone over the edge into another world. I don't belong here.

I'm an alien on my own planet.



Not only do I not drink coffee, but I no longer live in a superficial world of high fashion clothing and impressing others. I opted out of that a while ago. I tried working for a living for about 30 years once. Wasn't my cup of tea (*decaffeinated white, of course – higher in antioxidants*).

A couple of hours later, we pull into the driveway of Jack's rural acre and cedar sided home. It sits on the southeastern outskirts of Gardnerville, with magnificent views of the Sierra Nevada Range to the west. I am envious of his abode. Mrs. Jack, aka Stephanie, comes out the front door to greet me. Oh, I'm the guy who ... yeah, Jack told me all about what you are doing out there. She's really nice too, and makes me feel right at home. I try to apologize for interrupting their normally scheduled life, but she insists that it will be fun having me stay a bit. These folks are gracious hosts, and open their cozy home for my recuperation and safe harbor from the impending mega-storm.

Things are a blur. I have just been ripped back into the customary world of America, right out of my little unimportant trike realm, and it takes me a while to readjust back to civilized living with all the pleasures of 2009, like big screen televisions, computers, real beds, and hot food. Turns out Jack is a gourmet chef, something he didn't tell me earlier, but for tonight, he and Stephanie just order in two massive pizzas to compliment their cupboard full of fine wines. It's like the twilight zone for me. You just don't make a transition this fast without some mental fallout!

But, I'm not complaining. Having just stood on a scale at Stephanie's insistence that I look awfully thin (*or is that awful and thin*), the resultant number reveals a loss of ten pounds since I left the coast on October first. That would roughly coincide with Matt's prediction of 5,000 to 7,000 calories per day expenditure. Based on my intake of approximately 2,000 daily thus far, a ten pound loss indicates a ballpark deficit of 3,500 calories per day. My mind is too dulled to do the math properly, but it's good enough for me.

From the trike, I bring my panniers and food into the bedroom they made up for me. I take a much needed shower, throw on some lightweight sleeper type clothes, and then come out to join them for all the pizza and red wine I can handle. I'm certainly not a wine or beer drinker, but no sooner than my glass gets near the bottom, Jack makes sure it's topped right off again. And I don't even have to arise from my reclining chair to get my pizza! They delight in keeping my plate full,

apparently feeling pity for my swollen Achilles tendons, which are now clearly visible to everyone, as I am only wearing flip flops, and my pants cover only to mid calf. Stephanie says they really look bad. Thanks for that update.

Tonight, my body gets an over supply of calories for a change ... a big over supply at that! When I finally arise from the chair, my new world seems somewhat unstable, as I attempt to maintain my balance over to the kitchen. In this condition, I would be unable to get up and off my trike!

We talk about the journey thus far. They show me the Badwater blog on the computer so I can see what people are saying about the trip. We watch some television. For a brief time, I have no cares. I can do as I please. The news says the remnants of Typhoon Melor will indeed be hitting the region hard in the next day or two. They say to expect heavy rains and high winds, and to stay away from the low ground of dry riverbeds. It's coming, but I am safe.

I do a little Achilles tendon research on the computer before hitting the sack. The consensus is that it will take longer for them to fully heal than I have here in Gardnerville. Tonight I do not worry. I just go to sleep in the rural silence. The trike is still in the back of Jack's truck. I'll get it out tomorrow and do some cleaning and maintenance before getting ready to head back out on the road once again.

\* \* \* \* \*

To read the complete tale encompassing 37 days,  
and see the rest of the photographs,  
please visit:  
**<http://silentpassage.wordpress.com>**

Following are a few photos of the trip:



First day, passing through the coastal town of Reedsport, Oregon



First night's camp at Bunch Bar Landing, Umpqua River



Old road camp in woods, north of Klamath Falls, Oregon



Breakfast at an old logging camp in eastern Cascade foothills



The church that allowed me to lawn camp in Altamont, Oregon



California state line – flat ground & easy crankin' for many hours



View inside REI Arete tent, with trike panniers – Canby, California



Picturesque Adin, California – spent an hour for lunch in old store



Checking trike when Jack put me back on the road in Nevada



My miniature teddy bear Tumbleweed, who always adventures with me



Across Nevada desert after quick lunch – national park by nightfall



Big desert – little trike – crazy man





Continual uphill grade to the crest of the Grapevine Mountains



Jack waited a long time for me to get this close, then he left for home



Last photo prior to entering Death Valley National Park



My old stompin' grounds – been visiting since 1955, but not on a trike



Famous Scotty's Castle, northern portion of DVNP



The Q perched on the rim of massive Ubehebe Crater – high winds



Manly Beacon landmark near Furnace Creek, DVNP – dust storms



Badwater Basin, Death Valley, bottoms out at 282 ft. below sea level



Glad I'm not here when summer temps hit 136 degrees Fahrenheit



Artist's Palette road, 1,123 feet above Death Valley – tough pedaling!



Still climbing towards the fascinating Artist's Palette scenery



Get stuck in sand? Pull your trike out like this! Easy, no winch needed



ICE Q in sizzling Death Valley sun – daytime highs still passing 100° F



The steep climb up Towne Pass – expedition almost complete



Some of the toughest 17 miles to be found anywhere



Death Valley creosote bushes far below – one very steep climb





Whoops! Where did that come from? My force field keeps me safe.



Halfway up the pass: time for a much needed break, water, & snack



Getting dark and still not at the top yet – reflectors work great



Night by the time I finally reached the cold windy summit of Towne

*“I wonder if I can sustain this climb. I am becoming weaker and colder ... that much is certain. I consider the possibility of creating a crisis bivouac camp, one where I would simply park the trike right on the road’s shoulder, unfurl my emergency bivouac bag, slide my sleeping bag inside, rough out a little snow trench, and hunker down until daylight. My body heat is still sufficient enough that such a scenario would result in a controlled retention of warmth, or so I believe.”*

*Excerpt from: Silent Passage*

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## **Adventuring On A Trike**

### **What to KNOW before you GO**

*by Steve Greene*

Casting off the familiar comforts of home and heading overland for an extended period of time on nothing more substantial than a human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle tends to unsettle the mind somewhat, especially if going it alone. In a way, it’s pretty straightforward and basic, yet somehow, an initial fear of the unknown creeps in and erodes confidence. Concerns of weather, traffic, food, survival, and even going to the bathroom fill the head with mischievous gremlins bent on preventing the acquisition of new life-altering experiences. Alone? On a tricycle? Out in the middle of nowhere? I need all the protections I’ve come to expect in life! I need guarantees!

Well, guarantees are only delusions we build around ourselves to calm the restless spirit, for the reality of our world provides only one absolute guarantee upon which we may rely, and that one is precisely the reason behind our penchant for constructing alternates. Pondering one’s own demise often initiates a powerful wake of grim and unbearable anxiety, thus much of humanity seeks fortresses of immortality, intent on creating a haven of hope. Steering clear of anything out of our normal day to day existence, avoiding that which we perceive dangerous to our life force, is the norm. Take no chances! Stay safe. Don’t leave the box ...

But are things truly more threatening outside the box? Or, perhaps a better question for the average Joe might be, are we even in a box? And if we are, what’s beyond it? Many are the unfounded societal belief paradigms to which the frightened masses tenaciously cling in an

effort to remain safe. The extent of life lies within delineated boundaries, after all, and we dare not question anything more. We are taught that those limits are iron-clad realities, all there is to what we are, so as a collective, we don't even think there could be more ... far more than our shackled minds conceive. We don't think to even ask the question!

A few inquisitive souls, however, wonder what lies out there over the horizon; Or they behold the pretty blue sky and clouds over the mountains and ponder if these magnificent natural phenomena represent hidden psychological doors through which only the risk takers may boldly go. Their adventurous spirits yearn to discover what would happen if ... if they dare to wander away from their habitual environment of pleasant mediocrity. Their calling is to strike out and do things their own way, not the way everyone else has always done it. They come to understand there is much more outside the box than within, and once they leave, there's no going back. They become the freedom and opportunity few others see. They take the chance, and their reward is an indescribably vibrant feeling of being alive like never before. He who returns from a journey is not the same as he who left!

Adventuring on a trike is just one of countless methods for accessing hidden doors through which the intrepid may pass, a rare and very unique mode of personal expression and challenge that takes us to whatever is beyond our hum drum lives. The trike is like a magic carpet, a secret silent passage into a New World. More accurately, those who are riding human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles around this planet have most likely already left the box long ago, and the trike is merely an extended expression of their mindsets, one of their numerous methods of discovery used to make the most of who they are, where they are going, and what's available to them along the way. These people are Free on Three, seizing each day as it comes, moving about the misty realm of triangular locomotion with intense internal grins of epiphany, their world illuminated by the candle of wonder and curiosity. Live for the moment – for once it has passed, there is no getting it back! Carpe Diem!

It takes guts to ride a trike! With two and three ton moving mechanized machines speeding about by the thousands, or jammed up for miles at a walking pace, heading out on a trike is insanity taken beyond limits. You'll be killed, horribly maimed, or verbally dishonored by impatient and angry self-righteous box dwellers who refuse to share their road with you! You're obviously living on borrowed time riding a

trike in this world. Only folks many cards short of a full deck would even consider doing it. First of all, what's the point? Why go so slow? Modern cultures like ours only know one speed, and that's as fast as possible ... while multitasking no less. Trikes don't stand a chance. What could anyone possibly gain from riding a trike, other than perhaps a little exercise while pedaling safely around a quiet suburban neighborhood in an effort to undo the daily stresses of commuting and earning a lot of cash to pay down that massive mortgage?

Of course, you probably already know the answers, and that is exactly why you are reading these words. You know, or want to find out, the rewards of long-haul adventure triking, and you certainly realize, or soon will, that most of the traditional fears heaped upon us by The Boxers exist only in their minds, and that we too used to believe the same things ourselves ... until we quietly escaped on our trikes and moved beyond the fear. You also have probably noticed the barbed wit laced throughout this chapter thus far, and perhaps may agree that through simplification life can grow in many unexpected and glorious ways. Adventuring on a trike is most definitely something you don't want to miss!

After you've taken that trike out for multiple days far from the "safety" of your home, many awakenings crystallize within, the gremlins disappear, and it dawns on you that this small and simple human powered machine is the marvelous gateway to an inner independence, and if you're lucky, perhaps even to a physical one as well. Trikes are liberating for those bold enough to ease themselves down into the cockpit and slice through the static and illusions that plague the other six billion hamsters on their wheels to nowhere. Get off the treadmill. Get in a trike. Get on the road! A trike in the garage is safe, but that is not why trikes are built.

And the trike will grant each pilot new life. Only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go. There is no other way! These introductory words have been intended to serve as personal motivators, like a pregame pep talk designed to fire up the mind and body to succeed in the upcoming endeavor. Adventuring on a trike is probably a daunting thought for those yet to try it for the first time, but the memories, along with plans for future journeys, are well worth taking that first step. The expert at anything was once a beginner. We are all somewhere on that continuum, helping one another forward in a shared desire to leave normalcy far behind. If you are an experienced long-haul triker, take a new trike pilot with you next time. If you are

new to triking, find a seasoned triker and tag along on his next journey.

This chapter has been crafted to provide some basic ideas about what it's like riding a trike for longer distances over the course of several days (*or even a weekend overnight if it's your first time*), and what types of considerations are prudent to make the experience proceed with as few glitches as possible. Nothing ever goes as originally planned. This we all know. And few things occur in the time span originally allotted. Of course, that's the beauty of a rogue life with a trike on the road; the mystery of what will happen next is like a magnet to alternative thinkers like ourselves.

Obviously, before we can have a trike adventure anywhere, we have to have a trike! If you have yet to get one of your own, this is the first place to begin preparing for success, by studying all the manufacturers and what they have to offer. It's sure nice to actually look at a trike in person before buying it, something that I was fortunate to experience because a local fellow was selling his low-mileage ICE trike. There are no trike dealers anywhere close to where I live, so the trike gods were smiling upon my insignificant soul. These benevolent deities smiled a second time on my quest by making sure the second-hand trike I eventually acquired happened to be one of the best trikes on Earth. I got a great trike that was more than up to taking me anywhere I could muster the courage to go.

Until the used trike came to my attention, I was about to buy a new one from a trike mail order business called Hostel Shoppe Recumbents in Wisconsin. They are great people, very helpful, and eager to ship one right to my door ... fully assembled, no less. It would have been a quality one also, as I had picked the Catrike Expedition. It didn't work out that way, but having done some homework for several months on the best trikes according to the riders who share their feelings on the forums like Bent Rider, at least I had a pretty good idea what I wanted. Get the highest quality trike you can afford if possible, and be sure to save some money for all the options you'll be needing, along with quality cargo solutions to carry all your gear.

Assuming you have a trike that is built to last from high quality components, the initial step is complete. The peace of mind that comes with a well built machine is surely worth not having to worry about mechanical failures out on the road. We are out there for a good time, not to be tinkering with fixing a problem. It's just like computers of long ago; they were labor intensive and user unfriendly, forcing us to focus much of our attention on just running the darn things, which

leached creativity from the very project we were using them to craft. We want to focus on the trip, how we can use it to enrich our lives, and the surprises it brings our way.

All this is not to say however that we should neglect periodic checking and maintenance. Even the best trikes require minimal upkeep to keep them up on the road. This holds true even if we choose not to ride across the county, state, or country. Around town rides aren't too worrisome, for we can always walk the trike home if need be, but on 50 mile day rides into the mountains, simple routine maintenance is important for sure. A well maintained trike is always ready, and the parts remain in good condition so that they won't let us down in the middle of proverbial nowhere. A few minutes spent on a regular basis will head off most any issue before it develops into an unwelcomed problem, and this routine maintenance time will also allow us to take spur of the moment rides with little preparation or worry.

Here are a few items to check and maintain on your trike:

**Weekly:** Tires properly inflated; Chain well lubricated (*but definitely not overdone*); Brakes fully functional; Quick release levers fully closed; Hydraulic brake lines in good condition (*if you have them*); Panniers and cargo trunks properly attached; Air pump present and functional; Road tool kit present.

**After Every Ride:** Brush tires off and check for leaks and cuts; Wipe off road grime; Wipe down chain and apply minimal lubricant if necessary; Check for any new damage or wear.

**Monthly:** Clean trike thoroughly with damp rag (*no high pressure hosing*); Check for cracks in frame or welds; Degrease chainrings, cassette, idler pulleys, and derailleurs; Lightly lubricate the chain; Lightly lubricate moving parts of derailleurs, such as pivot points and jockey wheels; Make sure pedal, crankarm, and chainring bolts are tight; Check bottom bracket for wear or looseness; Check idler pulleys for looseness; Lightly lubricate clipless pedal mechanisms; Check spoke tightness, while making sure wheels turn true; Clean rims and spokes; Check accessory hardware attachments.

**Yearly:** Measure chain with a wear indicator (*such as from Park Tool*); Replace any heavily worn parts; Replace brake and shift cables if

frayed or rusty; Perform a thorough inspection from bottom bracket to rear tire, repairing or replacing anything in between that may contribute to a malfunction out on the road. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure ... and saves us one big headache right in the middle of a really fun day. Remember, any little maladjustment or seemingly insignificant problem will be magnified hundreds of times over the course of a long adventure.

If we conduct frequent inspections of our trikes throughout the year, hopefully on a weekly basis, the monthly and yearly suggestions will have already been addressed before the longer time frame. For example, we wouldn't wait for the once-a-year time to replace a heavily worn cable, or the once-a-month time to tighten a loosening crankarm bolt. Quick and simple weekly inspections and maintenance will keep the cables in good shape and all the bolts tight. It's like checking emails: Do it daily and it's easy to remain on top of the job, but do it once a month and it can become overwhelming.

Tire pressure is probably the most common maintenance ritual any trike pilot will perform on a regular basis. The minimum and maximum inflation pressures are embossed on the sidewall of the tires, often expressed in pounds per square inch (*PSI*) and bar units. Seventy *PSI* equals roughly 4.8 to 5 bar units. Trike air pumps often read in both measurements, so you can use what is easiest to remember. My Schwalbe Marathon-Plus tires have a maximum pressure of 70 *PSI*, and every few rides, I make sure with the pump that's where they are, although, with experience, you can get a pretty good "feel" what that pressure is like just by squeezing the tires with you fingers. If it feels a little mushy, out comes the pump.

Tires naturally lose air at a very slow rate over time, even just sitting in your garage unriden. On my Death Valley trek, I checked every day with my fingers. Then, about day-9, I checked them with my pump gauge because I had just ridden through a huge patch thick with nasty goathead thorns, so numerous that each tire's tread was hidden by the miserable white heads and spikes. The three Schwalbe tires on the trike registered just over 65 pounds, showing the natural air loss with nine days of heavy adventuring. The two trailer tires and tubes, both of inferior quality, had serious issues, with one registering 35 pounds after the thorn removal chore.

The main reason I run the tires at full pressure is to minimize rolling resistance, even though it makes for a little rougher ride. Going up mountains is easier if there is less drag, and after days of pedaling



over passes, that is a good thing. This high pressure isn't really an issue for me because of the tire size, which is 20x1.75 inches, making for more of a balloon feel and absorbing the road irregularities. I would run a 2 inch width if Schwalbe made the Marathon-Plus in that size, but unfortunately, they do not. Keep in mind though that my trike is suspended, which makes a huge difference in adventuring comfort, and allows me to minimize the friction between the rubber and the road by keeping the pressure higher. The trike came with thin 1.25-inch tires, which do lessen rolling resistance more than 1.75s, but since I spend some time on dirt roads, I also needed the added buoyancy provided by balloon type tires.

Another regular maintenance chore is that of chain lubrication, although if you don't get into a lot of dirt and grime, it's not that big of a deal. On my first trip, I stealth camped on some dusty old roads with deep dirt, which quickly mucked up my rear derailleur, cassette, and the chain. It looked like they were all made of dirt ... not good for parts longevity. Imagine the gritty chain pulling all that crud over the chainrings, jockey wheels, and cogs! Riding through tall grass is your friend, as the blades clean it off fairly well.

The secret trick is to not overdo the lubrication of the chain or derailleurs, as the oily substance easily holds onto dirt and dust, not to mention that if you throw the chain off the outside of the large ring on an over zealous shift, you're going to get all that tenacious lubricant on your hands or gloves when you put the chain back onto the chainring. Having lubricant on the outside portions of each link is not necessary, rather getting it into the joints of the links, where the movement occurs, is what's important. It's best to keep this lubrication task easy and clean by doing a little bit frequently if necessary instead of a lot every few months.

One way to tell if you have too much lubricant on the chain is if the chain looks dark, oily, dirty ... or fuzzy from grime. Also, if it's on there too heavy, when you touch it, your fingers will be a mess. The trike's chain and sprockets should retain the original look of the bare metal if kept lightly lubricated and wiped free of dirt on a regular basis. A well maintained drivetrain will appear brand new, with no evidence of any excess lubricant ... and, if you have to lift the chain back onto a chainring sometime, you'll still have clean hands or gloves afterwards.

Start looking at bicycle chain and sprocket systems when you see them parked here and there around town, and you'll notice some pretty dirty rigs because most riders just figure it will last forever even

if neglected. What they fail to realize is that a clean and well maintained power transmission system will work more efficiently in the form of easier shifts, while at the same time prolonging component life. What is unimportant to local riders who are always close to help becomes critical for trikers out in the middle of nowhere. Get in the habit of keeping your drivetrain immaculate. It just makes everything easier, while allowing for better inspection of potential problems.

Also check your idler pulley, sometimes called a chain pulley, which is midway along the power side of the chain (*the upper level of chain as it is pulled forward towards the crankset*). Keep it clean and check for wear. On a part like this, it is good to inspect it when new, so that you will know later what it is supposed to look and feel like. This gives you a baseline for comparison as the mileage increases over the years. Actually, this is prudent advice for all your trike parts! Know what they are like new, and you will realize when they are reaching the end of their useful lives. Most parts will provide thousands of trouble free miles, so the chances of something going south while on a particular adventure are slim ... as long as you are keeping current on thorough weekly inspections at home, and making necessary repairs or adjustments when needed.

Assuming your brake and derailleur cables are already adjusted well, little if anything needs be done in this department, except as a cable wears with time. If either of the brake levers on the handlebars are touching the hand grip, or getting mighty close, screw the barrel adjuster by the grip out until this slack is gone. If that's not enough to take care of the problem, you may have to reposition the lower end cable clamp by the wheel. The brake cables can be lubricated for smoother operation by disconnecting them at the wheel end, holding them up higher than the hand grips, and dribbling a small amount of light oil inside the housing, which will coat the entire length. Consider replacing the cable if it is frayed or rusted.

The rear derailleur has a barrel adjuster on it, which allows for fine tuning if your shifts are not as precise as you'd like. With the rear wheel suspended off the ground, turn the crank and shift gears, while working the adjustment until it is smooth. A good instructional video of this technique appears online, at the comprehensive Trike Asylum website ([trikeasylum.wordpress.com](http://trikeasylum.wordpress.com)). And like brake cables, when frayed, rusted, or kinked, replace the derailleur cables.

Prior to departure on an extended adventure, it is important to ensure that everything on your trike is in top operating condition, just as

you would with an automobile before leaving on a cross-country trip. But it's a lot easier with a trike, and requires no highly trained and costly mechanic to check out thousands of hidden and complex mechanical and computerized systems that make a car run properly. This is one of the perks of owning a trike! It's simple, with everything right out there to view in your own garage. There are a minimal number of operating parts, and those can be readily checked and adjusted by anyone with a modicum of mechanical savvy and a good bicycle repair manual. Knowledge is the key, for nothing on a trike is so complex that an average person could not do it. Trikes are truly a liberating form of transport.

Basic tools will complete most aspects of trike adventure preparation, with a few specialized garage tools necessary for those who prefer to do the more major work themselves, like changing bottom brackets, cassettes, or crank arms ... where you would need a bottom bracket tool or a crank puller. It is common for trike pilots to have a tool set that resides on the trike for potential road repairs, and an extended tool set at home for aspects of maintenance that would rarely, if ever, be encountered in an adventurous overland journey.

Here are some suggestions for the road tool set:

**Trike Tool Pouch:** Tube patch kit; Spare inner tube; Tire levers; Air pump (*such as Topeak Road Morph*); Spare chain links; Quick connect chain link; Chain breaker tool; Hex wrench set; Spoke wrench; Phillips and standard screwdrivers; Small crescent wrench; Box and open end wrenches for front axles (*unless quick-release*); Multi-tool (*such as Park rescue tool MTB-3*); Chain lubricant; Needle nose pliers; Spare shift cable; Spare brake cable; Wire cutters; Small roll of steel wire; Utility knife; Electrical tape; Any other miscellaneous wrenches or tools needed to perform tasks specific to your brand of trike.

Well, this trike maintenance talk could go on for many pages, and is probably an entire article in itself for some future writing project, so let's move on to other aspects of adventuring on a trike. We began this article with certain maintenance concerns because it helps to alleviate potential problems out on the road. We will touch again on a few of these topics later while discussing the adventure itself.

There is a lot to consider when setting out overland on nothing more substantial than a recumbent tadpole tricycle, especially on a first

adventure, but it gets easier! Once a triker returns from the first cross country journey, it all starts coming together. Little things that you were unsure of before leaving now make sense, and “dialing in” the trike, cargo solutions, and overnights begin to gel. What was once educated theory, speculation, and advice is now a personally known reality. He who returns from a journey is not the same as he who left.

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We have talked about preparation and maintenance of the trike briefly, yet the trike can't go anywhere without its pilot. On a trike, the pilot is also the engine, the key ingredient that propels the three wheeled machine on the journey. As the originator of the Triclops tricycle makes clear by the name of his company, we are all Organic Engines. Our fuel comes from calories in food, and fueling the engine happily is an agreeable and tasty task, far more pleasant than pumping toxic gasoline into an automobile, which then poisons the very air we breathe. And the exhaust from our organic engines is as harmless as a little flatulence now and then, which quickly dissipates in the big sky as we pedal along.

Just as we prepare the trike mechanisms for the trip, we must prepare the organic engine for the trip. One thing becomes abundantly clear when triking hundreds of miles over the course of several days or weeks, and that is how utterly sedentary we have become as a culture to get from one place to another. On a trike, we learn the value of maximizing our fuel rations, and how 5,000 to 7,000 calories may be consumed during the course of an ambitious eight to ten hour day in the cockpit. We eat like there's no tomorrow and still become leaner by the day, whereas a motorist driving a car for a similar amount of time each day may expend but a third of those calories while doing nothing more taxing than sitting on his posterior.

Distance triking is not for the unfit ... that is if one hopes to have a good time while covering wide expanses of countryside. Which would you rather drive across the country: a car with a well-tuned new engine, or one with a well-worn, poorly maintained, 250,000 mile engine? I'd rather drive no car at all, but for normal folks, the answer is obvious. The latter engine has a much higher chance of failure, which is only lost money. Organic engines fail too, but the cost is far higher. Nearly anyone who rides a trike long distances will become more fit with time, of that there is little doubt, but being fit prior to a big ride is definitely preferable. Using the adventure to tune the body is not an

acceptable option ... iron out the bugs before you go.

All serious trike pilots are willing to attain a level of fitness far beyond that of the masses. This evolution is part and parcel with pedaling through the landscape. I have seen a number of overweight trikers, yet if they stick with it and take an extended trip, the excess weight will eventually be a thing of the past, assuming they don't stop at every restaurant along the way and stuff with junk food. Being an organic engine has huge longevity perks, and allows us the freedom of silently exploring our planet.

How do we prepare our bodies for a trike adventure? Well, that too could be an entire book on fitness, many of which can be found if you are interested to learn about the topic in detail. Those books focus on fitness in general, which is fine, but there is more to it for folks pedaling a trike. The unique manner in which the human body interacts with a recumbent tricycle demands preparation through specific practice prior to leaving the traditional comforts of home. Just because you train at a gym several days each week is no guarantee that you'll do well on an extended trike journey. In fact, you'll find that no matter how many barbell squats or leg presses you do weekly, there is still an additional initiation phase on the trike.

Remember that on a trike adventure, you will be providing your own propulsion power for 6-10 hours per day, and that's often not on level ground! On a trike, we quickly learn that even small uphill can be a challenge late in the afternoon, hills that you would never even notice in a car. Pedaling over high mountain passes will tax one's endurance capability, as it's continual motion of the large leg and hip muscles that keeps us moving ever upward, and those large muscles demand a toll of hundreds of calories per hour. It would be unwise to leave on an adventure if the body is not thoroughly prepared.

Getting the bod ready for a long trek is not something that can be done overnight. The best planning includes months of preparation in the way of exercise, diet, and mental conditioning. Getting your first trike and going for weekly training rides for three months prior to departure is not an acceptable solution, especially if you wish to avoid unanticipated and unwanted injuries. I would recommend a solid year of trike riding before considering taking a protracted jaunt cross country.

My own personal story goes something like this: I got my first trike during the month of May, for a three-state trip I was to take the following October, a trek that I anticipated would be roughly 2,500

miles. I had four months to prepare. Those 16 weeks should be enough, I reckoned. I figured it would be a snap, as my entire life has revolved around peak fitness and health. I had been weight training nonstop for 40 years (*3 to 5 days per week*), walking everywhere that's practical, taking wilderness hikes since childhood, and eating what most people would consider an unnecessarily healthy Spartan diet geared for maximum functional longevity. Consequently, my mind figured I could ride a trike down to southern California from the central Oregon coast (*over several mountain ranges*).

As I went for increasingly longer and more taxing training rides during those 16 weeks, things came along fairly well, with no significant problems. My endurance was clearly up to the task of heading cross country. Strength was not an issue. The common annoying nuances and quirks associated with the recumbent riding position seemed to dissipate rapidly. I was so confident in my physical and psychological abilities that I often allowed a few days rest between rides ... and being summer time, I was also involved in other outdoor activities that kept me away from the trike for longer periods than I should have been.

Here is where my thinking failed me: I had not at all anticipated the potential for repetitive stress issues that manifest themselves only after many consecutive days of riding. Getting up in the morning and pedaling the trike until evening when it was time to eat dinner and pitch a tent, and doing this day after day with no time off, brought forth some physical problems that were then unforeseen by an inexperienced rider like myself. To simulate a long journey, especially for the new rider, requires day rides from your house for the number of hours and days you'll be riding on the trip, and these daily rides should be done with only eating and sleeping overnight in between.

Let's say your planned adventure will last seven days at eight hours per day. That's a total of 56 hours of pedaling. To understand what effect the seven day trip will have on you before you actually leave necessitates taking eight-hour day rides for seven days straight, just like you'll be doing on the adventure, but instead of being out far away from home, you'll be returning home each night. Only by doing this will a rider really get a genuine feel for what it's like. The valuable upside to this preparation strategy is that if something does go wrong with your body or trike, you are no farther than four hours from the house, which, at 8 miles-per-hour, would put you only 32 miles from a safe haven.

Prior to my first long distance trip, I did not take such action, and was not totally prepared as a result. This was a notable mistake. It didn't occur to me then that I could simulate the actual trip right in my own neck of the woods. The downside is that for the best simulation to occur, it requires a hefty time allotment, which may be unrealistic for many people. If you're taking precious vacation time from work to experience your trike adventure, it's unlikely that you would desire to take seven days additional just to simulate it. This strategy is best suited for those who are retired or independently wealthy, I suppose. Although, a working stiff may still be able to pull it off prior to vacation time if he rode the trike to and from work each day, depending on the length of commute.

Since I did not simulate my ride ahead of time, a major unexpected problem arose from my feet, an area of the body that I would not have guessed could bring me down on my first overland journey. Imagine the stress and compression that feet endure as they rotate the cranks hundreds of thousands of times on an extended trek, and you'll see that proper footwear and conditioning is crucial. Short day rides now and then, with days off in between, allow the feet to recuperate, and thus do not at all simulate the real ride. Had I followed the advice I offered two paragraphs back, I would have learned firsthand about how the feet can fail under the right conditions.

Up to the last minute, I was still debating what footwear to use. I wanted to hike a lot on the trip too, so I ended up using my Merrill Moab Ventilator hiking shoes, combined with Power Grip straps to hold my feet on the pedals. There were SPD bindings on the reverse side of the pedals, so I could have used my Shimano SPD sandals or purchased regular cycling shoes with cleats, but since my occasional day rides did not properly simulate a real adventure ride, I was ignorant of a shoe's importance at that time (although I had been warned by old timers). Choose the wrong shoe and your ride will be cut short.

As noted elsewhere in my writings, I developed a significant swelling in both Achilles tendons above the heels of each foot, and the two toes next to the big toe of each foot reached an annoying point of numbness on the insides where the two toes touch. From what I have been able to tell from medical study since the trip, the numbness issue resulted from crushed nerves and blood vessels in my feet due to the tendency of the feet to wrap themselves around the pedals on each revolution of the crank. The soft soles of the hiking shoes provided woefully inadequate support for pedaling 8 hours each day, and the

needed tightness of the pedal straps further worsened the issue.

The Achilles swellings were clearly an overuse issue, which developed notably after an epic 20 hour ride over the huge Cascade Range in Oregon, through a bone-chilling night with snow. I was undernourished, extremely fatigued, and my hands and feet were cold, which further accelerated any circulation issues. An element of fear also existed at times, which likely caused me to really put the pressure on the pedals to hurry on to a warm lodge miles and hours ahead on the steep pass. All this combined to seal my fate with the Achilles tendons.

Could my problems have been avoided? On hindsight, my answer is yes. Had I worn traditional hard sole cycling shoes with SPD pedal attachment, the numbness issue may never have occurred. I now have Lake MX165 mountain bike shoes with exceptionally stiff Vibram soles, along with pricey Specialized insoles designed to stop excessive nerve and blood vessel compression, as well as keep my knees in line with my hips and the pedals, rather than their tendency to turn inwards on each power stroke with regular shoes.

I also believe that had I taken daily rides of 8 hours, approximating my ultimate trip, the Achilles tendons would have been properly trained to handle the new demands placed upon them. Simply put, I expected to launch into the world of trike adventuring on the fast track, to make my trip with a minimal amount of actual riding preparation, which was a big mistake. And that day/night portion that lasted 20 hours in the freezing cold was a notable error also. I should have stopped partway up the mountain pass and pitched a tent long before I foolishly plunged my body, and tendons, into survival mode.

Neither of these problems put a complete stop to my trip, for I could continue to pedal in spite of the issues, but who knows how long the Achilles tendons could have held out had I not instituted counter measures on Day 11. Were they close to ripping loose? I don't know. What I do know is this: The tendons took about three months to totally return to normal, and the four partially numb toes did not enjoy absolute feeling for more than eight months. So yes, I really did mess some things up pretty well it seems, and hopefully I'll be all right from here on out.

My advice, for whatever it's worth, is to have logged a solid year of regular triking before any thoughts of a cross country adventure enter your mind. This gives the body plenty of time to adapt to the weird little things that all trike riders go through, strengthens the muscles, prepares the tendons, increases the cardiovascular capacities,



soothes the mind, and allows time to iron out any potential problems long before they develop into serious issues out on the road in the middle of unfamiliar territory with help nowhere to be found.

Speaking of weird little things that all trikers go through, Recumbent Butt is probably ranked number one when it comes to enduring a brief break-in period after first getting the trike. For the initial few rides, as one adapts from walking to recumbent riding, one's posterior experiences a dull ache, which is partially alleviated by shifting one's muscular hind quarters on the seat while riding ... or fully alleviated by stopping, standing up, and walking around for a minute or two. For whatever physiological reason, this unwanted sensation eventually ceases to be an issue, and you can ride forever in baby butt bliss.

Another thing to consider is that the bottom brackets on many trikes are higher in elevation than the pilot's rear end, which assists blood flow back towards the heart, but tends to reduce it in the feet, precisely where you really need it. On a traditional bicycle, the bottom bracket is at ... well, the bottom, of course ... which keeps the feet full of blood and feeling. A number of new trike pilots report some toe numbness during the initial phases of their triking career, probably due to this arrangement, but it usually ceases to be an issue, much like the recumbent butt phenomenon. They should call bottom brackets "front brackets" on trikes.

Since the feet are higher than the hips on many tadpole trikes, this is another good reason to wear stiff soled cycling shoes attached to the pedals with cleats, because having the feet wrap around the pedals in soft soled regular shoes on each revolution, with the blood supply further restricted by a product like Power Grip straps that hold the feet to the pedals, only worsens the propensity towards numbness. SPD cleats, or some similar cleat solution, are the only way to go for any serious long-distance triker determined to keep the feet feeling fresh and fine.

My recommendation is to avoid any strap product on a tricycle. These products work well on bicycles, where your feet are on top of the pedals, but have minimal value on tricycles, where your feet are behind the pedals. In order for Power Grips pedal straps to keep a triker's feet attached to the pedal, they have to be fairly tight to keep gravity from pulling the foot downward, which is not healthy for blood circulation. Even with my Power Grips sufficiently tight on my trip, I did have a foot slide out once when I was fatigued and mentally weary. This is not

a good thing if you are traveling fast, as the foot can be swept back under the cross frame member ... ouch! A good cleat system, on the other hand, allows for unrestricted blood flow and relaxed feet.

Riding a trike on a regular basis strengthens leg and hip musculature. If you are used to riding a bike, a good thing to keep in mind about potential body issues is the difference between bike and trike postures, and the effect on the knees. Human-powered cyclists develop powerful and attractive thighs, calves, and gluteals over the course of several years of riding. On a standard bicycle, when a hill comes, most riders rise from the seat in a standing position to achieve additional leverage and power to make it to the top. This is because the leg muscles have more power the closer they come to the fully flexed position, as do all muscles. On road bikes, the “double” crankset is typical, with two chainrings, whereas on trikes, the crankset is typically a triple, with three chainrings. That third chainring is a small one that allows for ultra-low gearing to get over steep mountain roads.

A trike pilot, by comparison, cannot stand and use the body to assist because he is sitting in a recumbent seat, but since gearing on a trike has lower options for hill climbing, this “disadvantage” is overcome. The caveat here though is this: Resist the tendency to “tough it out” by staying in the same gear just to reach the top of the hill if the distance is relatively short. The pressure loads placed upon the knees in this situation can have disastrous results because the hips are fixed against the seat, and once you exceed the limits of the knees to handle the extra applied force, the damage can be felt in an instant (literally). One second you’re just fine, feeling strong, and the hill’s summit is within reach, and the next second you know you have exceeded your knee joint’s capacity because of immediate pain. There are absolutely NO warning signs before this damage happens to your knees.

I speak from experience on this knee thing. The funny thing is that it didn’t happen to me on my first trike adventure, but several days after my journey’s end when I was pulling up into my sister’s driveway. I had been cranking around her neighborhood on flat streets in high gear, really pouring the coals to the pedals and pulling speeds of around 15-20 miles per hour, and when I headed up the short, but steep, driveway, I figured I didn’t need to downshift. Well, I was wrong. In just a matter of feet, my knees cried out, and even though I stopped instantly when I felt the pain, the residual ache persisted for about two days afterward, really putting the fear into me. Once was all it took. I learned the lesson well!

To successfully trike long distances out on the open road requires wise management of gearing options. It's better to be spinning faster and maybe going a little slower on a hill than to be maintaining maximum speed in higher gears by using sheer muscle power. Muscles can be trained and strengthened to a point where they can exert greater force on a joint than the joint can handle, something I have long since learned in my forty-some years of bodybuilding and weight training. I have had it happen in my elbow joints when doing weighted triceps dips with a 120 pound dumbbell strapped around my waist, and also in my knees when doing heavy leg extensions. If you want to live to trike another care-free day, go easy on joints always! Male machismo will only get you injured. Gear down before you find yourself on a steep incline. What good is your trike if it's just sitting in the garage unused because you're having knee surgery in the hospital? If you mess the knees up severely enough, they'll never fully recover. I know several people who can personally attest to this, and it gets worse as you age.

~

The body is amazingly adaptable, and possesses impressive recuperative powers. But there are limits, just as there are limits to what stresses will adversely affect the trike. Any little maladjustment in the human body or mechanical trike is magnified thousands of times on long trip. You might get by with a poorly aligned leg or a loose wheel spoke around town and short day rides, but pedaling hundreds of miles day after day will accentuate these problems until they really get your attention in a negative way. A poorly aligned leg may lead to knee damage, while a loose wheel spoke may eventually break and cause others to follow with calamitous results.

Here is an example to illustrate the need to get things right. Back when I first got my trike in May 2009, one of the initial things I did was to upgrade the tires from the thin Kenda Kwest 1.25 lightweight rubber to the superior Schwalbe Marathon-Plus 1.75 virtually puncture proof heavy-weight tires. This necessitated dropping out the rear wheel to change the tire, where a quick-release lever makes removal easy and fast. After installing the impenetrable Schwalbe tire, EarthGuard tire liner, and heavy-duty Kenda puncture resistant Q-Tube, I slid the wheel back into the drop-out slot and tightened the quick-release lever.

Then, off I went on another training ride for the upcoming trip. Everything seemed fairly good pedaling around town, but it didn't seem

to have the smooth edge it had prior. Had I not shifted down to my lowest gear as a test, the potential exists that the rear cassette cogs may have been damaged once out on the road. The chain would move up onto the largest cog when I shifted the rear derailleur, but then it would immediately drop back down onto the next smallest cog. It did shift through the other sprockets, albeit a little noisily and not as smoothly as I would prefer. Before I changed the tire, it had shifted flawlessly.

Turns out that when I reinstalled the wheel into the drop-out slot, I had gotten it in just a slight bit crooked. In other words, the axle wasn't running quite perpendicular to the chain, which meant that the cassette was also slightly askew ... not enough to cause total malfunction, but enough to adversely wear the cogs and chain. Once I made sure the wheel was fully seated at the ends of the drop-out slot, I took it for another ride ... problem gone! The shifting was once again great. Imagine had I not had occasion to use my lowest gearing for a while (*24 tooth front chainring and an 34 tooth rear cog is only used for the most extreme mountain grades*). The other cogs, which were also not perfectly perpendicular to the chain would have been receiving undue wear as the chain would be pulling towards one side, imperceptibly grinding away at the sprocket teeth. Working out the minuscule bugs is critical prior to departing on a long adventure. If it doesn't seem just right to you, take the time to troubleshoot it while still at home!

Part of working out the bugs means simulating the trip ahead of time with regards to your cargo solutions. Long trike journeys require considerable thought about how you're going to carry all the stuff you need, or at least think you need. I thought I needed a lot more than what I really did, and thus towed a large trailer behind me the entire way, something that led to several related issues that are discussed elsewhere (including my issues with the feet). Whether you decide to tow a trailer or not, it is still a wise idea to test all your theories long before you depart into the dark unknown. Now is the time to see what works and what doesn't, not when you're 71 miles from the next human outpost.

I am assuming you will be traveling unsupported, that is, without a vehicle available for your convenience. I have been passed by cyclists with no panniers, in an endless expanse of desert, happily speeding by me unencumbered by extra cargo weight, and then watched as their supply-laden van brings up the rear. This is great if you can afford it, yet for me and many others of like mind, hitting the road with my own provisions provides a certain pleasure and sense of

accomplishment that is hard to describe. Maybe it's the pioneer spirit in me. In my mind, the adventure comes with doing it myself. Where is the adventure if there is a car behind me full of all supplies for immediate daily rescue?

Okay, back to the cargo simulation plan. Whatever cargo solutions you have chosen, take a few rides fully loaded with your panniers, trunks, and/or trailer to see how it goes. Is it all too heavy for comfortable pedaling? Is a lower small chainring needed to successfully summit the long and steep mountain passes? Will all your gear fit into the little nooks and crannies of the bags? Is it all waterproof in case of a storm? Can you get to the most frequently used items easily when you need to? What's the best way to pack the panniers for maximum storage benefit? Don't guess! Know before you go!

Dry runs are marvelous tools. I sold my trailer after the first long trip, and prefer to take future rides with just what will fit on the trike. Perhaps a few more dry runs would have solidified justifications for going without a trailer on that trek, but then again, I was absolutely convinced, having just come from automobile travel mode, that I couldn't make it work on the trike alone. I now see major advantages of not towing a trailer. Trike-only travel is perfect for being able to navigate tight places with ease, to be able to back up when necessary, to make myself more invisible at stealth camps, and to lift the rear tire and pull the trike backwards when the need arises (*such as if I get stuck on a dirt road*). I figure if backpackers can go for days with far less cargo capacity than will readily fit on a trike, then I can make it work too.

What works well for me is the following: a pair of Radical Design Lowracer side seat panniers (25 liters), an Arkel Tailrider trunk atop the rear rack (11 liters), and a pair of Arkel GT-54 side rack panniers (54 liters). Radical Design is made in Holland, and Arkel is made in Canada. I have a total of 90 liters storage space to carry all my gear, which is roughly equivalent to 5500 cubic inches. This provides slightly more than 1.5 times the room of the typical 3600 cubic inch backpack (*like the Kelty Moraine that I own*), which is approximately 59 liters, so it's like having a backpack and a half. That ought to be enough room for just one guy's gear. All it takes is a little rethinking on how I do things, which is well worth the maneuverability I'll be gaining.

Everybody probably has their own ideas on how to pack their gear and where to put it. For everyone you ask, you'll get a unique answer. So here, I'll describe my own method of packing. The first

question is where to put my house and bed, in other words, the tent and sleeping bag, as both take up a fair amount of pannier real estate compared to other items. Of course, these shelter and rest components are essential for a comfortable and pleasant adventure, so they must be put somewhere. The Radical Design Lowracer side seat panniers are the perfect size. I keep the four-season REI Arête tent in the left side pannier, and the Berkeley goose-down sleeping bag in the right. The sleeping bag has to be placed in a very compact stuff sack to fit in the single 12.5 liter pannier, but it works. Anything I place in the side seat panniers does not count for weight on the rear rack, which has a company-stated limit of only 55 pounds, so since the house and bed are relatively weighty, that's good news. Everything, however, counts towards the trike's weight limit of 275 pounds, including my own 160 pound body.

Part of the bed and house gear goes into another nifty niche. On the rear of the right side Arkel GT-54 is a Cordura nylon tube-shaped container that is perfect for an inflatable mattress and tent poles, so in there they go. This makes it quick and easy to stash the rolled sleeping pad and poles without having to stuff them in the side seat panniers, if they would even fit at all.

Clothing goes in the left side Arkel GT-54, and I have found that rolling clothing is more space efficient and easier than meticulously folding everything. With folded clothes, they either have to be placed flat side down, which takes up room and usually results in things being placed on top of the clothes, or if placed vertically, they always fall over if another item is removed, making the organization in the pannier a mess. I'm a neatnik type of fellow, and demand order in my packing. That's why the smaller organizational nooks, niches, and pouches designed by Arkel work so well for me. I want to know precisely where to find everything I pack. I wonder how well I'd do with the large one-room solutions like the waterproof stuff bags popular with BOB trailers and Ortlieb. Such an arrangement might become too jumbled for me.

How many pieces of clothing should a trike pilot have on a long trip? There may be times when doing a laundry is not possible, after all, so is it good to stock up on extra duds to span the time without clean clothes? I have traditionally worn 100% cotton clothing during all my outback adventures in life, despite experts claiming that synthetic nylon clothes are a must for the quick-dry effect. I found out though, that cotton clothes weigh more and take up more space in the pannier. I have now acquired two super lightweight pairs of outback pants, part cotton

and part nylon. They roll up even smaller than the cotton pants I took on my first trike adventure, and dry time is definitely faster if I end up washing them in a sink or river. My long sleeved cotton shirts are very lightweight, and dry fairly quickly, so I may just keep them in the mix.

I think that two pairs of pants are sufficient if space and weight considerations are at a premium. I take three shirts, but their space requirement is minimal when tightly rolled because they are thin cotton. Keep in mind that one pair of pants is on me, along with one shirt, so only one pair of pants and two shirts are in the pannier at any one time. Two pairs of underwear should do it, although three can work since they require practically no storage space (*I use the brief bikini variety, which amount to hardly nothing size-wise*).

Socks are another story. I insist on a clean pair daily, although I have been known to wear a pair for a second day if there is no other choice. On my first overland trike trek, I packed enough socks for seven days, which would be seen as excessive by some folks. Not only that, but my socks are the old athletic sock variety, 84% cotton, and thick. I like them because they provide extra padding, and they don't take on a permanent odor after many months of use, like synthetics tend to do, especially polypropylene. I also don't like my socks to be constrictive around my legs, which reduces efficient blood flow, so the traditional sock works well for me in that regard. I tried a Pearl Izumi synthetic sock, but it was not the least acceptable for me, leaving marked indentations in my legs where the elastic band had been. With blood flow a critical concern in the feet of recumbent trike pilots since our feet are higher than our hips, my personal feeling is that tight constriction in a sock is clearly not an option.

As in all things, your opinion may vary. That's the interesting thing about life. We all have our ways, however odd they may be. What works for me is precisely opposite from what works for someone else.

Socks are folded in half and stuffed in with my clothes. By keeping clothing in one place, I get used to where to go when I need them. Logic is my first priority, breaking it only if there's not another clear option. Keeping all those clothes on the traffic side of the trike may also just help me bounce off any errant motorist whose bumper strikes the pannier (*oh yeah, I wish*). Well, that's why my lights and flagging are on the traffic side.

Being a writer, I always bring along a small journal and digital camera. The zippered and rugged journal cover is 5.5 x 6.75 inches. These two items together fit nicely on the right side GT-54 in a medium

sized pouch that sits on the outside of the main luggage compartment. Again, it seems like the Arkel designers made these panniers just for me, with useful pouches and compartments that match up well to odd storage uses that I have.

I also carry along a compact first-aid kit and a stash of items suited for emergency survival needs. There is a low riding compartment on the left side GT-54 that readily accepts the medical supplies, along with a portion of the survival gear, and on the rear of this side is a unique tubular pouch that works well to hold my Swiss-made Katadyn water purification bottle, which is soft plastic and the size of a typical water bottle. If I ever do exhaust my trike's onboard water supply, the Katadyn bottle will filter out 99.99% of all those nasty microscopic organisms that are bent on making me sick ... just scoop up water from a lake, river, stream, pond, or even a small stagnant pool, and then slowly sip away through the filtering straw system. Ahh, the miracles of science!

Rather than continue on with precisely where I placed each and every item, I'll just present the stuff I planned on taking along. Here is the gear list that I originally made up for my first trike adventure, including the trike itself. This list has been slightly modified over the first one I made to show what actually did come along.

### **VEHCILE GEAR:**

- ICE Q Narrow Track Tricycle
- Tire Fenders
- Rear Wheel Rack
- Burley Flatbed Trailer
- Rubbermaid Cargo Trunk
- 100 ounce Camelbak Hydration Bladder
- Arkel GT 54 Panniers
- Radical Design Side Pod Panniers
- Otivia Rack Cargo Cache
- Trike & Trailer Flagpoles
- Cateye Headlight & Taillight
- Marine Rescue Strobe Light
- Schwalbe Marathon-Plus Tires
- EarthGuard Tire Liners
- Kenda Q-Tubes
- Spare Tire & 2 spare Q-Tubes



## **CAMPING GEAR:**

REI Arête All Season 2-person Tent  
REI Arête Rain Fly  
REI Arête Tent Footprint  
Berkeley Down Sleeping Bag  
Cascade Inflatable Sleeping Pad  
Foldable Water Bucket  
Foldable Toilet Seat (*didn't need to use*)  
Pocket Shower (*didn't need to use*)  
Bathroom Bag  
Small Towel  
Corel Cereal Bowl  
Stainless Steel Spoon  
Skin Moisturizer

## **CLOTHING:**

Merrill Moab Ventilator Hiking Boots  
Hi-Tec Waterproof Boots (*sent home on Day 5*)  
Athletic Socks (*7 pair*)  
Cotton Pants (*2 pair*)  
Lightweight long sleeve Shirts (*3*)  
Underwear Briefs (*3 pair*)  
Down Vest  
Polar Fleece Jacket  
Polar Fleece Skull Cap  
Waterproof Jacket  
Water & Windproof Motorcycle Gloves  
Waterproof Gators (*didn't use – sent home*)  
Waterproof Over-Pants  
Specialized Bicycle Helmet  
Riding Gloves  
Wool Gloves  
Wide Brim Shade Hat  
Sequel Desert Hat  
Polycarbonate Sunglasses  
Flip Flop Sandals  
Thermal Long Under Pants  
Water Shoes & Shorts (*didn't need to use*)

Moleskin Protective Strips (*didn't use*)

**FOOD:**

Water (*nearly 10 Liters – more than necessary*)  
Grape Nuts Cereal  
Bob's High Fiber Cereal  
Raisins  
Dried Plums (*prunes: great taste and regularity*)  
Curry Rice & Vegetable Packs  
Bear Valley Pemmican Bars  
Clif Bars  
Par Bars

**EMERGENCY ITEMS:**

Compass  
LED Windup Flashlight  
Black Diamond Head Lamp  
Snake Bite Venom Extractor Syringe  
Waterproof Matches  
Flint Spark Ignitor  
Pocket Survival Book  
Orange Survival Scarf  
Survival Tri-fold Brochure  
Emergency Space Blanket Bag  
Katadyn Water Purification Bottle (*didn't need*)  
Space Blanket  
Swiss Army Knife  
Large Buck Knife  
Duct Tape  
Whistle  
Extra Otivia Trunk Nuts  
Crescent Wrench  
19 mm Box Wrench (2)  
Other Assorted Road Tools  
Topeak Road Morph Tire Pump  
Plastic Zip Ties  
Important Phone Numbers

## DOCUMENTATION:

Digital Camera  
Daily Log Book  
Ballpoint Pens

That ought to give you some idea of why I chose to pull a trailer behind the trike for hundreds of miles day after day. Sure, I had an abundance of space, but in the end, I would have rather had the easy maneuverability of just the trike. The Rubbermaid Action-Packer trailer trunk was simply a huge cavernous storage area, where things had to be heaped in as best as possible, kind of the “throw and go” mindset. Every time I took something out, another item was sure to fall into the space left behind.

~

Being prepared is the key to a successful adventure on a trike, and in reality, is indeed a massive percentage of the overall considerations and activity. Leaving well prepared will mean the difference between a potentially miserable experience and an outstanding one. One thing most trikers like to know ahead of time is where they are going, although an impromptu “decide as you go” adventure could be fun too.

I was very meticulous with my route planning. This is because I had a precise destination and a precise time I had to be there. I was expected to give a presentation about one of my Death Valley National Park books, so I couldn’t leave things to chance. To demonstrate the time I took in figuring out the exact path I would follow on the trip, here is a small portion of the original concept of what it would look like. The original had nearly 40 entries. Changes were made and it all didn’t go as hoped, but that’s the adventure of a trike trek:

To Death Valley’s Badwater Basin, 902 miles distant:

- 1) Begin central coast, Oregon
- 2) South on Oregon Coast Highway 101
- 3) East (L) at Reedsport, onto Hwy 38, towards Elkton
- 4) South (R) at Elkton, onto Hwy 138, towards Sutherlin
- 5) South (R) at Sutherlin, paralleling Interstate 5 on the east side, towards Roseburg

- 6) East (L, just south of Wilbur) onto Road 200 (North Bank Rd), towards Hwy 138
- 7) East (L) onto Hwy 138, through Glide, towards Diamond and Crater Lakes
- 8) South (R) at Snopark, through Crater Lake National Park on Crater Lake Road
- 9) Southeast onto Hwy 62, towards Chiloquin

Mental preparation and training is every bit as important as the mechanical trike and physical body aspects of getting ready for a cross-country trike adventure. After all, for someone who has never done this sort of travel before, it is usually a very daunting thought, especially if you are going solo and unsupported, which I was. For those of you who opt to try a supported adventure, or who have other trike buddies who wish to accompany you, this mental obstacle will be significantly diminished, as our “safety in numbers” human mindset makes abundantly clear. Fear mysteriously dissolves when we have company. All I could do was talk to myself out there.

Was I fearful once my initial stages of planning got underway? Sure, although I am fairly adept at controlling fear and getting the job at hand successfully completed, probably an artifact of my years in law enforcement, I suppose. Nevertheless, the thought of me and my trike, alone and moving ever so slowly through unknown distant territory, did have the tendency to unnerve me at times. I had to work at toughening up my mind just like I worked at toughening up my body and trike. We are only as strong as our preparation and foundational work.

Never underestimate the mental aspect of getting ready for a trike adventure! It’s real for sure, especially on the first trip anyone takes, and it is magnified if riding by one’s self. Fear of cars, trucks, narrow shoulderless roads, breakdowns, lack of food and water, physical injury, criminal accostment ... you name it. If our minds can think it up, we will begin to fear it. The vast majority of mental fears never come to pass, and are almost always wholly unfounded. The mind plays games. We have been brought up watching too much television and going to the theater too often. Seeing Hollywood’s portrayal of human death and misfortune has over-saturated our brains with negativity and violence. Without diligent work on our parts to dismiss this cloak of doom and gloom, it’s darn hard to get moving on a trike adventure.

What it boils down to is this: Use common sense and be dutiful in all aspects of preparation. I’m not saying that bad things can’t happen

to a trike pilot on an adventure, but rather the chances are that everything will turn out just fine, and you'll come away with a positive life-altering experience that you wouldn't trade for the world. How many people are killed each year in their own homes or hometowns? How many people die everyday of heart attacks and strokes, overweight, stress, smoking a pack of cigarettes a day, eating donuts and coffee for breakfast, blah, blah, blah? Where's the fun in that? If you're going to check out, might as well be having a great time when it happens!

If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space. Do something different, way off the grid of normalcy. Take a trike trip as far as you want to go. Only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go! There is no other way. If you wait for opportunity to knock at your door, you'll be just like everyone else. You can't cross the ocean by just standing there staring at it.

Okay, that's enough of pumping up the fearless macho portion of the brain! Everyone has some hurdle to overcome, and for most, that was the biggie. This trike adventure event you are pondering is one of those things that may well induce significant mental hesitation, but once you return, by golly, you're so glad you did it! Essential gear includes a small and lightweight digital camera, by the way! You'll absolutely want to remember every hour of every day with digital pixels.

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Leaving on a trike adventure is an exciting event, of that there is no doubt. Adrenaline and anticipation run high, infusing a sense of elation through the misty reaches of our intricate minds. While on the one hand we may be quietly stifling imagined fears, on the other, we just can't wait to hit the road to adventure.

My epic saga officially began in earnest at 7:00 AM on October 1, 2009. The morning temperature was ideally suited for pedaling a heavy load, and for the first several miles, I actually was wearing a couple of jackets, layered for ventilation, as the coastal air is nippy most every morning. Since my trike buddy Matt elected to ride the first 20 miles with me, things were quite a bit less stressful than if I had pulled out of the driveway all by my lonesome self. At the next town, Matt and I grabbed an early lunch of veggie burritos, chips, and salsa, and then he headed back north on his unencumbered Catrike 700, one heck of a fast trike, powered by one heck of a fit guy. I continued on inland, pedaling my combined vehicle, rider, and gear weight of at least 350 pounds

(probably closer to 375).

It was the classic inexperienced case of over-packing. Due to the extremely remote desert regions through which I'd be traveling in about ten days, my logic dictated that I needed everything I brought. There were 50 pounds of compact and nutrient-dense food in the trailer, enough that I would not have to acquire more for at least two weeks. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner were pre-planned to the bite, based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet, perhaps as high as 3,000, but that would be pushing it. In addition to the 148 ounces of water I had on the trike itself (*one gallon, 20 ounces*), I had approximately 150 ounces in the trailer. As you may well know, water is heavy.

One thing I was not worried about was becoming dehydrated or going hungry. Of course, the price I paid for this calming assurance was deeply felt on every mountain pass and rolling hill, where the food and water became an adversary to my swift travel. I dealt emotionally with this by remembering a personal favorite saying, often attributed to renowned philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, which goes something like this: That which does not kill you makes you strong!

Well, I sure was getting stronger ... for a while at least, until my daily caloric deficit started adding up. I later calculated that I was realistically burning about 5,000 calories each day, probably more on days where a lot of mountain climbing was involved. Getting from coastal Oregon to northeastern California and the flatter deserts of northwestern Nevada required ascending more endless mountains than I remembered being there (*of course, on a trike, things look different*). It was a daily matter of spending many hours pedaling uphill, followed by quick periods of but minutes speeding down the other sides. The fast and thrilling downhills in those mountains were the happy icing on the cakes of making the top.

On a self-supported trike adventure, expect three noteworthy things, among a host of others of course: 1) You will eat a lot of food. 2) You will still lose weight. 3) Your overall health and endurance will dramatically improve. Hey, you can't beat that, right? Most of us love to eat, but a long trike journey lets us do so and still mold ourselves into better physical shape. It's a win/win situation as I see it!

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Trike adventuring brings all manner of roadway and terrain under the three tires. Unfortunately, the human governments of Planet Earth are not the slightest bit concerned about the mental state or

physical well being of people using human-powered vehicles to move cleanly through the environment. All they can think about is fast and heavy automobiles and the economy. Cyclists are invisible to nearly all governments, although recently a precious few local municipalities are slowly coming around to constructing roadways in a manner that is consistent with safe travel for cyclists.

Any cyclist, whether a hinterland roamer or an around-town pedal pusher, knows that municipal, state, and federal governing bodies have done next to nothing to facilitate scenarios where the oft-quoted “share the road” credo is realistically achievable. For example, my state of Oregon does in fact have a “Share the Road” law that requires petroleum-powered people to courteously share all public roadways with vulnerable human-powered humans such as us, yet this amounts to mostly “feel good” lip service. On the Oregon Coast Bicycle Route, a road with which I am intimately familiar since I live four blocks from it, and a road that Oregon touts nationally to draw in thousands of cyclists every year, there are many deadly hair-raising portions where a triker or biker can very easily be struck, injured, or killed by a car or truck. Several key sections of the 364 mile route are so dangerous to cyclists that you wouldn’t believe it unless you saw it! The views are fantastic though!

Long portions of the Oregon Coast Highway 101 have plenty of shoulder for a trike or two, but when the pavement winds steeply upward along the precipitous cliffs of the Pacific, shoulders routinely disappear, forcing trikers to ride in the lane on “blind right” curves where a car may quickly come upon you before the driver even realizes you’re there. It’s usually very easy to tell when such a nerve wracking situation is about to occur: Oregon posts a small yellow sign with a bicycle logo and the words “on roadway” so that alert and caring motorists will keep an eye out for us ... but what about all the other drivers who are intent on watching the big blue ocean, or those who simply believe that cyclists have no right to be on “their” highway? And this doesn’t even take into account irresponsible motorists who text-message or cell phone while driving.

Not only that, but the warning signs are small, often faded, and easily missed on a road crowded with summer tourists. For trikers going down the grade, speeds of 40 miles per hour or more may be attained, thereby mitigating the danger somewhat, but for trike pilots going up, the speed is more like 4 miles per hour, most definitely a hindrance to cars traveling 40 to 50, especially in blind curves with a cliff on each

side and absolutely no way to get off the road even an inch. These same issues, along with many others, are found in every state and around the world. My Oregon example can easily be transferred to where you live, for we all struggle with the desire to ride in mental comfort.

I have attended a multi-agency meeting where the topic was how to make the coast route hiker friendly the entire distance, as I am also a hiker. When the most notorious section of the highway came up for discussion (*Yachats to Florence*), my suggestion was for the agencies to work cooperatively towards a pedestrian/cyclist solution, thereby solving two transportation mode issues at once. It was positively received, and while nothing will likely change anytime soon, perhaps at least I planted a few seeds for the future. I have also been working with my municipal government on making the town a safer place for human-powered humans (HPH), and the incoming civic leaders are not the “business as usual” variety. They are very open to initiating meaningful changes, such as the National Complete Streets Coalition suggests.

Okay, I’ve used up some textual real estate here on my soapbox, but it’s leading up to a couple of important points that all trikers may find of interest. First, these changes nationwide and worldwide will only occur if we all get involved at the local levels, where we actually may have some clout. I am surprised how open the officials have been so far, and ever optimistic for a favorable outcome, although I don’t expect miracles either. Second, until such time that governments across the country actually do take cyclists seriously, we have to cover our own behinds out there on the road while we adventure. In these days of diminishing petroleum and increasing pollution, perhaps our voices will be heard, where our words have traditionally fallen on deaf ears. How many dead cyclists does it take?

All this is not to spook any potential trike adventure enthusiast though, as there are many ways to remain relatively safe in a world selfishly fixated on petroleum power. Prior to my Oregon coast to Death Valley journey, I fell prey to well-meaning friends and family who pointed out every harmful thing that was likely to happen to me out there. These dire heartfelt warnings most often centered around being struck by a car or eighteen wheeler. My experiential findings by trip’s end however revealed a much different reality.

Truckers turned out to truly be my friends. They always gave my little trike and trailer wide berth. Car drivers were also exceptionally polite and patient overall. Most passed as though I was a standard



automobile whenever the oncoming lane was free enough to do so. I had no instances that led me to believe my life was actually about to be cut short. During the trip, I was expecting an irritated horn honk from time to time. This did not occur. Sometimes sympathetic drivers, or those who were also cyclists, gave a friendly honk and wave, which really boosted my spirits and hope for humanity. I have to say that my first cross-country trip was essentially free from scary incidents, and as I progressed each day, any lingering pre-trip fears melted away to nonexistence.

So what is it with all these fears and warnings traditionally given to trikers? Why are some trike pilots and bicyclists too fearful to leave their residential neighborhoods? Here's the way I see it, now that I too am an unprotected bag of bones pedaling along in a sea of steel cars: Human nature frequently seems to seek out that which is frightful, distressing, and dreadful in life. Look at any newspaper, online news source, or evening newscast on television. What do you read, see, and hear?

Mostly, these commercial entities spew out how many people were killed or hurt today and how it happened. Why do they do this? Because their stats show increased viewership when morbid topics are presented in all their glory. If viewers were turned off to this type of presentation, media sources would change their delivery paradigm, as their bottom line is always financial growth ... as fast as they can achieve it. They give the public what the public wants because this will result in the largest revenue flow. Ratings are what it's all about, and that is why we have become a nation overflowing with fear, anxiety, and panic (*inducing rampant fear in their citizens is also a key tool governments use to take their nations willingly to war*).

How often do we see the media present how many people survived and how they did it? Or how many good things happened to good people? Sure, a few of these things are discussed, but they inevitably are buried later or deeper in the news source. What am I getting at here? Well, for every one cyclist who is killed or maimed by a car, there are literally hundreds of thousands who are not, and these positive statistics go on day in and day out, while the unfortunate isolated incident happens once in a blue moon. Yes, I could be hurt on tomorrow's ride, but will that stop me? How many people still drive cars, even though 50,000 humans are killed each year doing so in the United States? Have you given up your car? Likely not, because the chances of a mishap are minimal enough that you feel secure in

continuing a potentially fatal activity while poisoning the atmosphere.

Common sense dictates that on our trike adventures we exercise reasonable prudence, and take levelheaded precautions to ensure a fun and safe journey. These same principles are useful for triking around town also, where increased cross traffic is another noteworthy consideration. What is the key component to trike survival? What are some strategies for surviving on a car-dominated planet?

Number one on the list of contemplation is visibility. How well do you show up on the road? If a motorist can't see you, you're in trouble already. If you are highly visible, you will get noticed. The great thing about trikes is that they are unquestionably safer than bicycles because bikes are everywhere, and over the decades motorists have become numb to their presence. They've see so darn many bikers that a rider will fail to pull their minds away from talking on their cell phones. Trikes are a notably different story however! It's like day and night ...

Most drivers have never even seen a human-powered recumbent tadpole trike before, so when their gaze falls upon your highly visible and weird machine, you have their undivided attention ... guaranteed. You are so utterly bizarre that they will usually slow down to figure out what the heck you are. It's hard for a car driver to strike an object that has his full attention! Time and again this has held true on all my rides, both locally and interstate. Add to this some attention-getting devices, and you've just dramatically increased your odds of not getting a grill plastered against your spine or in your face.

Prior to hitting the road on a long trike adventure, make sure you are equipped with:

- 1) A flagpole at least 6 feet in height, as measured from the ground. This places your flagging at a level visible from most car's windows.
- 2) A brightly colored flag, or two, or three on the flagpole. This is like a neon signboard grabbing the attention of everyone within eye-shot, even a motorist a full block or more distant.
- 3) A brilliant red LED tail light with multiple bulbs. This gets you noticed even on a sunlit day if you have a powerful light.
- 4) A bright headlight. Although not quite as important because it is not visible to the rear where the cars are coming, it's still a good idea in case you get caught out near sunset.
- 5) Several reflective day-glow green stick-ons. These can be placed anywhere on your trike or helmet, and show up well even in daylight,

but especially at night.

6) A bright day-glow green over-shirt. This clothing is worn by savvy cyclists worldwide, and will make you visible for many blocks, especially from the front where cars can cut you off if they turn in front of you.

7) Anything else that's bright and you like on your trike.

I strongly advocate wearing a helmet while powering your trike around our planet. Two other triker friends have told me not to bother, laboring under the mindset that if a car hits me, I'm as good as dead anyway. I don't see things that way. Let me explain why ...

The foremost reason I wear a helmet is not out of fear of automobiles! It is a reasonable precaution I take in case I pitch the right front wheel over the side of the pavement on hilly or mountainous terrain. This has happened to me, fortunately on level ground, but what if it occurs on a narrow road in the mountains (*which I frequently ride*)? If my trike rolls over into a ditch, or over the side of a switchback, that helmet may well save my bacon.

I rode a motorcycle for many years, and once fell at 50 miles per hour, not because I was hit by a car, but because my front tire unexpectedly deflated. No cars were even on the road. I had it all to myself. So there I was, my body sliding along on the asphalt at speed, with my right leg still under the motorcycle, and my face only about an inch and a half away from a road about to make mince meat out of it. What stood between my skull and that grinding pavement? My helmet! Had it not been for that white cap on my head, I could now be dead, severely maimed, or at least have a really ugly face.

During the many years I windsurfed, I also wore a helmet. There were no cars out there on the water, but my helmet still saved me. Once, while I was learning, my 16-foot mast fell squarely on my head after I had taken a spill, giving me quite a violent rap. Had I been without a helmet, it would have been highly likely that I could have suffered a cracked skull and severe concussion, but due to that thick padding in the helmet, all I got was a rude awakening. It kind of dazed me for a moment, but I was fine and got back up on my board and sailed to shore. During my learning phase, I was also pitched over the high side by wind unexpectedly catching the sail, which meant that my body went for a wild ride upside down, high in the air, and got slammed into the water backwards. Again, I was so glad to have my helmet protecting me from my own errors!

How fast can we go on a trike? Well, I've had mine up into the mid 40s on long steep downhills, which is just slightly slower than I was riding on my motorcycle that day so many years ago. My trike helmet is not as protective as my motorcycle helmet was, but at least it places some crushable cushion between my head and pavement, rocks, or trees. The very essence of who I am as a human is contained within my skull, and if that is lost, so am I. Do you know anyone who has suffered traumatic head injury, and although they visually appear the same as ever, the person you once knew is not inside anymore? I do. It is a very sad situation to realize that your friend or family member no longer recognizes you, or remembers their past. Protect your brain. It is all that makes you who you are!

As the folks in England who manufacture Inspired Cycle Engineering trikes have so eloquently stated in their owner's manual: *"If you have a cheap head, get a cheap helmet."* Enough said about brain preservation. It's your head. You decide if you want it to keep working like it currently does so that you can continue to enjoy riding your trike. I like my head just the way it is!

I also strongly advocate following all traffic laws while riding your tricycle hither and yon on your most-excellent trike adventure. Here are some reasons for my recommendation:

- 1) It's the law.
- 2) Motorists will come away with a good impression of trikers.
- 3) We will have some legal ground if perchance struck by a car.
- 4) It may keep us from experiencing a car/trike physical interaction.
- 5) We expect motorists to abide by traffic laws for our triking safety.
- 6) Obeying traffic laws helps our collective cause to share the road.
- 7) We meet the same standards of conduct we expect of motorists.

My years in law enforcement have shown me a lot of things that most folks don't ever see or think about, thus the impetus behind my stance on traffic laws. I've seen folks hurt, permanently disabled, and killed due to others who break the rules. These sad memories have remained with me, and I realize the gravity of a moment's indiscretion. Sure, I have my own personal contentions with governments and the big-brother phenomenon, but following traffic laws for my own and others safety is something that I willingly and happily do. I encourage all trike pilots reading this to evaluate their own conduct when riding in the presence of impressionable and impatient drivers. Do it for the

greater good of the trike realm!

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Once the trike has been prepared, emergency supplies and tools loaded, panniers full of all the gear, mind and body up to the task, and zero-hour arrives, it's off into the jaws of adventure. Hopefully they won't chew us up too bad! Actually, it's the adventure that draws most of us out there in the first place, along with that wonderful indescribable feeling of freedom. Without a certain element of unknown and danger, life would be a dull grind to the grave, so the trike really spices things up and keeps boredom at bay. Seize the day!

After the initial moments of trepidation pass, over the course of several miles at the beginning of the first day, the mind settles in to the task at hand. The heart rate slows, at least from causes of mental anxiety, and it's time to fully enjoy every inch of the journey.

That's what's cool about adventuring on a trike ... the inches can indeed be appreciated, and that means a new-found wonder for such things as flowers, trees, rocks, animals, sky, and sounds of nature. These are all things that automobile drivers never come close to experiencing while they travel. Cars simply travel far too fast, are too far off the ground, make loud whining noise with their tires, and often have the windows closed to preserve the comfort of the passengers at high speed. Most motorists only see fleeting glimpses of the landscape, but they are not a part of it on their hurried transit.

A trike pilot is an integral component of the territory through which he pedals. He has eye contact with horses and cows in the fields. He hears the songs of cheerful birds and the wispy wind in the grasses. He feels the fresh air passing over his athletic body, and has a lingering attachment to his world that petroleum powered travelers opt to ignore in their impatience. The trike pilot moves along at seven miles per hour, while the car driver rockets by ten times faster.

Motorists could enjoy every mile as it passes to a very limited extent, but in our modern society they are usually too focused on getting to their destination as quickly as possible. Trike pilots, by the very nature of their human-powered vehicles, are clearly not focused on ultra swift travel. We throw off the chains of the "Type A" personality, step away from the "hurry sickness" that has infected the culture at large, opt to see the Earth at plant level, and relax into the rare realm of triangular locomotion, a secret place that will never be heavily populated by the mindless masses of mediocrity, who shun physical

exertion like a cat fears water.

The very fact that you are reading these words means that you either already understand these concepts very well, or are well on your way to doing so. If you ever only take one cross-country trike trek, it will be full of memories that no one can take away from you, and you will have gone far beyond the bounds of the boring box. You will be living on the edge, at least for a while, and you will not be taking up too much space on this incredible planet. Trikers don't leave large invasive footprints that spoil our habitat. There is no toxic exhaust, nor is there noise. We move silently through a hidden world of universal harmony. The air is still clean after we pass by, and few even know we were there unless they see us with their eyes.

We pedal. We eat. We drink. We sleep. We pee. And we poop. Life is simple out on a trike adventure. No car to break down. No gas to pump. No speeding tickets. No driver's license. No insurance premiums. No hurry. And no worries of a blowout at 65 miles per hour. Are there any downsides?

There are pros and cons to everything in life. Pros include such things as being able to eat like a horse and not worry about gaining unwanted weight. Of course, triking also requires copious amounts of water intake because pedaling up long steep hills tends to dehydrate a person. What goes in must come out of course, and as the body is filled to capacity with food and drink, one of the potential cons arises: where to offload all that food and water!?!

Normally, conservative authors are hesitant about writing of topics that are too personal for prim and proper etiquette, however, since trike pilots are a rugged bunch, used to living on the rugged edge of life, I figure chatting a bit about a legitimate concern on a trike adventure won't offend anyone reading this. In fact, it may even bring a chuckle or two, or a thought of: "Yeah, I know the feeling!"

And what a feeling it is when the bladder is heavy. Petroleum powered people see signs like "Rest Area Ahead", "Next services 43 miles", or "Visitor Information" and can easily wait for the convenient room of rest. Not trikers though! Or at least not often. For a trike pilot on an overland adventure, it would be sweet coincidence to have a rest area pop up just at the right time. And if the next services are 43 miles, at 7 miles per hour, it will take 6 hours to get there ... can't wait that long! Dang, what's a triker to do?

Well, it's pretty elementary actually, and since I've been taking to the wilds like a bear to berries since I was a wee kid, the solution just

comes naturally. We simply scout the upcoming terrain (*which is easy at trike speeds*) for that perfect arrangement of bushes, rocks, or trees, and then quietly pull off the road. If a few cars are coming, just hang out for a moment and pretend you're doing something else (*like taking a drink from your water bottle*), and when there is a lull in traffic, quickly make like Superman and disappear from sight. This works well for liquid off-loading. Solids we'll discuss in a minute.

I've spent a number of days triking through desert terrain, where the only cover consists of scattered creosote bushes ... for hours worth of riding. The road is often straight, making sight virtually unlimited. In this situation, I look for at least two creosote bushes together, so that one shields me from cars in each direction in the event an unexpectedly speedy driver overtakes my position prior to my completion of watering the thirsty plants. A group of three allows me to "step inside" for complete privacy. Only my trike out on the shoulder bears testimony to my existence in the bushroom.

Whether or not a person can pee is often a factor of how calm he is. Nerves can shut down the ability to start the flow, that is unless the situation is so bloatingly urgent that you could pee right on the pavement if you had to. I guess a triker could always wait until the last minute so that it comes fast and easy, but the intervening time before hand on the trike may not be the most enjoyable, as the beautiful scenery tends to fade when all you can think about is getting rid of processed water.

I drink a lot of water because it is what my body demands while triking for 8 hours each day. It is not wise to withhold drinking because you don't want to deal with going to the bathroom, or in our case, the bathbush. Drink loads of water to keep the muscles working at maximum efficiency. Cramps are the last thing you want! In fact, cramps are only part of the picture. This is a fact of trike adventuring, and adaptation must be made if you're going to take a trip. It can actually be fun to find that perfect place to experience the "ahh" feeling. Water intake is a vital concept, so please keep the following water facts in mind:

Your body is a water-based system, composed of roughly 57% water. Every cell requires water to function properly and survive. Thirst is an awareness signaled by a person's brain that the body's water volume has fallen below a specific level necessary for optimum cellular functioning. If ignored, the circumstances that are causing thirst can lead to dehydration and ultimately death. Thirst indicates that the fluid

balance of our cells is low, and requires replenishment by taking in water by mouth. It is generally agreed that an inactive human should ingest approximately two liters of water per day (*a little more than a half gallon*) to keep the body healthy. Trikers are not inactive, so that number must be adjusted upwards. Our bodies have the capability to sweat 4.2 quarts an hour! To avoid dehydration in a hot environment or during strenuous activity like triking, check urination. If a person develops a full bladder at least every 3-5 hours and the urine is lightly colored or colorless, dehydration is probably not occurring. If, however, urine is deeply colored, or urination occurs after the passage many hours (*or not at all*), fluid ingestion is likely not sufficient for long term continuation of healthy survival.

Seventy-five percent of Americans are chronically dehydrated, and they don't even ride trikes all day. In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is mistaken for hunger, and since they don't ride trikes, they get fat. Mild dehydration will slow down our metabolism as much as 3%. Lack of water is a primary cause of daytime fatigue for couch potatoes. A 2% drop in body water can result in short-term memory loss, and we may miss a turn on our route. Dehydration symptoms to be watchful for include: headache, visual illusion of snow, lowered blood pressure, dizziness, fainting, delirium, tongue swelling, unconsciousness, and death. Once 2% of a triker's water volume has been lost, these effects begin to manifest themselves, first with thirst, then with loss of appetite and the feeling of dry skin. Our heart rate will increase and fatigue will come very quickly. Reaching the top of hills will seem like agony. If we cry, there will be no tears. This all leads to an increase in body temperature due to lack of sweating.

At 5% water loss, our arms and legs will begin tingling, we will feel queasy, and our fingers will have difficulty grasping the handlebars. When we pass the 10% mark, our muscles will become convulsive and uncontrollable, which will lead to bizarre pedaling spasms, or falling down if we attempt to get off the trike. Our skin will wither, our eyesight will begin going dim, and we'll be unable to shift gears. If we hit the fifteen percent water loss mark, we are about to become the next victim of a miserable dehydrated death, and later someone will find our pathetic parched skeleton sitting on a tadpole trike in the middle of the barren desert ... just because the pilot didn't want to pee!

Oftentimes I trike alone, which means that bathbush breaks are up to me whenever the need arises. I don't have to consult with anyone,



and I can take advantage of the opportune moment and location. But what about trikers in a group? You're all riding along, talking, and the last thing you want to do is seem like a person with a bladder control issue if no one else seems to express the need. One of three things may be up: either the others aren't drinking enough water, they all have huge storage reservoirs, or they are just as embarrassed as you are to mention that they need to find a spot to go. Whatever the case, it doesn't really matter. Triking is demanding business, so treat your body right!

Before any group adventure commences, discuss particulars that will arise on the trip, including bathroom stops. Devise a pee plan. Have a good laugh about it. After all, if you're going to be on the road for several days with these folks, they better darn well have a good sense of humor! Maybe you drop back and then catch up afterwards. Or perhaps everyone stops and stays together. Make a joke of it. Laugh out there on the road of adventure. We all pee, so it's only social brainwashing that proper people keep personal things like this private. You simply have little choice each day ... the others will usually know when you go, and you'll know when they do. Remember, death by dehydration is your only other option.

Every time you come upon a standard toilet facility, whether at a gas station, restaurant, rest stop, or an occasional oddly-placed outhouse, take advantage of it. At least, that's what I do. It's a long time between towns on a trike. I have found that wayside bathrooms appear now and then too, so there really are a fair number of toilets out there (*in one form or another*). I know I'll have to pee between towns in the wilds several times, but I still will use a bathroom at Safeway if it's there and I have to go. This is especially true for number two.

On my Oregon to Death Valley journey, I had a portable toilet seat in my trike trailer. It was the kind with lightweight aluminum legs that fold so that it takes up a slim amount of trunk real estate, and it weighed practically nothing. I figured that in the hours on the road between regular toilets, it might prove a lifesaver. I used to use it on my extended backcountry trips in my Jeep, where towns and toilets almost never appeared ... best view from the john you could ever ask for!

Well, what I found out was this: Since solid waste disposal is often a long time in making itself known, and is often predictable based on our own unique habits, it wasn't that big of a deal. I never took the seat out of my trailer because nearly every time the urge began to noticeably grow, a normal sit-down solution was soon at hand. People normally poop once a day it seems, and they have a pretty good handle

on the situation, and are able to time things to their advantage. And so it is on the trike. I pee continually on the route, which is quick and easy with no mess or fuss (*this is one time I really am glad I'm not a girl*), but once I poop, I'm good for another day or so.

Another important point to keep in mind has to do with human physiology, and that is since you are burning off calories at a break-neck speed pedaling all day (*often over mountains*), the urge to dispose of solid matter is greatly diminished over normal daily living, where a lot more food builds up. Out on the trike adventure, there just isn't much food that is left over for disposal. Nearly all is well utilized by a body literally starving for calories, a situation that is clearly advantageous when bathrooms are at a premium. If you learn to balance your caloric acquisition versus expenditure well, you'll be surprised at how little waste exits, and how infrequently it does so.

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Stopping for lunch is always something to look forward to on a trike. With that nice reclining chair, one might suspect it would be the desired place to sit and eat, but standing is the name of the game for the midday meal. As comfortable as trikes are, it just feels good to get out and stretch the legs while munching on some energy bars and downing a vegetable juice. Another great aspect is that you get to pick your scenery for dining. Perhaps a stunning overlook happens by at noontime, so spend a few minutes and enjoy. If you're with a group, lunch is even more fun, a time of sharing and lightening the load, both mentally and physically. For those who prefer commercial eateries, if one conveniently appears at the appropriate time, you're all set, but you can't count on it at tricycle speeds, so come prepared. I don't have the money to be eating out, so I do it on the cheap in the backcountry.

I love breakfast! Awakening in the tent in a wild or remote setting, usually off the main highway a bit, is a spiritually refreshing occurrence. The air is cool, first light has broken so I can see around the landscape about me, my body is refreshed as much as it can be from yesterday's ride, and I'm ready for a hearty breakfast. First things first though.

My water bottle always accompanies me in the tent each night because I prefer to keep the hydration process in effect. It means more up-time during the night, but on a trike trek, I always go right back to sleep because my body truly needs the rest. When you pitch your tent each evening, make sure the entrance to it faces in a way that you have

privacy when offloading nighttime water. Pitch near a large bush or tree whenever possible. If you're by yourself, it's easier because no one is around to disturb when you get up. If you're with a group of trikers, you may wish to pitch the tents in their own private spaces. Companionship is a great thing, but not when you can hear everyone when they get up and go!

I try to time my breakfast so that sunrise is upon me when I begin preparation. There hasn't been a watch or timepiece on me for well over twenty years now, so the light in the sky tells me all I need to know. Having some sun bathe me each morning makes me feel good emotionally, and it helps to keep the body and fingers warm, as it's hard to wear gloves when preparing some grub. I eat simply, usually wheat and barley nuggets like Grape-Nuts, topped with a handful of raisins, a couple of dried plums (*what most folks call prunes*), and a multi-vitamin supplement. Since soymilk is too heavy to carry along, the cereal is filled with water. If a market is handy shortly before tent time in the afternoon, then a soymilk might find its way into a pannier, because it tastes better than plain water and it provides more needed protein for muscle rebuilding.

The good thing about not being tied to staying overnight in motels and eating at restaurants is that I don't try to time my ride around them. I just go at my own relaxing pace and start looking for an overnight spot when I think it's time to call it a day. Probably the best scenario for folks who prefer more comforts than I talk about here is a supported adventure, if the extra cash is available to acquire these luxuries.

On an adventure with automobile and staff support, things are all well planned in detail ahead of time. You get food at prescribed times each day without having to carry it in your luggage on the trike. Snacks are available as needed whenever the van passes you. And you get pampered too, with far fancier grub than a primitive triker eats. Riders don't have to worry about anything except pedaling along and enjoying the scenery ... without all the extra weight that self-supported adventures require in the way of supplies. Every choice has its upsides and downsides. My way is inexpensive, relatively speaking, but I am roughing it big-time. Of course, for me, that's great, as I'm a naturalist at heart and love to do it. For others, the thought of it would turn them off. Yes, there are a number of city slickers who would adventure only if supported, and that's fine too.

Another way to have an adventure with other tadpole trikers

splits the difference and may be worth considering. Say you have a group of five trike pilots and their trikes. Well, one person in the group donates their van for the adventure. At any given time, one person is in the van driving, with his trike in the back or on top. The van is full of supplies like food and your sleeping gear. So, there are four trikes on the road all the time, one trike is in or on the van, and the triker who drives rotates every hour. With this method, you get the peace of mind that a car brings, but you don't pay the costs of professional commercial support. Another perk is that you get at least one hour rest per day that an unsupported triker doesn't. On a ten hour day, you get two of these breaks. After an hour of driving, you'll be eager to get back on the trike!

Primitive solo trike journeys make things simple on many fronts. You get up when you want. There are no group decisions necessary. You can leave right after eating breakfast, no need to wait for anyone else to prepare for departure. Solo triking lessens the time before starting out in the morning. It has always been my experience in the backcountry that groups always extend the time needed to get on the trail or on the road. Some folks get to talking, which is enjoyable, but burns daylight. Of course, on trikes there is a huge benefit regarding talking: You can still keep chatting while riding, until you come to those long steep descents, when everyone is having so much fun flying along at 45 miles per hour that talking fades into grinning!

Getting back to eating, dinner is probably the most deserved meal of the day. You've pedaled for eight to ten hours. You've gone over many hills and probably some mountain passes. Your legs are tired. You want to stand up for the rest of the day. And you want to eat! So, you find a great camping spot, what is called a stealth camp, and pitch your tent for the night. They are termed stealth camps because it's comforting to know you are invisible to everyone else. It also keeps any negative encounters with letter-of-the-law cops, or with unsavory transients, to a minimum.

I have known a lot of cops, having been in the profession for a while. Some stick to the book and are tough guys, while others are easy-going and mellow spirits who allow a wide margin when it comes to rules and laws. I was part of the latter, and would never hassle a cyclist just trying to get some shuteye wherever he could find it on the long road of a cross-country journey. Some officers though will let you know if you've pitched a camp that is somehow illegal, usually by location, and they'll make sure you leave, which is the last thing you want to do after erecting a tent and relaxing to eat. It's even worse if

you're already in the sleeping bag when they find you!

If quitting time finds you on a stretch of road that is lined with large ranch properties, it can be a challenge to find a camp. If a land owner sees you set up, a call to the local sheriff may get you booted out of the area, even if you're on the road right-of-way. Sometimes, wealthy ranchers are insecure in their secluded castles, with a distrust and fear of unknown people, and they can have a variety of ways to protect themselves, like high wattage motion-activate spotlights and vicious dogs that will most assuredly find your tent after dark if not restrained to their owner's property as required by law.

Camping below the radar is the best solution. Some trikers wait until nightfall to pitch, so no one knows they are there, and they make it a point to leave before daybreak. That is a true stealth camp. It also is a little more regimented than I want to be. I prefer to pitch my tent while the sun is still on me, and I prefer to break it down the next morning when the sun is back. Nights get cold, even in summer depending on where you are. My fingers do better when warm, rather than bitter cold. I've triked all day and my body is in a caloric deficit at the end; the last thing I need is to burn even more calories just trying to keep my hands warm while setting camp and eating dinner.

Getting back to dinner ... again, my preference is to be able to be warm and enjoy the natural surroundings while I eat, so I make it a point to pitch my tent about an hour before sunset at the latest. I savor walking around and seeing the landscape as I eat, carrying my bowl of rice and vegetables, and my spoon. It's a time of mental and physical relaxation and rejuvenation, something that maximum stealth camping doesn't always allow. Every time I camp, the realization of how lucky I am to be experiencing this simple living in this great land really hits home. When I say great land, I refer to the marvelous planet we all call home, not a political territory. Everywhere we go, there is much to relish and honor. I'll take this to a penthouse view any day.

Finding a camp site is a daily treat, although some might consider it a daily chore. If you get an early start in late afternoon, it is indeed a fun activity as you check out each little nook and cranny that will offer shelter and concealment in the terrain. If you wait too late in the evening, it can be a situation where you take what you can get, which may be far from ideal. On a trike adventure, allow time to be relaxed about decisions. Don't box yourself in and have to hurry figuring out the best option because it's getting dark and cold.

Allow the time to pick a location that meets your needs: off the

road as far as possible, concealed from passing motorists, protected from high winds, far away from any artificial light sources (*if in a more suburban environment*), and a place that is not likely to be stumbled upon by anyone else. Start earlier than you think is necessary, as sometimes the best spot is just a little farther on. Of course, you don't know that ahead of time, so it's a gamble for sure, but you might think something better is just around the bend, and find out it gets less desirable, so you may choose to return to the last good spot you saw. Time lets you make a wiser choice.

If you have planned ahead of time to use selected government (*BLM, Forest Service, etc.*) or commercial (*KOA, etc.*) campgrounds, then it becomes more straightforward. All you have to do is maintain your riding schedule to arrive at the campgrounds before dark. In your preplanning phase, if you chose campgrounds that are realistically spaced, say 50 miles apart to make it easy, then you can be fairly confident of making each one. Be prepared though in case something that day prohibits reaching your next scheduled campground. One thing I have learned well during a lifetime of outdoor adventure and camping is that it's wise to always expect the unexpected, and be ready for multiple eventualities. The only thing certain about a triking adventure is uncertainty ... unless you are in a fully supported commercial adventure, where chances of things going awry diminish markedly.

When on a fully supported adventure, overnights can be a thing of pure joy, where lavish dinners are waiting for you, and your tent and gear is ready to go upon your arrival. Other cyclists will be there too, so there is plenty of action and camaraderie. Most of the other riders will be on two wheels, and many may be curious about your three, especially if you are really fit, and passed a few on the uphill and flats. If you are in the vicinity of the two wheelers come downhill time, well, you'll really earn their respect (*and possibly envy*) as you fly past them to the bottom. Trikes are far more aerodynamic and reach higher speeds on the downhills. In any event, all that competitive stuff aside, people will want to talk to you each evening, so be prepared. You may get a kick out of hearing them complain about sore wrists, necks, and pelvic regions, while, as a trike pilot, you experience none of those typical bicycle blues.

That leads to another thought: The reason recumbent tricyclists don't get those traditional aches and pains of bicyclists is due to the reclined manner in which a trike pilot sits. Our bodies are supported very well on the recumbent chair, at an exceptionally relaxing angle,

our feet are held to the pedals with binding mechanisms, our arms are comfortably at our sides, and the neck rest is available whenever desired. There is no sliver of a hard seat forcefully pushed into our hindquarters (*would anyone in their right mind sit on such a seat all day at the office?*), our upper body is not supported by our delicate wrist bones, and our head does not have to be consciously held at the extreme rear limit of its backward travel just to see where we're going.

Trikes clearly make a lot of sense when it comes to maximum adventuring comfort! A trike pilot's relaxed view is that of the road ahead, the sky above, and the scenery all around. The wrists never bear any unnatural loads, and there is no need to free the buttocks of painful unforgiving impalements. The trike's mesh or padded seat makes for miles of smiles. I've heard trikes called the "lazy man's bike" but my preference is to think of them as a smart man's bike, although, they aren't bikes at all. It's just a public convention to perceive any pedal-powered vehicle as a bike regardless of how many wheels it has. Well, enough of this bike/trike comparison stuff. To each his own. All I know is every time I see a long distance biker on adventure, I am SO glad I do it on a trike!

There's nothing lazy about taking a trike adventure. It's a lot of hard work for sure. The trike makes it easier and more fun though. Trikes are heavier than bikes however, and prone to get stuck sooner on some dirt roads. Oops, there's that bike word again, but a bike does have an advantage here. I've stealth camped on dirt side roads covered with sand and silt. The rear drive wheel tends to dig in, along with the rear cassette and chain, and it can be easy to grind to a halt ... too much touring weight for one thin tire to get enough traction. A biker can step off and walk his rig by lifting up on the center frame. Trikers can't do that.

Lifting a loaded trike is not something you should attempt, even if strength is not an issue, because trikes are inherently highly unstable when lifted off the ground. They tend to tip very easily and quickly. Awkward is the word that comes to mind. If you get stuck on any road surface, and pedaling is no longer an option to keep moving forward, get off and turn the trike around the opposite direction. Then, go to the rear, lift up on the pannier rack as you stand up straight, and walk the trike backwards with the rear wheel off the ground. The two front wheels, which are now trailing, keep it incredibly stable, and you can easily keep on moving to or from your camp area even in deep sand or crud. Just be sure not to lift it too high because the front chainrings

could drag in the dirt.

For stealth campers who seek the primitive experience, this backwards technique will be used often enough, because to get off paved highways for a quiet and private overnight, dirt roads are usually the best option out in the country. Since I pulled a trailer on my first cross-country jaunt, I could not move the trike easily on deep silty roads as I described earlier. I had to walk backwards all hunched over and pull the trike AND trailer by the trike's front derailleur post. What a drag that was ... literally! Heck, I burned even more calories doing that maneuver, which was very inefficient, uncomfortable, and slow! If anyone had seen me, I am sure they would have thought I was a nutcase directly from Notre Dame.

The way I see this trike adventure affair is through the eyes of a man who loves the wilderness ... and getting out into it without destroying it is now my lot. To stay in motels each night is too much like just being at home, except that it costs an arm and a leg to sleep in their perfumed rooms. For me, camping in the wilds is part and parcel with triking in the wilds. It's part of who I am. I enjoy the challenges that come with locating and successfully operating a stealth camp. An occasional campground for a shower can be a welcomed interlude now and then, but motels are a last resort if something is wrong or I need to rest up from a physical injury (*which I have done*).

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I was cautioned prior to leaving on my first long trike adventure by well-meaning conservative people that camping in a tent near paved roadways would put me at risk, that I might be harmed by transient miscreants with nothing more productive to do than accost a lone and vulnerable traveler with no car. If one hears enough of this talk in the weeks prior to departure, it tends to become an imagined reality, which can lead to pre-trip anxiety. And so it was with me, despite years of specialized training in self defense in one of my former lives. After all, I had grown older, somewhat weaker, and my mind was going soft from lack of hardcore adventure. But when the day came to pedal out of the driveway and into the remote unknown, I ventured forth nonetheless.

There I was, pedaling over roadways that were taking me farther and farther from home, all by myself, in a vehicle that had no locking doors, alarms, or speed capability to allow for rapid escape in the event some unknown human might choose to impinge upon my personal freedom to exist peacefully. That first night, I was on the



watch. I chose a place to pitch my tent behind some large evergreen trees and dense bushes, well concealed from the paved road in a turnout spacious enough for an eighteen wheeler to negotiate. The soothing sound of the Umpqua River kept me calm as the sky clouded over and it began to mist.

Several cars drove in and out during my pitching of the tent, eating dinner, and just hanging out prior to bedding down. I go to sleep early while camping, so every once in a while after I hit the sack, the lights of a car would momentarily illuminate my tent as it pulled in so the driver could use the concrete block outhouse on the other side of the dirt area. Once they discovered it was inexplicably locked, they would then quickly leave. Next thing you know, first light was appearing through my tent walls. Amazing! I had survived the night and had a new day ahead, albeit it kind of wet from light rain.

With each passing day and night, the fears continued to vanish, until finally ... they were gone! So, I began thinking about this fear of intrusion, and whether I was just getting lucky, or if the dangers are highly overrated.

Here's what my mind now sees as the explanation, although of course, there are always exceptions. Next time could be different, but then again, I think there's something to this: Imagine the mind of the criminal intent on stealing someone's money. So here's this guy lurking through the bushes looking for easy prey out in the sticks. They always look for a vulnerable mark because they don't want their plans to go haywire and end up hurt or in handcuffs. Okay, this guy (*it's almost always a male*) sees my tent, my trike, and just me standing around, or maybe I'm in my sleeping bag already. So, what's he thinking?

A number of things actually! Even their brains have some processing power, and they are able to figure most things out well enough to survive. First of all, I'm on the ground in a tent with no car. It's likely the evil-doer figures I don't have much money on hand, otherwise, why would I be traveling like this. For all intent and purposes, a solo triker could easily be mistaken for a bum, and we all know bums ask for money because they don't have any of their own. Second of all, the bad guy entertains the thought that maybe whoever is in the tent is a pretty tough hombre, otherwise why would he be out here alone in the first place? People living along side roads have to know what they're doing, so he likely deduces that I may even be more of a danger to him than he is to me. Thirdly, he may wonder if there are two people in the tent, which would double his trouble should he decide

to perpetrate a nasty and despicable deed. And finally, this hoodlum may see me as a kindred spirit, and honor some unspoken code that one thug never steals from another.

Well, I did carry some cash with me on that trip, perhaps a couple hundred dollars or so, with a backup credit card. That may or may not have been worth his while, but the second thought would be the most accurate of the four. While I'm a peace-loving nature boy who gives wide berth to potential trouble, I do know how to take care of business if necessary. It's like that Roosevelt chap once said: "Walk softly but carry a big stick." This is not said as way of a boast, for truly, I abhor violence and male machismo, but rather as a matter of fact. I have been well trained how to successfully walk away from life threatening humans with guns or evil intent, and after years of practice, those types of mental and physical actions embed themselves in one's motor memory.

By the end of the first week living on the road in a tent with my trike, I stopped worrying. A couple of nights, when in the middle of nowhere with no ideal camping landscape to be found come evening, I pitched in pullouts within full view of passing traffic. Traffic out there was minimal compared to cities, but it was obvious I was there. The entire trip proceeded without negative incident. I relate this story for anyone who may still fear camping alone, and I am not the only one with these findings. There are thousands of hikers, bikers, and trikers each year who traverse this grand planet in the warmer months and can attest to peaceful nights for weeks on end. Just as chances are mighty slim a grizzly bear will eat you, so are the chances that a newly escaped inmate from the local slammer will steal your trike and tent. There's simply not much of a payoff for someone to accost a lone person in a tent with only a trike!

My advice? Banish the fear and live free! Fear only serves to keep us shackled and imprisoned in a world full of anxiety. Like the old Beatles song of long ago once sang: "Live a little, be a gypsy, get around ..." (*now that song's stuck in your head*)

You may say: "Well, he dispenses this advice, but he lives in a la-la land and has been lucky." True, I may have been lucky so far, but I don't live in a la-la land, oblivious to the rare dangers of reality. I've seen the ugly sides of life as a cop, so I do prepare accordingly, just in case, but I don't let the thought consume me as do some people. I was asked by several friends prior to my trip: "You'll be packing a revolver, right?" My answer was no. I had sold my collection of bullet-shooting

devices not too long after leaving law enforcement, and was not going to buy a new one simply for this trip. First of all, I didn't feel I needed one, and second, my scant adventuring money had to be used in more productive ways than acquiring a device designed and created primarily to kill another human being.

There was one elderly lady in a small northern California town on my trip who began chatting with me at a local market when I stopped in to use the restroom and get a V8 juice. She saw the loaded trike and trailer, and asked where I was headed, so I told her out through northeast California and into northwest Nevada. She knew the barren and unpopulated road well, and emphatically told me that I must keep my gun at the ready while pedaling through there. Apparently, according to her, the ultra remote region was haven to marijuana growers, and they don't hesitate to waste folks they believe may be snooping around, she said. I just thanked her for the information, but did not engage in a discussion about my preparedness. The lady also told me that the destructive remnants of a Pacific hurricane were going to hit me out there once I crossed into Nevada ... she was right about that one!

What I do carry with me on the trike is a large Buck knife that I've had for over 30 years and always carry while out in the backcountry. Knives come in handy for many things, including survival applications if necessary. In the highly unlikely event that I would ever be accosted by a deranged person, I suppose it could serve me well there too, however I would prefer to just use my hands and arms in a one-on-one combat situation. I must admit though, that the comfort factor is there, however gruesome it may be. The last thing I want to do is get involved in an incident that would involve the local authorities, and most assuredly delay my wonderful trike adventure!

I've been speaking primarily about potential woes of primitive camping, because that's the type of camping I mainly do. What about trikers who choose motels or campgrounds? I did stay in a couple of motels on my trip, unplanned of course and not for long. There, the question arises, will someone rip off my trike while I'm asleep? I left it outside each night, not locked to anything or even to itself. The trike ripoff fear had already subsided by then, and I figured that if they really wanted it, that's life, and it would provide me a reason to go shopping for another one. Again, this is one of those things where fear so overrides many people that they can't relax about daily living. Chances are no thief will mess with it because he doesn't have any use for such a

bizarre thing anyway, and fencing it would prove problematic (*assuming he could even figure out how to use it, as most non-cyclists I've met can't even figure out how it steers*).

By the way, that's another advantage of trikes over bikes. Bikes are stolen all the time. They are easily fenced (*illegally redistributed*), bring money to the thief, and some criminals actually end up using the bike for themselves. Trikes, on the other hand, don't register on the thief's mental radar. He doesn't want it for himself, and no one he knows would want it either. A trike is nothing but a white elephant or albatross for most of the population, so adventuring on something that no one else wants is a good thing! Another factor in a triker's favor is that a bicycle thief would have to ride the trike away if he was on foot, which would be very obvious for bystanders to observe, thus providing reliable information to the police, and if the thief had a car, getting a trike into one is next to impossible. If he had a truck, he could maybe lift it in the back, but he would likely drop the highly unstable machine once he picked it up from the ground, and the whole awkward maneuver would really stand out to other folks witnessing it.

When I stopped at a busy Albertsons supermarket during rush hour in a large town to get some fresh fruit, I parked the trike right in front to the side of the entrance. People were everywhere, many in their business clothes after work. Witnesses were thick in the event a thief was lurking. If you need to buy something, you're by yourself on the trike, and you fear theft, use the busiest store available and park where the most people can see the trike. It's either that or park in the rear where no one can see it, which would work if the thief doesn't see you leaving it. Out of sight, out of mind. But if you were spotted by a criminal, he has a prime opportunity to snatch your three wheels with no witnesses (*assuming he'd even want the darn thing*). Both are options with pros and cons. I consider each based on the particular situation. Another advantage of parking in front of everyone is that nearly everyone stares at the trike as they pass because they haven't seen one before, so the fact that it draws heavy attention is another plus; thieves don't like attention!

The contents of my panniers are not very valuable to anyone, things like jackets, clothing, tent, sleeping bag, etcetera, and some of it dirty no less. I always keep my wallet and digital camera with me. People see touring cyclists every year. Their cycles and panniers are soiled from miles and days on the road, and almost guaranteed safe from theft as a result.

I've strayed here a bit from motels. You can see that one topic readily brings up another one, and the threads are so numerous that it's difficult to remain true to a single idea. Many issues have overlapping aspects, thus the intriguing wandering monologue. Back to overnight stays.

Some trikers take their rigs into the motel room with them. That's certainly an option if you find yourself in an area of questionable repute. My trike is an ICE Qnt, and has probably the narrowest track width of any tadpole tricycle, at 27.5 inches. It fits right through standard doorways with no problem, so I could just wheel it in if I wanted to. Most trikes have a 31-inch or wider front wheel track, which could necessitate tipping it sideways, which is problematic if loaded with gear. This is assuming of course that your room is on the first floor and accessible to the outside. Motels with central hallways are harder, and if your room is upstairs, good luck ... you'll need it. At any motel, always take your panniers and trunks inside with you regardless of where you park the trike.

Locking the trike to an immovable object is also an option. I haven't done that in most situations, and the lightweight six-foot cable lock I have could easily be cut by a medium sized pair of bolt cutters. To carry one of those super strong Bulldog U-Locks would mean considerable extra cargo weight, which, in my opinion, is simply not worth it! It may soothe your soul around town to have one of those locks, but don't pack it for a long adventure unless you welcome a heavier load, more muscle exertion, and slower pace.

Campgrounds provide a comfortable overnight location for a triker on adventure. In many states, governmental campgrounds run by the state or feds offer highly reduced payment for us. Many have what they call "hiker-biker" camp areas, perfect places for an exhausted trike pilot to pitch for the night. A real bathroom and/or shower are close by. A picnic table is standard fare. Other people camping all around provide emotional security of safety in numbers. People come over to talk about your trip and trike. Some offer you free food, beer, and a place at their campfire because they feel sorry for you. Other cyclists may provide good conversation as you share your journeys.

Hiker-biker camps in Oregon are only about five bucks, compared to a standard twenty or more for autos. A triker can camp for at least four nights for the price of one night in an auto campsite. Recently, while in northern California at the Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park, I happened upon that state's hiker-biker camp. It costs \$8,

which I thought was kind of steep until I saw it. Wow, utter luxury to be sure! Each one, situated on the bank of the beautiful river with huge redwood trees all around, had a miniature picnic table, an unbelievable rock edifice that housed a cookstove, and a well maintained flat area to pitch a tent on the soft ground. Deluxe bathrooms were only yards away. It was the best trike camp I've ever seen ... as far as campgrounds go, of course. And, unlike Oregon's hiker-biker camps that are communal with no privacy, and sometimes on ground not exactly level or root free, Jedediah Smith's are all separate and totally private with their river frontage. There are five of these at that park, and they surpass the auto camping area with their views. Guess it's well worth the extra three dollars!

Now, private campgrounds are another story usually. I checked at a KOA this past summer and was told that everyone pays the same price, whether you're in a van, car, motorcycle, bicycle, or just hiking. Unless you are really desperate for some reason, avoid these private campgrounds while on your trike adventure. That's not to say that some may provide a hiker-biker discount, but it would be rare. Not only that, but many of these private campgrounds, like the KOA I just mentioned, really compact the sites for maximum revenue flow, with no concern for anyone's privacy, so you feel like a sardine, packed in between a van and a car, with their tents only 12 feet from yours. And if that's not bad enough, many of these businesses have high wattage lamps everywhere so people can see like daylight at night, which is not conducive to a deep sleep.

On my trike trip, I passed through Klamath Falls, Oregon during rush hour. It was getting late, I had a lot of miles under my belt that day, and I wanted to pitch camp soon. I was unfamiliar where I might set my tent, and could see that the autumn sun might set prior to finding a good spot, something I always try to avoid by allowing sufficient time. I passed the Klamath Falls KOA, which was right off a busy four-lane main thoroughfare. It was a noisy and active place, and I kept on pedaling. After getting some fresh fruit at a market, I continued through the large city. Once out into the rural portion of Altamont, which borders Klamath Falls, it was clear to me that I had a way to go if I wanted to clear the rural final homesteads, but I didn't want to chance nightfall making the finding of a camp even more difficult.

That's the night I recalled what my Catrike 700 friend Matt Jensen had told me about churches being a potential in a tight situation. The Harvest Christian Center appeared to my left. I walked in and

introduced myself to the husband and wife pastors, who were preparing for a musical gathering of the faithful. They happily offered their huge south lawn for my overnight needs, and assured me the automatic sprinklers would not come on that night. I pitched my tent on the soft grass, right next to a farmer's fence with horses on the other side and the sweet smell of agriculture in the air. No sooner than the tent was up and I started eating some grub, a magnificent sunset treated me to an awe-inspiring photograph with my digital camera. It sure beat the KOA: It was free, had immaculate restrooms, and the views were superior. I slept well, with complete privacy. I didn't need a shower yet anyway, at least in my opinion.

One thought that I'd like to put out there again is one that's born of perception. What we perceive might happen is usually not what does happen. This is especially true with occurrences we would typically view negatively. It is very important for any trike pilot, or ordinary human for that matter, to let go of fear, doubt, and anxiety in order to fully enjoy life. There will be many varied experiences on a cross country trike adventure, and they will all go into our mental and/or written notes as memories we'll not forget during our brief time in this life. Not allowing ourselves the freedom to live these moments because we believe disaster is around each corner is not living.

I don't want to forget any aspect of my times on a trike. They all make up my triking life, who I am as a trike pilot, and go into the mix of my total awareness that keeps life the adventure that it is. I don't want to miss the opportunity to explore on my trike due to fears of what might happen. I do my best in all things, and what happens happens. That's life. That's the way things go. It's all part of my story, and so it is with you. We cannot control everything. In fact, there is little we really can control on the grand scale of things. At times, we forget our life is transitory, and live as if there are unlimited tomorrows. This can put the time we do have to poor use, as we let it slip by while not living it to the fullest. Remember, seize every moment with a passion!

I don't want to forget the bad times in life, or even the bad times on a trike trip. Were it not for the bad, how would we know good? We appreciate the special positive times more because we have a knowledge of other times that weren't so positive. Life is an epic adventure, and every component of it is worth savoring while we can. Something else to keep in mind is this: People love to share stories with each other. Trikers gather around and swap tales of their times on the road, and inevitably the topic of worst experiences pops up. We enjoy

hearing about all those tough times they had, and we eagerly share ours ... “I remember that frigid night in the snow when I was shaking despite pedaling the trike up that dark steep mountain all alone ...”

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There are hundreds of tire traps out on those long paved miles of your journey, little obstacles that would have no affect on an automobile, but could cause a trike pilot a real headache. Many of them are difficult or impossible to see ahead of time, and so unsuspecting trikers ride right into them. Others are so large and obvious that we literally must ride around them, which can force a wait if traffic in the lane is heavy.

One thing I’ve noticed is that car lanes are usually free of debris, while road shoulders (*or bike lanes if really lucky*) are often littered with all manner of junk and dangerous gremlins waiting for human powered cyclists. About the only good thing to be said for the many roadways that have no safe shoulder for trikes is that there is also little to no debris in the car lane in which we are forced to ride, which is refreshing. Some selfish motorists throw trash from their cars, which of course, ends up on the shoulder. Most of the shoulder debris is just annoying “stuff” to ride around or over, like banana peels or dirty diapers, but other items demand prompt attention and action ... or else.

One of the nastiest things to be aware of is a conglomeration of old rusted metal strands of wire that used to be part of a trucker’s tire prior to blowout at 55 miles per hour. Some are in bunches, yet easily missed because the rust diminishes their appearance. Others are single strands and nearly invisible until the last possible moment. If one of these pieces of steel hits your tire just right, it will probably puncture it, unless you have super heavy duty rubber like Schwalbe Marathon-Plus tires (*of course, even they have limits*). The thicker the tire tread, the better chance you have of not getting that deflated feeling. If you are tired, enjoying the scenery, or concentrating on traffic, these steel wires can really take you by surprise. And, if you’re cranking along at a good clip on a really narrow shoulder of a very busy roadway, simply turning the handlebars to avoid the wires may not be an option; I’d rather have a flat tire than swerve into a car’s grillwork.

The funny thing about these steel wires is that they appear harmless at first glance, but if you get into a large bunch of them together, which can easily happen on trucker highways, that’s a lot of sharp ends looking for your tire, and they are stronger as a group if



bunched together, therefore more likely to overcome the resistance to the tire's surface. Should you be unlucky enough to impale your rubber on one or more of these nasty debris artifacts, please use care in removing the metal. It is old, dirty, and rusty, and it can also poke you! What if you haven't had a current tetanus shot?

Even the wonderful natural world delivers an occasional unpleasant surprise, so we can't blame it all on modern truck tires or human-generated trash. One of the worst tire traps ever comes from the *Tribulus terrestris* plant, in the form of a frightening grouping of long thick thorns that will make fast work of standard duty cycling tires and tubes. A flat is almost guaranteed. There is a central mass of bone-like material, called a nutlet, from which several long sturdy spikes protrude, each one about 10 millimeters in length, and each easily capable of letting the air out of your tires. The nutlets resemble the head of a goat, thus the commonly known moniker of goatheads.

If you get goatheads in one tire, you'll likely get them in all three, as these nutlets fall from the plant in groups of four to five. Just like ants in your house, where there is one, there are often many more unseen. Of course, once they embed themselves in your tread, you may well see hundreds at once, as I did after riding through an autumn pile of elm leaves in a city park on my trike journey. All of my treads were literally covered thickly by goatheads, so much so that the tread portion of my five tires (*two on the trailer*) was not visible. It is truly an unnerving sight to behold. All you can do is hope the weather is warm, dry, and bright because you'll be sitting around for a long time pulling them out.

Be very careful when removing the nutlets, as they don't play well with human skin either. I used a Swiss army knife to pop them out. It is a long and tedious process, made worse by the fact that when popping some of the central cores out, an occasional spike will remain in the tire, broken off at tread level. If left in the tire, these remaining spikes can deviously work their way farther into the tire and tube while riding. You could fix one flat, only to have another down the road later from a spike or two that you missed. And here's the worst part: These little broken-off spikes are very tiny when viewed from their ends, some being whitish in color and others somewhat grayish. They are almost impossible to see unless you very carefully, slowly, and closely scan every square inch of your tires. The ends look just like a tiny piece of road grit ... until you start working one out, and then discover a spike up to one centimeter long!

I had the superior Schwalbe Marathon-Plus tires on the trike, with EarthGuard tire liners and thick Kenda puncture-resistant Q-Tubes inside. This was an expensive triple protection tire setup that paid off in spades, as none of the trike tires succumbed to hundreds of goatheads. I even pulled out one of the spikes nine months later at home, which I had missed that eventful day on the road. My trailer tires weren't so lucky, as they were just standard Kenda K-West light-duty tires, with standard lightweight tubes. I had EarthGuard tire liners in those tires too, but the thick liner wasn't enough by itself to stop the spikes from entering the flimsy tube. Both tires went flat eventually, once the spikes worked their way deep enough.

Some trikers get flats fairly frequently while on long road trips, and that is usually due to the use of light-duty tire and tube choices. If I can stress just one thing to remember, it would be this: Do not skimp financially on placing the best puncture resistant strategies you can on the trike. You may think that changing a tire is easy, but what about three? And what about one or two that go flat a second time within the next ten to twenty miles from missed spikes? How many tubes do you carry anyway? Probably not enough to fix multiple flats! Keep this in mind also: If the weather is rainy, windy, and/or cold, the absolute last thing you'll want to be doing is spending a half hour extracting goatheads, and then another half hour changing tires. I was lucky. My goathead revelation occurred at the day's final camp in warm sunny weather at a city park with benches, water, shade trees, and no automobile traffic. What would it be like on the side of a busy state highway in a freak snowstorm?

I stand by the products mentioned above, and while some riders have said it is overkill, I know better. My trike trip is taken for the joy of the ride and the beauty of the scenery, not to be tinkering on repairs roadside. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Money spent to avoid the problem in the first place by using superior products pales by comparison of the hassle to be endured by skimping initially. This was a lesson well learned by yours truly, especially since I got to see the difference between the trailer setup and the trike setup in the identical conditions, something akin to a controlled science experiment. The gulf was a wide one: 100% of the light duty tires eventually failed, while 100% of the heavy duty tires remained fully intact, and still are well over a year later.

Superior rubber on the road also is a plus for other tire traps as well, such as nails and tacks. Both of these bad guys can also force a

tire and tube repair, but at least there is usually only one with which to contend instead of hundreds, and only one tire is affected instead of three. Of course, if you are unfortunate enough to sustain a nail hole, not only will you need to get out your spare tube, but you'll need to repair or change the actual tire too. The good news about nails is that on a trike we are often riding rather slowly compared to the speed of cars, so we might ride right over a nail and not apply the force necessary to drive it into the tire like a car does.

Along with your spare tubes, be sure to carry tire repair supplies, and know how to use them ahead of time. The last thing you want to have happen is being out on the open road with a damaged tire or tube, and then learn how to use the patch kit. Learn these simple skills in the comfort of your own garage. I carried a spare tire on my first trip, which I easily kept on the underside of the trailer, but I never had to use it. I did use one spare tube however for a trailer tire. Trikers without a trailer may opt not to carry a spare tire due to space restrictions and hassle of where to store it, but the good news is that if your tire develops a small hole or tear (*key word being small*), it can be patched with a patch kit, or, in a pinch, jury rigged on the inside with a stout piece of flexible plastic or duct tape.

Glass is plentiful on our highways, especially on the shoulder where cars do not travel. People of questionable character have been known to toss liquor bottles out the window, leaving razor sharp shards of brown glass hidden in the shadows. Only the fortunate glint of sunshine or an observant eye will allow avoidance of these tire-eating gremlins. A glass shard can open up a trike tire in the blink of an eye, especially a thin light-duty tire. The more rubber the better, but no tire is totally immune from larger pieces of sharpies.

The most vulnerable time for a triker may well be on long steep descents, where speeds of 40 to 50 miles per hour can be attained. This speed, and resultant force, magnifies the damage potential for anything on the roadbed when it contacts the tires. A shard of glass that could be ridden over at 8 miles per hour just may slice right through the tire at 45. At those faster speeds, the luxury of a quick swerve doesn't exist, so you pretty much have to run over anything you don't see far in advance. If that happens, attempt to straddle the object by keeping it between one of your outside front tires and the trike's center line, where the third tire tracks. Basically, if your foot goes directly over the object, it will miss your three tires completely.

Rocks and gravel are almost always non issues if you're

running superior quality heavy-duty gear on your wheels. I would recommend however that speeds be kept low on rocky surfaces just to be on the safe side. Traditional high-pressure thin road tires are more prone to being damaged by small rocks or gravel, but if you're on an unsupported cross-country road trip, I seriously advise that they should not be a tire of choice. Maximize chances of success through wise gear choices.

Another tire trap worthy of discussion is the common road drainage grate that allows rain runoff to leave the roadway. Essentially, there is a sizable rectangular hole in the roadway's shoulder that empties into an underground storm drainage system, and the hole is capped with steel grating. There are two basic kinds of grate design. One has the pieces of metal running perpendicular to the flow of traffic, while the other runs parallel. Perpendicular grating, that which runs ninety degrees to the direction of your trike tires, is rarely a concern. On a stable trike, it's easy to ride right over the top of them. It's the other kind that is the trap!

Grating that runs parallel to the trike tires will suck up the tire and wheel in short order, plunging you into a situation that will probably not be repairable, either right on the spot or at a bicycle shop. There is a strong likelihood that the aluminum wheel may be bent, perhaps ruining some of the spokes and pitching you off the seat onto the street if you're traveling at speed going downhill. And if your rear tire falls into one of these grates, the rear derailleur is a strong candidate for total annihilation. This is a case where the slower the speed at impact, the better. Hit one of these at four miles per hour and you might get lucky. If a traditional bicyclist hits one, he's almost sure to take a nasty spill.

All governmental agencies should be required to change out the parallel grates for perpendicular grates. These are definite safety hazards for all cyclists, and governments that use them place themselves at risk of lawsuit. Parallel grating is proof positive that the government entity in question gave absolutely no consideration to human powered cyclists. They constructed the road only for petroleum powered automobiles with wide tires. Sure, as trike pilots we can anticipate and see most of these dangers, but what if a grate is covered in leaves after an autumn storm? It might be invisible and in goes your tire. This may bring the trike to an immediate halt, and with no seatbelt, guess where the pilot goes! Essentially, our governments have told us: *"You're on your own. We don't care. We are not liable for your*

*injuries.*” Heed this message and you will be ahead of the game!

What other kinds of hazards are we likely to find on our thin ribbon of road shoulder during a trike adventure? Well, you name it and eventually you’ll probably see it on the road someday if you ride enough. Some dangers enter a category that exceeds the simple title of tire trap. A few would fall under the heading of trike trap. Things like old car exhaust systems that finally rust off and tumble onto the road certainly will be visible for a ways off, so you’ll have plenty of time to avoid them, however, something that large will likely require that you enter the car lane to circumvent. If you’re flying down a steep mountain pass, beware of tight curves with minimal forward visibility. Always be on the ready.

In Florida, trikers will occasionally come across live alligators on the shoulders of roads near wetlands. Now that’s a pilot trap if I ever heard of one. Forget about having to change a tire; just avoiding being on the lunch menu of this carnivore is enough of a job. One could be lurking behind that next roadside bush! Hobo artist Dan Price has a photograph of a flat alligator that had been hit by a car in his journal of riding his TerraTrike from northeast Oregon to the Florida Keys. They’re out there. Adventurer Heidi Domeisen rode a tadpole trike from North Carolina to Alaska and back ... alone. She came around a curve in the Alaskan highway to find a female grizzly bear and her cubs in the road. The bear bluff-charged her on the trike. Bet that got her adrenaline going! To read her story, visit the Crazy Guy on a Bike website and search her name. Dan’s story is right here in this book.

Out on the open road of the trike realm lingers many a varied object or creature to surprise you. It’s what good triking stories are made of. Without these unknowns, a little bit of the adventure would be missing, so rather than seeing them as unfortunate aspects of an otherwise perfect trek, envision them as part of the challenge that makes a trike journey worth the effort. Knowledge is power, and being ever vigilant is your best defense against mishap. Experience these tire, trike, and pilot traps in a safe manner by being ready for them in advance. Don’t fall asleep at the bars, as I did once at around two in the morning while traversing the Cascade Range in the snow (*fortunately, there are no drainage grates on that long mountain pass!*)

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Emotional stability is challenged whenever we set out on a new adventure where the safety of our home becomes but a memory.

Loneliness can become a companion to any solo trike pilot covering hundreds of miles across the countryside. A few seasoned cyclists who actually prefer to be alone for protracted periods of time might not experience such a feeling, but I would imagine most of us do when by ourselves in strange lands. Maybe some of us are better at subduing emotions than others, but if we set our ego mask aside and honestly evaluate our thoughts, we're not always as stable as we might appear on the outside.

Sure, the emotions were there on my first adventure, and I'm the type of guy who is aware of them and willing to share with others. Yet these concepts remained just emotional thoughts, never reaching any point of genuine fear that led me to doubt my desire to take this trip. The way I saw it was that I would learn much on the trike journey, gaining knowledge to expand my horizons and life experiences. An adventure that is new to the adventurer is like picking up a new good book: You can't wait to turn the page and see what happens next!

This loneliness thing gets easier though with each passing day. The routine begins to make sense, former questions are now answered by doing, and the mind slowly eases into accepting a new model of existence out on the road. Our minds are highly adaptable, and for those of us who are able to adjust to new situations by allowing the mind the time it needs, the rewards are many.

Only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go. To discover this necessarily involves moving through several stages of emotional instability. Until we actively make life happen in a new way, we can only speculate how we will react to the new situation. Loneliness is a normal response for those raised by people. If we move to a new town, we suffer for a while from loneliness brought on by the old town's memories, but soon we are getting in the swing of things and emotions settle in again.

Same on a trike. The really neat part of triking into the unknown is that we are very physically active during the day, and thus our minds are engaged in the necessities of continuing forward progress. Physical activity keeps us mentally healthy as it boosts our endorphin levels, which leads to sensations of well-being and confidence. During the days, any fearful emotions were well contained because I felt marvelous out in the wilds on the roads. I was in control and making a new adventure become my reality.

Setting up camp each evening was equally labor and thought intensive, so all was well. I'd say the time that proved most challenging

was usually after I got into the tent to sleep. All the activities for the day were over. All was calm and I was left with my thoughts ... and perhaps fears. Images of friends, family, and familiar places tend to surface prior to sleep. Of course, the good thing about this time frame is that trike pilots are usually so bushed after pedaling each day that sleep quickly overcomes them, shortening any periods of self-doubt.

For anyone who feels this emptiness or loneliness after dinner, a cell phone call works well to create the illusion that all is as expected. Trouble is, you may not want to hang up. That voice on the other end is your tenuous anchor to normalcy as you lie in an unprotected tent deep in the wild woods all alone, and the other person is in a secure home with all the comforts. Just like when we were kids though, after saying the final goodbye, getting down into the sleeping bag and pulling it up over our heads will keep the monsters at bay until morning!

Morning is a time of positive anticipation. A new day has dawned, and we are busy with eating a filling breakfast to power our pedaling for a few hours. Breaking down camp, putting the panniers back on the trike, and checking for any mechanical glitches keeps us busy again. The expectations of today's road trip allow the brain to remain actively engaged in things other than potentially harmful emotions. We are eager to initiate the first rotations of the crankset. Maybe the only idea that has time to enter the mind is that we may miss what was our temporary home last night.

Funny as it may sound, I do find a unique emotional attachment to each camp I create. It doesn't last long, of course, but I know it's there in my head. After all, by myself I crafted a unique living arrangement that saw me successfully through the night. I became one with the flora and fauna, existing simply on the ground with them. I chose the locale because there were probably things about it I liked (*landscape, scenery, serenity, etc*), and I will miss them, however transitory and minimal that emotion may be.

There is a certain personal satisfaction to be gained in making a new home for oneself each night in remote lands. I enjoy doing this. It is an important aspect of adventuring on a trike for me. Even taking an overnight weekend jaunt brings the same thrills and fulfillment of the camping process, but on a two-day trek, the emotion of loneliness is generally a non-issue because you'll be home tomorrow anyway.

Going on a trike adventure with a group of people, or at least one other person, usually keeps emotions such as loneliness at bay. Just having another human to talk to and share things with is enough to keep

the mind engaged even during quiet times on the journey. Most humans seem to be inclined to function efficiently under conditions of partnerships of one sort or another. There is safety in numbers, both physical and mental, or so the mind usually believes. And if you get on each others nerves, then the mind is engaged in that, and even though it's emotional, loneliness doesn't enter the picture.

Not all emotions leave us sad however, as loneliness often tends to do. The vast majority of emotions experienced by yours truly are highly positive and spiritually productive (*when I say spiritually, I am not referring to any religious ideology, but rather the essence of who I am as a person*). My spirit is continually refreshed by all the sensations around me every minute of the ride: The shape of my planet through which the road travels, the wind and birds singing in the trees, the wide green pastures of horses and cows, the immense beautiful blue sky and white fluffy clouds, the sounds of my natural world welcoming me home, the serenity of a long flowing high-country valley, the annoying tire whine of an eighteen wheel just off my port side. They all play a part in keeping me engaged in the now. Nothing else matters. I am here and I am happy.

If my emotions start to grumble as clouds darken the sky and rain falls upon me, I shake the feeling knowing that I am truly alive, truly on a wonderful adventure as part of my life, and happy to be healthy in the clean and remote hinterlands. The wettest day on a trike adventure, after all, is far better than the driest day in a toxic big city where I am only a nameless one of thousands, a place where stress determines the fate of most. I would rather be rained upon pedaling a backcountry byway, where I am free on three, living on the edge, and silently passing through my natural world. People get all worked up over getting wet. Why? Humans are waterproof!

It's our clothing that engenders that common belief. People are unprepared for rain, and run through it like it's poison. Of course, in today's industrial machine, that very well could be the case in huge acidic cities. Preparation is the key, as I've said before. There's no such thing as a bad weather day, just bad preparation. If it starts raining while riding your trike across the Nevada desert, do one of two things: Either get your rain clothes out of the panniers and put them on, or take everything off and ride naked. Both solutions avoid wet clothing.

Enough talk of emotions. Enjoy the trip. You'll never be in that day again. Make the most of it all, even potentially sad emotions like loneliness. Savor those feelings. They are part of what makes you who



your are. They make the ride all that much sweeter once you do return home! You survived, and now you have great stories to tell, and many who want to listen.

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Construction zones are a fact of modern human life for those who use public roadways. Long ago, when I was little, I always thought it strange that huge road construction projects always occurred right smack dab in the middle of summer when dad, mom, sis, and I were taking summer vacations somewhere. What's the matter with these people anyway? Can't they wait until summer is over?

Well, no, they can't, because many Earthly locales experience less than ideal weather conditions to pour concrete and work outdoors other times of the year. Everyone it seems takes advantage of the warm dry weather, what is typically called "good" weather by most folks. Personally, I like my planet just the way it is, and accept all weather as a natural part of my life. There is no good or bad association in my mind at this point in my life. Anyway, back to road construction.

It can be daunting enough in a car, with colossal yellow construction machines roaming about like ancient dinosaurs devouring a meal. The pavement may be rough, or may be missing altogether, with only dirt temporarily on the roadway. How does that feel to a trike pilot on a tiny machine powered by his own legs? Yeah, it's something trikers generally prefer not to see during their days on the road!

There is one notable advantage though. On the trike, we can ride right up to the front of the line, no matter how many cars there are. We just keep pedaling on our narrow road shoulder, and come to rest right under the nose of the dutiful flagman, or flagwoman as the case may be (*interesting: my word processing program just showed flagwoman as an unknown or misspelled word, although not so with flagman – goes to show our cultural bias towards males – like how everyone refers to mankind instead of humankind*).

So, there we are in our diminutive tadpole tricycle, with all the car drivers staring down at us wondering what we are riding and why we are out there in the first place. The flagger looks down at us, and you can see the wheels turning in his head as he attempts to solve any potential problem on how to get us through the construction zone in one piece. No one likes these places, especially trike pilots.

For one thing, when the pilot car pulls away and the car line follows, even though they are only traveling 25 miles per hour, the

triker surely can't hope to keep up, and soon enough, the entire line passes us again, and we are alone. Eventually we know that the pilot vehicle will be coming back the other way, with a line of cars in a one-lane setting, heading directly for our little helpless trike! Where's the fairness in life? Why doesn't anyone think of us in the grand scheme of things?

Construction zones! Truth be known, they can almost be welcomed at times, as pedaling along hour after hour, day after day at such a slow speed can on occasion become somewhat mind-numbing. These zones provide an injection of excitement and drama, and in most cases, a time when fellow humans realize your vulnerabilities and try to help you through.

Motorhomes are driven by people. People come in all types. It's the person who makes the difference to our safety on a trike, not the vehicle that person is driving. The vast majority of people allow plenty of leeway to trikers on the highways and backroads, thus most motorhomes also allow plenty of room when they pass. The difference between a motorhome and a standard sized automobile however, is that the car is much smaller and narrower, and thus has more room to move over. Sometimes, depending on where a motorhome overtakes a trike, circumstances of the moment can make for a thrilling or perhaps frightening few seconds.

When I do drive a car nowadays, which is rare since I no longer own a petroleum powered vehicle, I constantly assess my own driving techniques when on tight and curvy mountain roads, asking myself if I could safely pass a trike at the speed I'm driving. It takes a conscious effort to modify driving habits to allow cyclists safe passage, and that is from my own mind, which is keenly aware of the situation. Think about that 95% of the public that doesn't ride a bike, or that 99.99% that doesn't ride a trike (*or even know what a trike is*). Considering this, it's truly amazing to me that folks provide so much room and courtesy to trikers on the road. I guess it's a testament to the inherent good nature of the human, a statement that most people are kind and do the right thing most of the time (*either that, or they don't want to be sued if they hit you*).

When on a trike adventure, the best time to ride is the daytime. In fact, that's the only time to ride, right? You'd have to be crazy to ride at night, or so conventional trike pilot wisdom may assert. To be safe, it's essential that a triker ride in bright daylight with brilliantly colored flagging displayed prominently on flexible fiberglass poles. Car drivers

can see you way off in the distance. We sleep at night. Trikes sit outside the tent or motel room at night. A triker has no business being out on the open road after the sun departs behind the western horizon. Right?

Well, maybe not. When the night is warm and the full moon shines bright enough to read a book, accepted conservative beliefs tend to be challenged. Life is an adventure, and for genuinely spirited adventurers, new horizons beckon on a regular basis. Just riding a trike hundreds of miles day after day was a new experience to me on that first trip, something I had never imagined doing, so anything beyond that was really pushing the envelope.

The night of the second day, I could not find any really good place to pitch a tent like I had done the night prior, so I decided to get some shuteye on the trike's recumbent seat in a church parking lot in a tiny little town on the Interstate. This was not ideal. A street lamp nearby, passing trains, and the barking dog next door made for a tough time. The weather was good, but as the hours wore on, the air became nippy, and I was becoming chilled even with all my jackets on because I totally sedentary. I knew the next section of road would be hot pedaling during a sunny day, as it had many long uphill, so I decided to start pedaling again, sometime after midnight.

That night ride in the early hours of day-3 was totally invigorating and so incredibly worth the experience! I wouldn't trade it for the world. I would encourage any trike pilot who happens to be on a trike adventure during the phase of a full moon to seriously consider pedaling under the supervision of Earth's environmentally sustainable night light.

Visibility from the car driver's standpoint is not an issue at all. If you have a brilliant flashing 10 LED tail light as I did, they can see you way off, perhaps even better than in the daytime. I also had a professional-quality marine rescue strobe that flashed once every second or so, which can be seen literally for miles. I kept the headlight off because the moon lit my way effectively, and allowed me to see my planet in a way I usually don't. I pedaled 17 wonderful and exciting miles in a world so incredibly different than the one I would have seen had I waited until the next sunny day.

One month later on this same trip, when the moon came to full once again, favorable circumstances just happened to smile a second time on my situation. My camp in Death Valley was becoming increasingly intolerable due to motorhomes crowding out my tiny tent, and a loudly snoring man in his big trailer only six feet away was more

than I could bear. Being a man of the natural world, I couldn't stand it anymore, and decided to try another moonlit ride. I had the desert highway to myself under the light of the full moon and a cloudless sky. Temperatures were mild and very comfortable for pedaling.

Not taking a long and remote ride in the light of the full moon is missing a unique joy of triking. I can type reams of words here to attempt getting the feelings across, but they are probably in vain. Until a triker actually finds himself alone in the backcountry, pedaling silently under the smiling face of the bountiful moon, the ambiance, sensory perceptions, psychological impressions, and a vast array of emotional flavors will remain elusive. Simply put: You won't know until you go! And another incredible aspect of night riding is that you get to watch the sunrise. Sure, you may be sleepy, but there is always time for that later. Live the ride. Do it in the dark!

On that same solo trip, I did also take one unplanned night ride across the seemingly endless Cascade Range, which morphed into a dangerous life-threatening situation, but even that had its upsides. How many people have ridden a human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle pulling a trailer over a major mountain range after a freak snowstorm all night long? Well, I certainly wouldn't do it again of course, but since it happened, I am pleased to have lived that adventure. As I always tell myself: I'll never know how far I can go unless I risk going too far!

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Being one who enjoys the natural world, and tries to remain as distant as possible from the industrialized chaos of America, I opt not to own a cellular telephone. If I'm out in the wilds having another adventure, the last thing I want to hear is a telephone crying to get my attention. Whoever it is will try again later if it's important. There's nothing so crucial in my personal life that I feel a need to be connected 24/7 to the outside world. It can wait. People who know me know this, and simply adjust to my times in the hinterlands.

On my trike trek to Death Valley National Park however, I did have a small cellular telephone in my right rear Arkel GT-54 pannier. I broke my own rules for this trip because several folks asked to follow my trip online as it was in progress. Well, one way I thought about doing that was with one of these new netbook computers, those tiny laptops about 6x9 inches in size. It would allow me to pull into any business area with free Wi-Fi in the air, connect wirelessly, and update a blog for anyone to read worldwide.

I thought long and hard prior to the journey about getting an Asus Netbook for \$239, but decided against it for three reasons. First, I needed that cash to buy supplies that were absolutely necessary on a trike adventure, and a computer is not absolutely necessary. Second, I realized my propensity to get carried away with my writing, and knew darn well that if I stopped to update a blog, I'd lose valuable time everyday. Third, I'd have to be finding electricity on a regular basis to keep the battery charged, and since I usually camp primitively, that wasn't going to happen (*I did not own one of those miniature solar chargers like the one's REI sells*).

Well, I came up with a solution that was even better in my way of seeing things. My answer to the dilemma wouldn't allow photograph uploads everyday, but it did allow me the freedom to roam without being tied down to a wireless connection location. Three friends agreed to be my intermediary by posting to a new website my daily progress (badwater.wordpress.com). All I had to do was keep in touch with them daily, or whenever it was possible, via phone. I borrowed a prepaid cellular telephone for the trip, and called each evening with the day's occurrences if cellular service was available in the area where I pitched my camps.

Not all locations allowed communication, of course. Up in the mountains, where service was spotty or nonexistent, a night or two may go by with no call. I spoke earlier of the loneliness emotion. On nights where I contacted any or all of the three, I had no problem. When a night would come where the cellular telephone screen displayed "Call Failed" I felt all alone, except for the magnificent nature that was ever present. These people would then take notes, log into the website administratively, and post the latest for enthusiasts who were following my progress. The system worked well, and we all had fun with it.

But let's say I wasn't doing the website idea. Would I have still found a cell phone useful? As it turned out, that little electronic device may have saved my sorry triker hide. Danger lurked ahead, and since I was out of touch riding the trike all day, I had no idea. Once I finally did establish contact with two people following my progress, I learned that a massive and potentially deadly storm system was going to intersect my exact route within the next two days. That cellular telephone conversation led to a major trip modification. I'm glad I had the phone.

It was the most severe storm system that had passed over the huge northwestern Nevada desert region for many years according to

locals. Extreme winds, unprecedented rains, and deadly flash floods turned my proposed tricycle route into a disaster zone that could have easily done me in. My advice on your trike adventure? You've probably guessed by now. Have a cellular telephone on your trike, and don't forget to take the charging cord! You may also want to acquire one of those miniature solar chargers at REI so you won't be out of luck out in the middle of the boonies. I kept it turned off while riding, and only activated it each evening for the time necessary to make a call, thereby maximizing battery life.

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Things look different down here in the seat of a recumbent tadpole tricycle. Scenery viewed from the perspective of a trike pilot takes on a whole new appearance, even if you've been on a particular road before in a car. This low to the ground puts nearly all of the world above a triker's head ... way above most of the time. Pumping along in a reclined seat eight inches from asphalt allows careful study of plants, flowers, bugs, trash, and whatever else happens to be on Earth's surface. Creeping up steep mountain grades favors unparalleled opportunities to soak it all up in great detail. It's fun to watch little wildflowers slowly pass to your right, just inches from your handlebar grip, realizing that motorists will never have this experience, and even bicyclists aren't nearly this close!

Trikes are great conveyances, for nothing else brings travelers closer to their world. There is no battle of balance on ultra-slow uphill due to the three wheels, so speed becomes irrelevant. A trike pilot can simply stop at any time, take a digital photograph or get a drink of water, and then just take off again, all without swerving or reattaching to the pedals. And if a trike pilot finds a nail or other nasty tread-ripping item lurking somewhere in the roadway, it's a simple matter to pick it up while riding by so that it will not find a victim later on. I routinely tossed nails off the shoulder.

The yellow diamond-shaped road signs that depict an eighteen wheeler on a steep downhill grade are a welcomed sight for nearly any cyclist who just made the long trek to the summit. Often, there are summit signs at the tops of passes, and a quick digital photograph may be on the agenda if getting up for a stretch, snack, and a drink of water. This means your work is over for a while because you get to rip down the other side, faster than a speeding bullet (*or so it would seem – everything is relative*). The downside to flying downhill is that the

descent never seems to last long enough. Just about the time when the triker is mentally high as a kite from the awesome adrenaline surge of raw sporty speed, up comes the bottom of the mountain to spoil all the fun.

Of course, trike adventuring is such an exciting thing to do that it's all fun. The flatlands have their appeal, as do the ascents. Long open stretches make for a quicker pace. Things seem to even out over the hours, and just about the time you lament that the uphill section is taking forever and cutting into your daily mileage, if you worry about that sort of thing at all, the ensuing downhill section makes up for it all with milepost markers zooming by so quick that they are a blur. Assuming a pass of equal distance on each side, and assuming 4 MPH up and 45 MPH down the other side, that's an average speed of 24.5 MPH overall ... not bad if you stop to think about it. The best you may have done if that same distance had been all flat might have been 15 MPH. See how it all works out to our favor? You're getting to your destination quicker even with the endless uphill portion slowing you down.

Adventuring on a trike seems to bring the most fulfillment when out in remote rural settings, where people and cars are not so much a concern. These are times when a trike pilot can really relax regardless of the incline that may happen to be under his tires at the time. No matter how adept a triker is at navigating the hassles of city traffic, leaving the city limits brings a tranquil sense of happiness as the exhaust pipes of passing polluters are no longer pumping their defiling contaminants into the triker's lungs. On any trike adventure though, towns are a reality when pedaling across the miles.

However vexing they may be, human-infested municipalities give you the opportunity to stretch your weary legs, and walk around seeing males in business suits and females in white-collar dresses chatting on their cells while they down their midday lattes. A professional woman, smartly dressed with cell phone in hand, parades from the Starbucks counter with her caffeine towards the comfy couch by the front window. She sits down, crosses her legs, and revs up her heart with the java, prepping for the afternoon's client meeting. Those nylon clad eye-catchers and spiked heels wouldn't get her too far on a tricycle though. After triking for several days, you've gone over the edge into another world. You no longer belong here. You're an alien on your own planet.

And to those who see you getting off your trike to take a break,

you do look like some kind of an alien! They've never seen a trike before, and you look as weird to them as they do to you. You have a helmet on your head, something that the female business elite would never consider putting atop their expensive dyed waves. They wonder how you could be out pedaling around the countryside while they're gulping down their lunches between meetings. You wonder how you have survived this long in such a chaotic high-pressure world. You're glad to be on an adventure, where your greatest challenges come in the form of where to find tonight's camp. The "suits" are all stressed out drinking caffeine and laying waste to their bodies as they suck on burning tobacco, while you are maximally sedated and building your longevity from the morning's 30 mile stretch.

Life in the city goes on as you finally exit the hectic hamlet of humanity, on your way to big blue sky and gentle country breezes. Of course, sometimes those wispy winds evolve into more than a tranquil brush of air on your recumbent tadpole trike. Wind can turn your modest little tricycle into a aerodynamic three-wheeled rocket when its origin is from your hind side. A good stiff tailwind is a welcomed aspect of planetary weather for trikers adventuring on a long haul, as the winds find much resistance in the form of the panniers and trunk straddling the rear wheel. And that resistance means a notable increase in speed, especially if triking through a level stretch of valley lowlands.

All of a sudden, the trike pilot can upshift to the largest chainring as he takes advantage of this transient invisible helper. It's a situation where the wind makes a chain transition to the big ring easy, and the resultant rapid locomotion is further assisted by yet more fast air molecules working their unseen magic. Sometimes this wind-speed cycle appears to be limitless, and the triker maximizes every last bit of speed available while he can. On days where the winds are consistent and your direction is essentially downwind, this can go on for quite some time, artificially inflating your mileage for that day. Too bad this phenomenon can't happen every day!

But alas, the world is full of antagonists. For every "this" there's a "that" and that's how the story goes. Headwinds, despite their commonly perceived evil by cyclists, are in reality a good thing (*yeah right ... how so?*). Okay, before I launch into why headwinds are our friends, keep in mind this single heartwarming fact that puts all this in relative perspective: If you had chosen a diamond framed bicycle for your adventure (*an admittedly poor second choice, but still much better than an automobile*), the headwind would be having a field day with



you, slowing you way down and tending to knock you off balance when your line of travel was slightly askew from dead-on. Ever seen a bicyclist riding down the road at an angle to compensate for powerful cross headwinds? Any minute you can imagine him being blow off into the barrow ditch or into the farmer's barbed wire fencing.

Adventuring on a trike changes everything! First of all, there is no such thing as balance. A trike is always upright and stable regardless of where the wind is originating. Yes, it may be stiff, but a triker won't fall over when all hell breaks loose. Secondly, trike pilots are low to the ground in a reclined position, allowing the conspiring forces of the sky to simply whisk right over the top of them. A trike's ultra low aerodynamic profile is a real plus when it comes to slicing through the atmosphere. We don't form huge wind blocks, as hunched over bicyclists do with their torsos.

So why are robust headwinds good for us? Well, that which does not kill you makes you stronger, and the winds are likely not going to put an end to your adventurous lifestyle. This means the added effort needed to keep forward momentum going translates into calf, thigh, and glute muscles that rise to meet the challenge, which in turn speeds up the heart muscle, making it stronger in the process. An athletic heart beats slower during times of rest, much slower than the average stressed-out sedentary cubical worker, meaning that the ever-faithful pump will keep you going many years longer.

Everyone's heart has a maximum certain number of beats before it finally gives out from accumulated fatigue and wear over time. On average, let's assume an average sedentary person's heart beats 108,000 times per day. That's 39,420,000 times per year. A trike pilot's heart may beat only 86,400 times per day by comparison, which is roughly equal to 31,536,000 times each year. The triker's heart has 21,600 fewer heartbeats per day, and 7,884,000 less beats per year. That's almost eight million fewer heartbeats every year. Magnify that to a decade and we get 78,840,000 fewer heartbeats, or take it out to 50 years to see the gulf widen to 394,200,000.

If you had a job pumping up trike tires for a living, your muscles would feel a lot less weary at the end of each eight-hour shift if you had to pump 324,000 fewer strokes. Your tire pumping work could go on for many years longer (*oh, the joy!*). But in the case of our hearts, it is a desirous outcome to maximize our beats. We only get a finite number ... might as well keep the daily total less and add more days!

The bottom line is this in our theoretical example: If the

common physically-inactive human can live 75 years at 75 beats per minute, how long can a physically-active trike pilot live at only 60 beats per minute? Some quick calculations on my Linux Fedora laptop compute the following answer: Mister couch potato's heart beats 2,956,500,000 (*yes, billion*) times during his life, which would translate into about 94 years for a triker, all else being equal. But that fails to take into account that an exceptionally fit trike pilot will be healthier overall due to his penchant for pedaling, so odds are even more useful years could be forthcoming because the heart is much stronger than the sedentary example. Assuming the minimum though, the good news is that trikers can expect to live 19 years longer than normal people. All this goes to prove, at least here in this writer's humble opinion, that potent headwinds and really long super steep mountain ascents on our trikes are the best things we could possibly hope for! Sure, downhills are fun, but the killer uphills with a wild headwind are truly the keys to lasting happiness! Find BIG mountains. Ride them often!

All right, that's enough health and fitness talk for now. Perhaps I should inject the traditional disclaimers perpetuated by a conservative society fearful of lawsuits, such as this advice is not intended to replace that of your medical professional, along with the note that these words have not been evaluated by the food and drug administration. Your results may vary. You could tumble onto the ground at 62 from some rogue genetic anomaly despite logging 50 trike miles three times per week. Life has but one guarantee, and we all know it's simply a matter of "when" that ominous termination occurs. The way I look at it all is this: I do everything that is under my control to maximize my chances of living fit and remaining fully functional, including such things as eating a Spartan organic vegan diet, working out with weights three times per week, walking regularly, hiking, and climbing into the trike's cockpit as often as I can in my pursuit of adventure.

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What does the average motorist ponder as he sees a group of bikers? Not the kind who pedal bicycles on the shoulder, but those perceived miscreants astride a number of almighty Harley-Davidson choppers, rumbling boldly down the middle of their lanes. Well, first off, a surge of fear may course through Joe Average, who has been taught that bikers are always bad news, even though we live in a world where elite professionals such as surgeons and lawyers are known to don the garb and take off cross country on their polished chopped

machines.

The car driver may make sure his doors are locked, windows are up, and he remains in traffic so that other innocent motorists are around to witness any potential problems. It's another of those unfounded fears that holds the masses hostage in their collective minds. While triking across a notably secluded stretch of western Nevada desert during the fall of 2009, a group of these machines appeared on the horizon headed my way.

The road was long and mostly straight, and as my tricycle travel took me from the northern end of Sarcobatus Flat and west into Bonnie Claire Flat near the California border, I noticed a small group of Harleys coming the other direction. There were four, and the sight was something that would probably be a point of concern for the traditionally brainwashed collective of our refined society. If there really were any basis to this fear of bikers, then my immediate future may have been in question. After all, I was all alone on a vehicle that can't exactly outrun a fire-breathing Harley. And the height of my eyes from the ground made the thunderous two-wheeled machines appear gigantic as they approached.

I'd was willing to lay odds that these guys had never seen an "old" man with a gray beard pedaling a tricycle pulling a trailer before. They had beards too, but they also had black leathers, and a few other expected decorations that I did not. All eyes were on me during the final few yards before our passing, and I noticed their engines were slowing so they could figure out what the heck they were seeing. Those guys really got a kick out of me and my bizarre rig, which I cleverly deduced by the ear-to-ear grins on their faces, along with thumbs-up, waves, and nodding of the heads. One fellow even called out "Way to travel!" A happy grin seemed etched on my face too.

My passage was silent. Theirs was not. It's a euphoric few moments when two different species of travelers connect in the wild desert hinterlands. Anyone traveling out that far on anything other than a car is surely not your run-of-the-mill citizen. A mutual respect was the result. I felt confident based on what I saw that had I needed assistance, those fellows would have gladly come to the rescue.

A couple of cars with normal people passed during the next few miles, and I waved and smiled as they went by. One older couple in a sedan stared at me as they sped past in the other direction, but did not return my visual greetings. Perhaps they were in such shock at beholding an unidentifiable pedaling object (UPO), that their brains

didn't reach the point of even realizing I was waving to them. I love being different!

About a half hour later, a second group of motorcycles was headed my way. There were at least a dozen of them, but this new group consisted of what is commonly referred to as "full dressers"... long distance cruising motorcycles with saddlebags, trailers, and full gear for extended cross-country camping. In stereotypical America, those guys are supposed to be safe to normal folks, probably a bunch of doctors, lawyers, cops, and respectable citizens.

They also slowed down a bit to gawk at me, and so I waved and smiled just like I did with the previous group of "questionable" bikers, however this time, there was no obvious reception forthcoming. A couple smiled, and one even waved, but most just looked somberly towards me and rode on by. Of course, since those were "high-class" bikers, they also had expensive two-way radio communications between them, and since their engines and wind speed distorted noise, they had the volumes on their radios turned way up ... far enough that I was privy to their conversations chatting about me. It's gratifying to know that I was earning some "air time" on their radio waves: "Did you see that? What was that guy riding?" They weren't all friendly like the "bad" bikers were, but they did notice.

Road angels are wonderful creatures! They come to the rescue or meet the needs of trikers battered by the rigors of pedaling across the surface of Planet Earth on the human road system. Sometimes it's hard to spot them right off, as they usually aren't white and they never have wings or halos. But they're out there, and often appear when we least expect it, like the one who delivered two cans of ice cold juice to my camp one evening, and then two more cans the following morning. Or the three who made sure a luxurious hot lunch followed by a calorie-laden ice cream made its way into my pitifully thinning bag of bones. Road angels can somehow tell that a trike pilot on an adventure needs something.

These guardians of tricyclists' well being were first mentioned to me by my friend Matt Jensen, the local fellow who has ridden recumbent bikes and trikes many thousands of miles. He reckons he's logged over 100,000 miles to date, and he has had plenty of positive experience with road angels personally. In fact, he himself has filled the role when other cyclists have been in need.

A road angel is simply a person or people who assist a triker on an adventure with some perceived need, be it food, companionship, or

whatever else they can offer. I am so grateful when another human, who is a total stranger to me, would come forth and volunteer their time in a caring way that I always react in the most joyful of ways. First off, triking solo can become somewhat lonely at times, and just interacting with other people is fun. Secondly, if they offer food, which is common, who am I to refuse a few morsels that I would otherwise never see out there in the backcountry?

Road angels are ordinary people who perhaps take pity upon a solo road triker, introduce themselves, and make something available to you. This phenomenon may be limited to lone trikers when they pull into camp or a local market on their way overland, or maybe even husband/wife trike teams who appear to need a little tender loving care on their journey. Having never triked with a group, I am not so sure that most road angels would approach several trikers at once ... possibly too intimidating, or they figure that since the trikers are in a group, they don't need any assistance. A group of trikers will generally be loud and happy sharing the day's stories, and may exude an aura of confidence that silently sends the message that no help is needed.

While on a solo tour once, Matt met a female cyclist on his same path one day. She was apparently near tears on the side of the road, pondering what to do since she had lost the skewer attachment that held her BOB trailer to her bike's rear axle. Matt, being the consummate cyclist who is generally prepared for any eventuality, just happened to have a spare unit because he too pulled a Beast Of Burden trailer. Feeling the positive forces of the universe, and knowing what goes around comes around, Matt happily gave the part to the woman to get her through the rest of her trip. Matt was one of her road angels.

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What would you think if I told you I had to actively pedal downhill to avoid coming to a stop? Crazy, huh? Well, on one day of my first trike expedition, precisely that happened ... even with my aerodynamic profile. As the hours passed, the wind grew, until it overpowered the pull of gravity on my tricycle. I was not coasting, even though it was a noticeable downgrade. If I had stopped pedaling, the wind would have blown me backwards UP the grade.

Well, that wind did die out completely for a bit that evening, but then, as I was setting up my tent for the night, the invisible marauder returned with an overwhelming vengeance. Luckily, it was in gusts, as it took both arms and legs to hold the tent footprint down while clumsily

attempting to position the tent atop it. Only when the wind briefly subsided for a few precious seconds each time did I have the ability to insert poles, or place gear inside for ballast. I was already dead tired, and the normal five minutes it takes to pitch the tent turned into fifteen. I felt defeated at 200 feet below sea level. The wind died again after the tent was up, long enough for me to eat a quick dinner, but then once it got dark, a steady 70 miles per hour slammed my camp until around midnight! What a day ... and a night.

If you are going to take a long journey on a human-powered recumbent tadpole tricycle, be ready for celebrity status. Be ready for endless questions you've answered many times before. Be ready to pose for the cameras of just about everyone who talks to you along the way, and don't be surprised to see someone who remains distant taking your picture too. Trikes are bizarre by nearly anyone's standard, and when folks see weird things, the natural human reaction is to whip out the digital camera and grab the image to show everyone else back home.

Some trikers I know simplify this process by handing out a business card that has an internet address the curious onlookers can visit to read about the trike adventure later. A few trikers grow tired of this ritual that occurs everywhere they go, and try to avoid it, but most seem to enjoy the attention. So it is with me. I love talking to people about things for which I have a passion, and tricycles fall into that category. For me, this sharing of my exploits and the amazing machine I ride is just a fun thing to do. Decide ahead of time how you wish to handle this on your own trike adventure, for it is guaranteed you will be approached many times over the days and weeks.

One day I had to install a new inner tube inside one of my trailer tires that had finally seen the last of its useful life, having been punctured a week and a half earlier by hundreds of goathead thorns. Just after I had replaced the tire and wheel on the trailer, a very cordial elderly Asian couple walked up with big grins on their faces. They spoke hardly any English, but it was clear that they were curious about my vehicle. We talked as much as we were able considering the language hurdle, and then they asked to take photographs in their broken English. So, I was a momentary celebrity as the husband took digital pictures of me sitting on the trike with his wife standing next to me. Smiles and slight bowing of heads signaled the end of our pleasant visit, and they watched me ride off.

A few days later, another celebrity instance appeared shortly after daybreak. Pedaling across the pavement to some picnic tables, I

found a nice wooden table in the sun, which felt perfect this early. Later in the day however, I would be seeking shade. Out came my dining supplies from my small trailer, which I spread out with total abandon on the table. Having been eating atop my trike trailer for so long, it was pure luxury to have such a big expanse on which to eat ... and to be able to sit down while doing so, no less.

While I ate, a couple of early risers walked past and questioned me about the trike and my journey. I enjoy sharing my epic adventure with all who ask, so I commenced to talk. It was clear they were impressed with the whole idea of what I was doing. They may have thought I was crazy, but hey, they were talking to me all about my trike trek, so I had an audience, which is more than I can say for people who travel by conventional means. I stand out as unique in a sea of mediocrity. Yep, I guess I really am a wilderness rogue.

Later that day, sitting back on my trike seat again, under the shade of a tree near the front porch of the lodge at the highway's edge, I contemplated potential daily activities. A very nice elderly lady walked up and asked if she might take my photograph on the trike. Now used to such requests, I smiled and said sure. Pictures taken, she showed genuine interest in the tale of my journey, and continued asking many questions. There could be no better use of my time than to be an ambassador for trikeedom, enlightening the motorized humans of this planet about the joys of three human-powered wheels. I never tire of such interactions, which will hopefully shed light on alternative methods of travel for a society that is entrenched in the status quo.

"What's the nature of your infirmity?" were the words I heard off to my right as I was again seated on the trike, finishing up a few journal entries after lunch the next day. I looked up (*you're always looking UP from a trike*) to see another older woman sincerely interested that a man with some sort of handicap was still able to get himself around on his own. She moved around to the front of my trike so she was facing me.

Matt Jensen also had told me that folks would believe me to be physically handicapped while on my trike. He said that since it resembles some odd sort of wheelchair that this thought comes to mind for many people, so much so that trikers in general are aware of this dynamic response. As this lady was standing over me, guru Matt's teachings came to light yet again. Time to have some fun!

I closed my journal and stood up from my low recumbent seat. Next, I moved away from my trike and jumped as high into the air as I

could. The lady watched all this with awe. Then, I said to her that physically I am fine, and if there is any handicap, it's only in my head! To this, we both had a good laugh, and I launched into describing what this bizarre looking contraption was, why I was on it, and where I was going. She also wanted to know how I ride it on the freeways. Life on a trike is always exciting, even when things are slow.

On another occasion, a young Japanese couple came up to me, curious about my wheels and mission. They spoke fluent English, perhaps because they lived in the United States. After asking the usual questions and hearing the usual answers, the fellow asks if I will stand next to his girlfriend (*or wife – I don't recall now*) in front of the tricycle for a photograph, to which I happily consented. Then, he inquired whether I would let his lady sit in the seat for another picture ... not a problem! I demonstrated how to gracefully sit backwards into a trike, and then helped her get into position. Somehow, her tight mini shorts and wide high heel shoes looked oddly out of place on the three wheeled beast. She couldn't even reach the pedals. It wasn't until later that I realized she had left her sunglasses on my machine, but alas, it was too late to locate them because they had driven off and were far away by then.

Thousands of foreign visitors flock to Death Valley every year from all over the world. Germany is a popular country when walking around here, as you can hear quite a few German conversations. As you may suspect by now, Japan and other Asian countries also supply their share of visitors. On my final day of the tricycle expedition to this renowned national park, I took on its most notorious mountain pass. Midway up the epic cycling challenge, I stopped in a rare spot of shade at a rest stop ... to rest, rehydrate, and pump some much-needed calories into my body on the hot day. Even then, visitors saw me and were curious.

A bus full of people milled around for a while, with some asking questions, and then two guys who had just pulled over in their white Toyota sedan were briefed about me by someone else, so they came up to talk. One fellow from Japan was here with his Japanese/American buddy, and wanted his photo taken next to me (*even though I'm sweating like a pig*). We had to go through a translation mode with his friend, as the guy who wanted the photo spoke no English. We were all smiles and had a good time. They wanted the address to the Badwater trike blog so they could later read all about the trip.



Yep, you're a celebrity for sure whenever pedaling your triangle across the miles. Be a good sport and indulge the curious masses, even if it means a slight delay in your itinerary. The way I see it is that we are all ambassadors for the world of recumbent tadpole trikes, and it is incumbent upon us to step up to the plate to pitch our machines and personal missions. Remember this: For every positive contact you make, that's one more person who will from then on give the respect due us while traveling out on the open road, one more person who will say, "There's another one of those cool tricycles! I'll give them plenty of room."

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Not all is as it seems. Occasionally, trike pilots can be fooled. They make mistakes in judgment. Estimating each day's mileage ahead of time can be tricky business, which is one reason that any triker who prefers motels each night is well advised not to book ahead of time. Even if familiar with the route, unforeseen circumstances can crop up at the last minute that will cause a premature end of travel for a given day (*flat tire, mechanical malfunction, etc*). One thing I have learned repeatedly in life is that things usually take longer than originally expected, and building in some "slop" time is a good idea. Mountain passes offer us a good example.

I spoke earlier of my final day on the tricycle expedition, and a ride up Towne Pass. Spending many days and hundreds of miles on a recumbent tricycle pretty much results in one's ability to fairly accurately assess most terrain on the route, both by actually looking at it in person, and by mental calculations of elevation profiles on a map. A trike pilot takes into account the degree of grade on mountain passes, and allows a certain time frame for making the ascent, knowing that the descent on the other side will make up for lost time as we learned earlier. With experience, these assessments come close to hitting the mark on what actually develops on the road, but not always. My assessment of the Cascade Range in Oregon, for example, was so far off that it put my life in jeopardy. New lessons are learned every day while adventuring on a trike.

Well, anyway, I had more than one option for leaving the national park, so each day prior to departure I mulled over the choices before me. One option was a ride over Towne Pass and down into the Panamint Valley on the other side. Towne Pass has an elevation gain of 4,956 feet in the 17 miles from Stovepipe Wells, which is at sea level. It

is a pass that is notorious for overheating cars. That works out to an average vertical gain of 292 feet per mile, which is quite severe from a triker's standpoint. Extreme grades like that are why I put the 24-tooth chainring on the front so that I could pull my heavily loaded trailer no matter what.

My inclination was the Towne Pass exit for three reasons. First, I wished to have that feather in my cap, which is purely male ego of course, but nonetheless, I covet the experience and mental rewards. Second, the twelve miles down the south face of the pass would be the ultimate thrill ride on a tricycle, surpassing any downhill pass thus far. The south face is even steeper than the north face I would be ascending, and it has many curves. To ride it on a trike would be the definitive experience for a triker, as speeds of more than 50 miles per hour are entirely possible. Third, I have spent many years of my life exploring the Panamint Valley, and am well versed in its terrain and history, and to ride my Q into it from Death Valley would be pleasing to my spirit.

Thus, I opted for this choice, but got a late start that day because my speaking engagement and book signing event took longer than anticipated. I only had 17 miles to the summit, which I figured was doable, even though I didn't depart until 10:15 that morning. I was truly looking forward to speeding down the south side of the pass by late afternoon, when I could watch the evening shadows overtake the Panamint Valley. It was to be my crowning experience! But out in those parts, distances are terribly deceptive, to the point that sometimes a person's perception has gotten them killed when they think they can make it to a certain place. This is especially true on a slow moving vehicle powered by human legs. This is also one reason visitors are advised to remain with their car if it breaks down. You don't want your mind or body to break down too!

Although my ride up to Artist's Palette several days earlier was more of a vertical gain when figured on a "per mile" basis than Towne Pass, that ride's brutal section was only three miles long instead of seventeen. The Artist's Drive road begins at 163 feet below sea level, and rises to 960 feet above. That is in the first three miles! This works out to a 1,123 vertical feet elevation gain in the three miles, or about 374 feet per mile! By comparison, the Cascade Range ascent I traveled early in this expedition was a 4,000 vertical feet elevation gain in about 31 miles, or roughly 129 feet per mile. So Towne Pass was somewhere in between at 292 vertical feet per mile. Any way you look at it, these radical ascents really test one's mettle, improve one's heart, and are ripe

for time miscalculation.

I figured that even if I averaged only 4 miles per hour on Towne Pass, that would put the summit four hours and fifteen minutes away, not including rest breaks of course. At that speed, I'd make the top at 2:30 in the afternoon, or shortly after 3:00 at the latest, giving me plenty of time to descend the other side in daylight. If I averaged 3 miles per hour, it would require about six hours, putting me on top between 4:15 and 4:30 PM, still very workable. This was in my ability I thought.

Returning to the road angel subject momentarily, the night before the Towne Pass summit attempt, dinner was courtesy of my most ardent road angel. Mom insisted on treating me and Jack Freer to a feast at the cozy resort restaurant, and as always, I never argue with anyone who wants to feed me, especially when the next day would bring such a massive physical outlay. She wanted to include Jack because of his continued help on this journey of her son.

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Extremes were the hallmark of my first adventure. Over the course of that journey, I encountered rain, wet forests, ice, snow, sub-freezing temperatures, frozen water and food, hypothermia, sun, dust, triple-digit temperatures, hot water, high winds, dirt storms, overheating, and vast deserts. My hands had been so cold breaking down the tent that I had to do it in short bursts to allow my hands to re-warm enough to have another go at it, while at other times, the campsite was so comfortable that I didn't want to even break camp. I saw geese flying along side me on the Umpqua River, horses running along side in northern California as the stallion was excited about my passing, coyotes furtively looking for food, rattlesnakes and tarantulas crossing the road, and deer curious about what I was. And dogs, the bane of regular bicyclists, refused to get close to me, as my image was not in their understanding – simply heading in their direction sent them packing.

I learned that venturing out where the masses fear to tread brings special rewards, and puts one in touch with other adventurous people. I learned that when two extreme explorers meet in the wilds, there is an immediate and powerful kinship, based on an unspoken understanding of what each is experiencing alone on the journey. I learned that it takes just as much mental and emotional strength to carry out these extended overland trips as it does physical ability. I learned that incredible memories are formed each new day, and any normal

folks who I happen to encounter are eager to hear all about what it's like.

I learned that there is a lot to be learned while riding a tricycle to Death Valley ... that a whole new world can present itself between sea level at the Pacific Ocean and 282 feet below sea level at Badwater. Whether atop a dark and frozen snow-bound mountain pass or cradled in a hot sun-baked salt playa, there are secrets to be learned. It was one hell of a ride!

And so, I now conclude this most basic discussion of adventuring on a trike. There is always more to talk about for sure, but there are only so many pages here to do so, thus much must be left out. No amount of reading about a trike adventure can truly prepare for one's first trek, only provide a few sketches of what is waiting out there ... beyond the imagined safety of home and the normalcy of society. Life is not a dress rehearsal. There are no second chances to relive a particular moment. Our time here is unnervingly short, and it is clear to me by now that you are passionately interested in recumbent tadpole trike adventures, else you wouldn't be reading these closing words of a long chapter.

Therefore, I invite you to give it a try, being aware that the human mind often plays a game of duality, where two seemingly conflicting viewpoints can curiously exist within your head, separated only by time and circumstance. In the perplexing words of Thornton Wilder:

“When you're safe at home you wish you were having an adventure; when you're having an adventure you wish you were safe at home.”

Returning to the opening thoughts of this essay, how secure are we really in our day to day lives? Are we truly less so if out on our trikes, feeling more alive than ever? Let's close with this thought from Helen Keller:

“Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.”

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## To Trailer or Not to Trailer

... that is the question

*by Steve Greene*

As with just about any facet of tricycling, opinions will vary about how to do this or that, or what is necessary to achieve a certain end. People often become emotionally attached to their own particular setup and way of doing things, so it is not uncommon to experience some very opinionated viewpoints along the way. Here in these pages,, it is hoped that balanced information will be presented most of the time, although biases will probably seep through here and there. When statements are made that seem dogmatic, I strive to preface them with a proviso that whatever is being said is based on what has worked well for me, realizing full well that other options every bit as acceptable, or perhaps even better, surely must exist. Few of us personally try every conceivable means of achieving a given goal, so we just speak to what we know (or think we know).

The topic being discussed in this chapter will generate various ideas. To pull a trailer behind a tricycle on a cross country trip or not to pull a trailer is loaded with pros and cons. Bringing a trailer along for the ride clearly has notable advantages, yet it also most assuredly has major drawbacks. At any given point in time, there are always folks who are debating whether to invest \$350 in a quality trailer for their first (or next) trike tour, so I would like to offer my two-cents worth for your consideration. Hopefully, this advice will be worth more than you paid for it! Read on and find out ...

My acquisition of a trike was hastened in 2009 because I had been invited to speak 900 miles distant from my home, and I was intent on not using a toxic petroleum based vehicle to get there and back. This journey, which was originally scheduled to be over 2,000 miles in length, was to take me through many remote miles of desert, through secluded terrain where it could be two days (or maybe even three depending on circumstances) based on tricycle speeds before I would arrive at the next store for resupplying my provisions. Adequate water and food are absolutely essential for someone pedaling for days on end, where it is normal to burn at least 5,000 calories per day, and dehydration is always a possibility.

After mapping my route and realizing all this, I looked at my trike and pondered how I could even come close to loading it up with everything I envisioned was necessary to keep me alive. Already on the trike was a pair of Arkel GT-54 panniers, very roomy Canadian cargo solutions that attached to both sides of my rear rack, yet they seemed woefully small for my overland trek because just my clothes and other assorted gear alone would more than fill them, leaving no room for food and water. These panniers had 54 liters of storage volume per pair, or about 3300 cubic inches (a good sized backpack like my Kelty Moraine, by comparison, has around 3600 cubic inches of cargo volume). So, I sent another \$99 to Hostel Shoppe in Stevens Point, Wisconsin and acquired an Otivia hard shell cargo cache trunk that would mount atop the rear rack, above the Arkel panniers. It had roughly 11 liters volume, or about 672 cubic inches. Then, I began filling these storage areas as a test, and realized that even more room was needed.

Okay, guess I had to throw additional money at the problem in hopes of a workable solution. Next, I purchased a pair of Radical Design Lowracer side panniers that mounted directly on my recumbent seat with simple straps. They added another 25 liters of storage volume (about 1,528 cubic inches) to my already available 65 liters, bringing it all up to about 90 liters of space, which translated into roughly 5600 cubic inches. So I loaded it all up again, stuffing what I thought I had to have into every available space I could find. All this practice was bringing me up to speed on trike trek packing. I was confident that soon I would be an expert, although the trip ultimately proved me wrong in several ways, which I will discuss later.

Water was not so much the problem that food was turning out to be. On the front portion of my trike's mainframe, where the boom extends forward, two 24 ounce water bottles were mounted, and behind

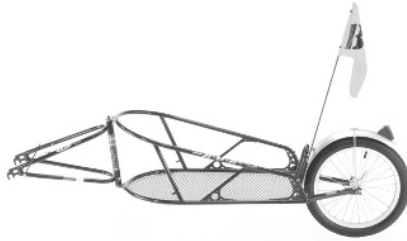
the left side of my seat, was a 100 ounce Camelbak water bladder with a sipping tube. That provided about 124 ounces of water, just shy of one gallon, or roughly four liters. Crossing through expansive deserts, especially on hot days, could easily demand at least one gallon of water in a single day for a person pedaling up long hills and mountain grades, thus having the potential to leave me dry for the second day. Since the trip was in the fall, perhaps the deserts would be cool enough to let me pass with only 100 ounces of water (50 ounces per day), but my Death Valley destination was still seeing triple digit afternoons, so I wondered.

My dad always taught me to go prepared or stay at home, so this mantra has long since been an integral aspect of my thinking. I needed more water for that “what if” scenario. Why cut it that close? What was my life worth to me? I could gamble and figure if worse came to worst, a passing motorist might be able to save my sorry carcass, but I wanted to be independent and not have to beg for assistance out on the lonely highways. Gee, I didn’t even have enough room with my cargo setup to bring sufficient water, let alone food. Where was all that food going to go? Even if I figured my normal 2,000 calorie per day diet, a two day stretch with no market looked grim, but touring cyclists reported daily caloric consumption rates of five to seven thousand! That meant much more food was going to be needed, which added up to much more room.

Add to all this my need for warm winter clothing, since I was planning on crossing high alpine mountain passes in late November on the return trip, where snow was a very real possibility at the high altitudes, and it finally became apparent to me that I probably needed to get myself a trailer. Yep, that’s the ticket! I would buy a trailer, running up my bill another three Benjamin Franklins at least. But hey, then I would be ready for anything! So, I began researching trailers.

My local trike guru, Matt Jensen, told me I needed a Beast Of Burden trailer, commonly referred to as a BOB. This is a narrow aluminum trailer that mounts to the trike’s rear dropout area. It is small and compact, and even mountain bikers pull them on single track dirt trails. The BOB has only one wheel, a 16 inch at the very rear of the unit, which requires a dual sided dropout mount for lateral stability. Matt demonstrated to me how the single large waterproof bag folded over and strapped in between the rails. It had a storage volume of approximately 91 liters, which translates to around 5600 cubic inches. Essentially, a BOB is a stow-&-go affair, where all your trailer goods stuff into a single flexible bag. He said it would be all I needed, based

on his own experience with his BOB. BOBs were the trailer of choice for all serious cyclists I was told. With a Beast Of Burden trailer, my cargo volume capacity would double over what my trike already had. Sounded like a good plan.



Beast Of Burden (BOB) trike trailer

I also considered three other trailers, each of which had two wheels that made them laterally stable with only a single dropout attachment. One was the Optima Quik-Pak, an aluminum framed trailer that had a cavernous waterproof stuff bag even larger than the BOB, with a storage volume of about 163 liters, or 10,000 cubic inches. The two wheels were 20 inches, the same size as my trike's three wheels, and the maximum cargo load was 75 pounds. This solution used the same single bag design idea as the BOB sack, where cargo was packed with little ability for extensive organization. It is one of those things where when you reach in to get something you have to rummage around a little, and if you pull out something, the other stuff kind of falls into where it was. They call it a "Quik-Pak" because essentially you just toss everything in quickly. Being a neat-nick type of guy, I was curious if I'd like it, but that could not be my sole deciding point. Unlike the BOB, few people have even heard of the Optima, and I had never seen one on the road to my knowledge.

My next two options were made by Burley, a company based about 65 miles from my home. One was the Burley Nomad, a very compact little rig like the BOB, but it had organization panels inside to keep things somewhat ordered. It was also waterproof. Its two wheels made it a little wider than the BOB, but I liked its ultra low profile. Like all four of the trailers I studied, it mounted at the trike's rear dropout. The Nomad's two wheels were 16 inch, like the BOB's single 16 inch wheel. The weight load capacity of this trailer was 100 pounds, plenty



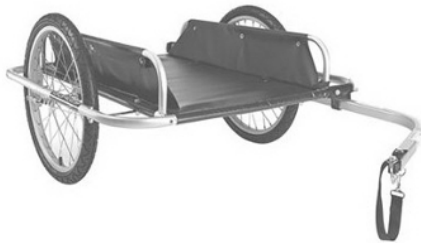
for all my extra water and food. The storage volume was similar to the BOB, both of which were notably less than the Optima. But as I looked at the Nomad photographs online, I wondered if I might need even more room.



Optima Quik-Pac trike trailer



Burley Nomad trike trailer



Burley Flatbed trike trailer

The final option I considered was the Burley flatbed trailer, light as a feather with two 20 inch wheels. Essentially, this was a minimal aluminum frame with a large piece of vinyl stretched between the four sides, which allowed for placing any number of container options on top, with two side rails to keep it all in place. This trailer was

definitely the widest of the four, but seemed to me to have huge luggage volume potential, depending on what type of trunk I placed on it. It also had a 100 pound maximum cargo weight rating. After having spoken with a pair of bicyclists heading south on the coast (Highway 101) a week earlier with just such a trailer and a Rubbermaid ActionPacker cargo trunk strapped atop it, I realized that I could bring everything I needed with little concern about space restrictions, and since the Rubbermaid trunk was a hard shell fixed plastic box, I might even be able to organize it fairly well. The volume of the trunk was 35 gallons, or roughly 9,000 cubic inches (just over 140 liters).

One trailer I did not consider at the time was the Radical Design Cyclone trailer, only because I was not aware of its existence. I later realized this company, the same one that makes my Radical Design Lowracer side-seat panniers, makes a very nifty little trailer that may have been perfect for my needs. Based in Holland, their trailer also has two rear wheels, and it has a cargo volume of 100 liters. It's small, but that would be a plus in tight places. For those of you contemplating a trailer, this is definitely worth a look!



Radical Design's compact Cyclone trailer from Holland

All things considered however, I decided to get a BOB after Matt's demonstration one afternoon. I did like the compactness of the trailer, which would serve me well when seeking night stealth camps off the main paved highway. Having been in touch with the ICE folks in England about the trek, I emailed them about the trailer I was planning on buying to get their take on it. A couple days later, I received a reply from the people who designed and built my trike, and they had different ideas. They informed me that since I had the ICE Qnt with rear suspension, a BOB would not be recommended, as the inherent lack of lateral stability of a single-wheeled BOB places undue stress on the rear

swinging arm components of my trike. On a fixed frame rigid trike with no suspension, this is not a concern, but on mine it is. A trailer like that would prematurely wear out the suspension bearings on the Q, and would also tend to destabilize the handling characteristics of the trike. I wanted no chance of handling issues on steep fast descents, so I had to change course. I ordered an Optima Quik-Pak from Hostel Shoppe, but after a couple of weeks of back-order waiting, changed to the solution I ended up using.

As you have seen by the photographs in this book, I ultimately went with the Burley flatbed with the Rubbermaid ActionPacker trunk. After shelling out the cash for both items, I had the widest trike trailer of the four I seriously considered, with a large plastic trunk on top. The width factor was further exaggerated by the fact that this trailer was offset to left another few inches, a characteristic that was apparently necessary to allow tight radius right hand turns, and this aspect had the consequence of widening my on-road profile to roughly 36 inches instead of the trike's 30 inches (which included my Arkel panniers loaded, as the trike itself has a front wheel track of only 27.5 inches). Extra width is a bad thing on narrow shoulderless roadways. The BOB would have been nice in this regard.



Burley Flatbed with large Rubbermaid ActionPacker trunk atop

This offset design also made it so that I would have to consider five tread tracks when navigating road debris during the trip. If some nasty stuff like nails, or other tire-eating items were in my path on the road's shoulder, I would have to mentally think about avoidance tracks for five rubber tires if traffic kept me from pulling out into the automobile lane. Had the trailer run directly behind the trike, the two

tires would essentially have tracked behind the trike's front two tires, thereby allowing me to only have to visualize three tracks instead of five, as the rear drive wheel is a track all its own. With a BOB, I would have only considered three tracks, which would clearly have been the easiest during times of heavy traffic and little room.

Speaking of tires, the fact that it had 20 inch tires was a favorable consideration because it meant that I only needed to carry one size of spare inner tube during the trip. This is because the three tires on the trike are also 20 inches. I also carried one spare tire. With this setup, if I had any flat or damage issue with any of my five tires, a single solution would work. If a trailer has different size wheels than the trike, then it requires carrying different size tubes ... meaning more tubes. And since I had the extra heavy duty puncture resistant Q-Tubes, which take up about twice the storage volume folded than regular lightweight puncture-prone tubes, this was a definite advantage in my situation. Quick note: from 2009 on, Burley flatbed trailers have 16 inch wheels.

My new trailer and trunk unladen weighed in at just over 36 pounds together. This meant that I would be expending extra energy every mile to keep those 36 pounds moving, and as any distance cyclist will tell you, weight is always a prime consideration for long trips. Extra weight slows you down and makes you work harder, things that result in the consumption of extra calories and water each day, which, of course, means that you need to bring along extra food and water just to pull the very load that is supposedly supplying you with needed extra supplies.

This begs the question as to whether going lighter and therefore faster (without a trailer) would mean getting to the next market without the need for all the extra food and water you included to get you there in the first place (if you get what I'm trying to say). Is all the extra stuff actually a wash-out, in other words? Maybe by not bringing along a surplus of water and food I could travel easily enough to make it across long stretches faster with just what the trike would hold without a trailer. It's all just academic theory until one actually gets out and gives it a try.

Well, the trailer and trunk added 36 pounds ... weight that was necessary to carry even more weight in the form of supplies. Inside the trailer trunk, I put my 6 pound REI Arete tent, my down mummy sleeping bag, 5 liters of contingency water, a two weeks supply of food, a thin and lightweight portable toilet seat with folding aluminum legs, toilet paper, my Aussie hat, and any other miscellaneous items that

didn't conveniently fit inside the storage solutions already on the trike itself. The extra water weighed roughly 10 pounds. The food bag weighed about 50 pounds, stuffed with items that required no cooking and were readily edible within seconds (such as energy bars, granola, dried fruit, and ready-to-eat one-pound containers of rice and veggies).

With all this, I could theoretically get all the way to Death Valley without ever once stopping to resupply my food. All I would need to do is find places to refill my water whenever it ran low. If I averaged 50 miles per day, readily attainable from all that I had learned from other touring cyclists, my midpoint destination 900 miles distant, where I was to give my talk, would be only 18 days out from my departure date. I had some lessons coming!

The Burley trailer rolled effortlessly, as if no friction at all were present in the wheel bearings or with the rubber on the road. On flat ground, I would quickly forget it was even there! Coming off mountain passes on long fast downhills with wide sweeping turns, the entire rig handled as if the trailer did not exist. All that extra weight may have had the effect of propelling me downwards more quickly than without ... guess I'd have to ask a person with expertise in the laws of physics. On the uphill however, it was a different story.

Since I realized ahead of time that all the added poundage would make long steep pass ascents more physically demanding, putting perhaps too much pressure on the knees, I changed out the front crankset to get a 24 tooth small chainring. I tried a 24 on my stock Campagnolo, but the difference between the mid ring of 42 and the small of 24 was 18 teeth, way too large by most cyclist's standards (it refused to downshift on uphill). I tell that story elsewhere on this website, so I shant repeat it here, but the bottom line is that the 24 tooth chainring allowed me to pull myself up the steepest of grades with little problem, even with my large load. I also had the notable issue that the new crankset had only 152 mm crank arms, which translated into less torque on the power stroke; I had to pedal faster with 152s than if I had 170s (I now have 170s on the trike again). Of course, when you're on a 24, with a 34 on the rear cassette, your pace is nearly that of a snail, a slim 3 miles per hour much of the time on the steepest grades. Needless to say, at that speed, a 50 mile day can occasionally prove elusive over the course of 8 hours!

As I have come to learn since the trip, a 26 tooth small front chainring would have been plenty low with less of a weight load, like if I had not towed the trailer. With a 26, my speeds up the passes and long

hills would have been faster, I would have cut my transit time between towns considerably in places, and my body would have had less workload placed upon it, thereby cutting back on caloric and water needs. By way of estimation, my gross vehicular weight, which for me includes my own body weight since I have to power the whole thing (I'm the engine, after all), was somewhere between 350 to 370 pounds. This is the weight that I moved down the road with my leg muscles for eight hours each day. I stopped in at two truck scales on the trip, and both showed the number 350. Of course, these scales round that number because they are made to weigh enormously heavy 18 wheelers weighing many thousands of pounds, but the scales did pretty much confirm my own estimation of what I had onboard when I pulled out from home the first of October. Slowly, day by day, that number lessened as I ate from the food supply.

If I had been more experienced prior to the trip (this was my first journey like this, and I didn't take Matt's advice on going light), and made do with just the trike and no trailer, my total load, including me, would have probably been between 70 to 90 pounds less! Just the trailer setup alone was 36 pounds, after all. Had I been pedaling a reasonable weight, I probably could have made do with much less food. Actually, part of the food issue was that I wanted to save money, and since I had purchased much of my stock at a Grocery Outlet bargain market, saving me a considerable amount of money, I figured I could avoid paying the outrageous prices typically found in little Timbuktu markets out in the middle of nowhere, and thus was born the initial urge to carry enough with me to last the first 900 miles ... live and learn (the words "what an idiot" do come to mind).

The purpose of this story is to look at the question of whether or not to pull a trailer, so let's get into some pros and cons. You may have been picking up some cons as you have read between the lines so far, yet there are good things to be said for having Mr. T tagging along behind the trike. Let's look at those now.

From a safety standpoint, I kept wondering on roads with exceptionally narrow shoulders of less than 36 inches if the fact that the trailer being offset to the car side of my trike would help me appear even wider than motorists typically believe trikes to be, thereby forcing them to give me more room. I also suspect that this extra width could have been cause for anger in young impatient males, or even in old impatient gray-haired ladies for that matter, as they may have seen me as an impediment to their ultra fast "get there quick" mindset. My

opinion is that these were probably the case with the Burley flatbed, but with narrow trailers like the BOB that pretty much run in line with the rear tire, any advantage or disadvantage of offset does not exist, so this speculation is specific just to the trailer I pulled.

At every camp, the trailer came in mighty handy as a table that was already available upon arrival. Of course, the lid had to be closed, so when I used it to hold my food at primitive camps, I had to first set the supplies on my seat, close the lid of the trailer trunk, and then place the food items on it. This is also specific to my unique setup with the Rubbermaid trunk, as none of the other three trailers I considered would have offered a large flat surface upon which I could place a bowl of morning cereal.

The trailer also kept anything inside totally dry in the rains I encountered on the trip. I kept my food in this trailer at night, so if a hungry bear did happen by, he would tear into it instead of my tent, where I placed my panniers at night to avoid squirrels chewing through the expensive Cordura fabric. This happened to Jeremy and Stephanie Bradshaw on their Oregon coast trip (see story on Trike Asylum), so I wasn't going to let it happen to me. Had I not pulled a trailer, the food would have been in the tent with me. Now mind you, I've been hiking, backpacking, and hanging out in bear-laden mountains for most of my life, and never had an instance of bears prowling my camp, but I suppose there is always a first time (especially now that I've said it, and Murphy's Law is sure to come into affect the next time I trike camp). Every time I have ever seen a bear, it always bolts the opposite direction.

Knowing that I had enough provisions to last at least two weeks was a reassuring thought. But for the trailer, I could not have soothed my psyche to this extent. I was confident on this trek that I would never go hungry or want for water, especially since I had a Katadyn water purifier too. This was erroneously predicated on a 2,000 calorie per day diet, a dynamic that is radically different out on the road for eight hours per day, where I was burning around 5,000 calories each day based on the weight loss I experienced by the 12th day when I finally weighed myself. If I had attempted to maintain my starting weight, I would have had to at least double my daily consumption of food, and my supply would have run out within the first seven days or so.

The trike by itself is about six feet long. With the trailer, the entire train is about ten feet long. I had affixed tall flexible fiberglass flagpoles on both the trike and trailer, on the traffic side. Both poles had

orange and yellow flags to bring my attention to inattentive motorists. Some color blind people see the day-glow orange as a muddy brown, but pick up quite well on the bright yellows. The trailer allowed me to have the first flagpole drivers saw about 5 feet farther back from my precious head and brain, something I saw as a positive situation. With the lateral roadside offset of the Burley flatbed, this flagpole was even farther out towards traffic flow. Even though the trike and trailer are low, ten feet of length and three feet of width is large enough to attract notice by inattentive drivers, especially with it all colorfully flagged.

Trailers are definitely useful for bringing along many extra provisions on extended remote trips through desolate countryside, of this there is little doubt. The particular trailer/trunk combination I had presented additional uses, most notably as a large flat area on which to conveniently set things while camped primitively or stopped along side the roadway. Most of the time I never was even aware that it was tagging along behind me. In many ways, I was very happy with the trailer towing experience, and truly enjoyed always having access to a large food supply whenever I needed and wherever I was.

All this considered, would I tow a trailer again? The answer is now easy. The answer is now no. In fact, I sold my trailer not long after returning home after the journey. The lady triker from out of state who bought it was ecstatic about getting a nearly new trailer for only two-thirds the new price. Being the honest guy that I am, I lined out the pros and cons for her, but her application was going to be different. She only wanted it for around town errands and shopping on her trike, which is a whole other ballgame. So, she bought it, and I was glad to be rid of it, kind of like boat ownership, where they say the two happiest days of a boat owner's life is the day he buys it and the day he sells it. The only significant saving grace of a trailer is that a considerable amount of gear can be carried along, but is this worth what is lost in doing so?

### **Onward now – to the drawbacks ...**

Anyone who has pulled a trailer with an automobile already knows a few significant downsides to pulling one. Like the inability to back up with anything resembling ease. On a trike, this is even worse, and backing up is next to impossible. Now before anyone says that trikes don't have a reverse gear, let me say that trikes are easy to back without a trailer. All it takes is foot usage in more demanding situations, or, if locked into the pedals with bindings and you don't have far to go



on flat pavement, the hands do quite nicely.

But the real backwards issue comes in stealth camping off the highway on old narrow dirt roads. For those who stay in typical campgrounds or motels, this is absolutely a non-issue, but for backcountry guys like myself, this was one of my foremost gripes.

A typical camp went like this:

About an hour before sunset, I would begin looking for a suitable dirt road heading off the main highway, so I could set a hidden camp and not be noticed by anyone. I like privacy. On occasion, the road would be sandy, deep enough that my rear derailleur would drag through the dirt while pedaling back into the woods or to a secluded hill. Obviously, this was not a good thing, as it quickly deposited a lot of dirt and small rocks all over my drivetrain as the chain carried the grit around my rear cassette, through the chain tubes, and around the front crankset and chainring ... over and over with each revolution of the chain. The thought of millions of grains of fine grit being pulverized between the chain links and the sprocket teeth was not too welcomed. And of course, all that fine dust became embedded in the chain joints where the links met and articulated. The first time I saw this, I was really bummed, but way too tired to even consider attempting to clean the overwhelming mess. Besides, I had to retrace my steps the next morning to get back out onto the road, so why bother?

This filthy consequence occurred because of the trailer, pure and simple. Had no trailer been attached, I could have simply done as trikers do in such situations, just stand up, lift the rear wheel off the ground, and walk the trike through the dirt backwards, with the front two wheels trailing. It's very simple, stable, and easy to do by grabbing the rear pannier rack, and it keeps the chain and sprockets clean. I would have used this same technique the next morning to get back onto the pavement, which was usually elevated several feet above the level where I camped to allow for highway water runoff in heavy rains. As it was with a trailer, to get back up to the road, which was simply not possible to pedal to due to the steepness and lack of traction, I had to grab the front derailleur post and walk backwards all hunched over while pulling the trike and trailer!

Picture that! It was awkward, unstable, and just plain unpleasant. Sure, I could have dismounted the trailer, but seeing as how the attachment area was tucked snugly under my left Arkel pannier, it

would have involved far more time to dismount, move the trike and trailer separately, and then remount than it did to do it my improvised bizarre way. It was a highly unstable maneuver because the trike pivoted on the single rear wheel, so the front tires had to be kept within inches of the ground to prevent the trike from tipping over (which actually happened to me once). Without a trailer, pitching camp in such situations would not have been problematic at all.

And here is another point of consideration: These little neglected dirt roads were often very narrow two-track, which meant that after riding in, I had to get turned around to get out the next morning. I would do the turning before setting camp that night, as it was another unpleasant chore, which consisted of tediously moving the trike, then the trailer, then the trike, then the trailer many times by little increments, until it was finally facing 180 degrees. This also pulled the rear derailleur through the dirt, making it even a bigger filthy mess. It was a dusty affair that did not contribute to my positive mental attitude. Fortunately, I was out in the wilds, so I soon became absorbed in the beautiful country and forgot about my trailer woes.

One of the big advantages of a trike is the ability to get into, through, and out of tight places. Trikes are only six feet long and as narrow as 29 inches, so this is a big plus. Tight turns are possible even if they are tighter than the trike's turning radius by either backing up once or twice in the process, or standing up and physically moving the rear of the trike as necessary. Again, with a trailer, this is not a possibility. Backing up is out of the question, and moving all 10 feet of it by hand is tedious and possibly dangerous depending on if you're in a hazardous traffic situation at the time. The overall vehicular length with a trailer is certainly not conducive to maneuverability in the slightest. A trailer makes a highly maneuverable trike an albatross in more restricted size situations.

Clearly, the main reason I have decided against the trailer is the nearly complete lack of being able to maneuver easily at any time. I do not like being restricted in where I can travel, or in my ease of getting there. Once, in a parking lot where there were no cars when I pulled in, I came out of the store to find a car had pulled in on either side of my trike and trailer, and wouldn't you know it! Each one was only about 18 inches away from my rig. So there I was, with this slim corridor behind my trailer to get out of the situation. I sat in the seat, pushed backward with my feet, and attempted to steer my rig out like one would do if backing a car and trailer in a tight situation. It would have been easier to

back the car! I ended up getting off the trike, steering a little bit while standing until the trailer was about to hit one of the cars on my sides, then picking up the trailer and moving it enough to allow me to push backwards some more. This embarrassing little episode, which surely must have looked pretty silly if anyone were watching, took several minutes, and led to my firm resolve never to park headed in with the trailer again.

As a triker, you probably realize how nice it is to effortlessly breeze through the most restrictive of environments, to get where people in cars can never go, and to have almost as much freedom of movement as a pedestrian. Without a trailer, it is even easy to get over curbs, just by swinging the trike around and lifting the rear wheel to pull it up and over. This freedom of movement is what I have come to expect on my trike, and I was not impressed with having lost much of the liberty with my trailer. Of course, with the trailer gone, am I not back to insufficient cargo area like I was before the trip?

No doubt about it ... losing 9,000 cubic inches of storage volume is going to make a difference. That's about 140 liters less room to put my gear on an overnight or longer trip. To help visualize volumes expressed in liters, imagine one of those Nalgene one-liter plastic water bottles that backpackers commonly use, and then further imagine about 140 of them, minus the unused airspace between spherical stacked bottles. Or alternately, and more precisely, imagine pouring 140 liters of liquid into a storage trunk, and that's how much volume it was. That visualization may or may not work for you, and if it doesn't, just imagine a typical large backpack size, which is roughly 3600 cubic inches. With the loss of my trailer, I am giving up about two and a half backpacks worth of storage room. That's quite substantial obviously.

The flip side is that in a volume of 140 liters, a lot of heavy stuff can be packed, and that always leads to much slower headway on even the mildest of hills. The added weight requires the trike pilot to always be gearing way down compared to normal trike-only jaunts, and when pedaling in lower gears, speed always suffers. With many long steep passes to cross over the course of many days, all that lost speed really adds up to a much longer transit time between departure and destination points. All that weight also requires many additional calories for your body to move it!

So, now I have my highly valued maneuverability back, which makes me very happy! I also have my faster speeds back, always a plus on long-haul overland journeys! I didn't realize how much I prized

these aspects of triking until I lost them on the trek. Trikes, as you may well know, are also a blast to ride, real thrill machines, where the pilot feels like a race car driver, and to even relinquish the pure excitement side of triking is not something I wish to do. I want to have few restrictions on where I go, and I prefer to have a lot of fun getting there at reasonable speeds. Sure, I love the natural world and find solace in slowly advancing up a mountain at 3 miles per hour as I behold every little plant and creature, but after a few days of this, I long for the thrill of the ride again.

Life is full of compromises, and we make choices based on what are the most important things to us. I chose to downsize my load to keep the maneuverability and fun factors as high as possible under the circumstances. I was willing to accept the trade-offs.

What has this compromise required of me? What must I do with no trailer to toss things into with wild abandon? Well, I must put back on my thinking cap and redefine my needs. Just as when I went from a full sized Ford Bronco a number of years back when I was still a car owner, to a Nissan Xterra for my backcountry explorations, downsizing requires a redesign phase, a time of reassessing what is really important. The Xterra would hold nowhere near the gear, yet I relished the challenge of slimming down my over sized load, trimming it to the true essentials. This exercise proved fruitful and fun, cut down on unneeded gear, lightened the load, and increased my fuel economy.

Many of the same principles apply now to trike explorations. By downsizing, I get better fuel economy for sure, yet the fuel is not one of petroleum origin, but rather one of vegetable origin, as I am the engine of my tricycle. Better fuel economy for a triker means more miles per calorie instead of miles per gallon. Residual flatulence may occasionally be a byproduct of this engine, but at least it doesn't harm the environment or cloud the skies with smog. More miles per calorie means less food is necessary per day, but water intake should still be high.

Downsizing the oversized and heavy load also brings greatly increased maneuverability because smaller vehicles simply get around easier than larger ones. For me, this is the key point of it all. As I pen these words, I am now in the process of my reorganization phase, and have not yet taken a long trip without the trailer in tow. I am confident however that I will successfully move through this time, with the end result being more freedom of travel on future rides.

One way I look at things is this: Backpackers hike for extended

periods, sometime months and thousands of miles, with only 3600 cubic inches of cargo capacity strapped on their backs, or about 59 liters of space. They become masters at surviving in the wilds with just what they can put in this size-restricted bag, or strap to the outside of it. They realize from experience what is necessary to bring along, and what is best kept at home. For one thing, they can't bring very much, so it has to be distilled into the absolute essentials, and for another, the more they bring, the heavier the load, and the more food they require to carry it. If a backpacker can make do with 59 liters or less of provisions, can I apply the same ideas to triking across the landscape?

I believe so. My pair of Arkel GT-54 panniers has 54 liters of packable volume. The Arkel TailRider rack trunk has an 11 liter potential. The pair of Radical Design Lowracer side pods adds another 25 liters of volume. This brings my usable cargo capacity to 90 liters, or roughly 5500 cubic inches, in comparison to a backpacker's 59 liters or 3600 cubic inches. I have about 1.5 times more storage volume than a typical strong backpacker, so it's not a matter of IF I can make do without a trailer, but HOW I can make do. I must rethink my beliefs of what is essential. For the added ability to maneuver at will in tight situations, I will eagerly enter into this retooling of my brain.

Who knows ... I might need to ride the narrow sidewalk of a nightmare bridge someday, a thing the narrow trike can do, but not with a trailer. You know what I mean if you've ever ridden some of the longest bridges on Highway 101 on the Oregon coast, where the narrow pedestrian walkway makes little 90 degree bends around the massive bridge supports, obstacles that a 10 foot trike/trailer combo simply cannot negotiate.

These are my basic thoughts on towing a trailer. There is no right or wrong about any of this. It all boils down to personal preference, not much more. There are those who swear by trailers, and those who go without. Some use trailers only for really long cross country epic rides, but not for local or regional tours where supplies in convenient towns are plentiful. Credit card trikers who punctuate their overnights with motel stays and restaurants probably don't need a trailer, but those who opt for stealth camps in the middle of nowhere may find trailers mighty handy. Crossing open deserts is easy with a trailer. Twisting through congested downtown traffic full of impatient drivers in a big city is another story.

Don Saito rode his ICE Qnt trike 12,614 miles around the perimeter of the United States and did not use a trailer to do it. He

camped primitively or in a stealth manner much of the time, but he also availed himself of the many stores and restaurants along the way, along with “warm showers” hosts, cutting down on the amount and weight of any food he had to carry. This allowed him to travel nimbly at reasonable speeds and make good progress most days. If Don can do it, so can I. I will learn what I need to know to make this so.

But who knows! Life is usually unpredictable, and we learn to never say never. A year from now, I may just have a Radical Design Cyclone as a new traveling partner. Or then again, perhaps I’ll have an Innesenti and pull a BOB trailer ... decisions, decisions.

Only time will tell this trailer tale (and money).



A popular BOB trailer behind the legendary Innesenti trike

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Touring panniers on ICE by Radical Design in Holland

## **Trip Tips**

Thoughts about overland triking  
*by Steve Greene*

Several types of people will be reading these words. Most will already be trike pilots of some sort, although a few will be contemplating the acquisition of their first trike. Most will use their trike for local rides, errands, exercise, and relaxation. Finally, a few rugged weather beaten souls will be long-haul distance trikers who set out overland for adventure at every turn, those whose spirits yearn for the ecstasy of the unknown and the achievement of that which others dare not do.

For about ten years in another life, I was a dedicated windsurfer, one of those fellows who stood on a short surf board with a sail, mast, and boom attached, and then went speeding across the open water, powered only by a strong wind and my own boundless lust for excitement. The more powerful the wind, the more incredible the ride, but with that immense natural force from the sky also came a proportional fear of getting out there in the first place and ripping across the water.

Of course, the result was always the same. I'd push myself to overcome that fear just enough so I could place my rig in the water, step aboard, and be transported into pure adrenaline bliss. It all happened within a heartbeat ... from standing still in the water to flying across the top of it at 25 miles per hour. The extreme thrill is utterly indescribable to anyone who has not experienced it, but suffice it to say that anguish over past events or worry over potential future events had no room in my being to even exist. I was completely in the present moment, at a level of life few might imagine. Once I was out on the water, with an aggressive attitude, I was happy to have overcome my initial hesitation.

There is a human truism that asserts we wish we were out having an adventure when we're safe at home, and we wish we were safe at home when we're out having an adventure. The hardest part of any adventure, any exciting and potentially dangerous experience worth remembering, is the getting started of it. It's that first committed step into the unknown that is the most challenging. We are drawn to the very things that we fear, yet we find the fear melts away once the endeavor is initiated in earnest. This is because fear is nothing more than a thought in our heads. It is not real. But then again, without it, would our adventures be somewhat diminished?

Well, it's food for thought at least, and by facing it in these opening words, perhaps we can push beyond it with our trusty recumbent tadpole trikes for the times of our lives. Like it was with windsurfing, it now is with overland trike journeys. The planning and anticipation is so much fun, yet as the moment of truth is staring us in the face when departure is imminent, our old companion fear is right there, at least for most of us anyway. There are many aspects of a trike trip that must be anticipated and accounted for prior to the first pedal stroke, and through preparation, we are better able to dispel many mental demons. Preparing for success makes us strong, and once we're out there on the open road to adventure, we realize we wouldn't want it any other way.

Thus, without further introduction, following are but a few concepts and suggestions to make your most excellent trike journey all it can be. May you reach your maximum potential, and have the time of your life doing so! Remember, the only difference between the guy out on a cross country trike adventure and a triker pedaling around the neighborhood is that the former simply took the next step towards freedom. If you can do a day ride of 50 miles, all that need be accomplished next is putting a bunch of those rides back to back until



you get to where you want to go – until you are free on three. Here are twenty-nine Trip Tips that may make it easier and more fun:

**Trip Tip – (Pannier Loading):** Does it matter which cargo you load on the right or left sides of your trike panniers? Trikes are like miniature cars when you slow to a stop at side of the road, as they take up lateral parking space. So there you are on your trip, pulled over off the pavement on a narrow road to access some food for a quick energizing snack, or to don a jacket for the cooling air temperatures. On which side of the trike do you want to stand as you access your gear?

**Consider this:** From a safety standpoint, it might be wise to have your frequently accessed items in the right side pannier, so you can be farther from the passing automobiles, and you have a better view of the road and traffic. Had you used the left side for these items, your hind quarters would be a grill target, and you wouldn't even see what hit you. Keep in mind if you're from countries other than the United States, which always does things differently (think no metric), all this will be reversed, as you drive on the left side of the road (thus you'll want to use the left hand pannier for frequently accessed items).

**Trip Tip – (Crankset Chainring Sizes):** Trikes have three chainrings on the front crankset. Manufacturers usually put on a compromise set of rings that will serve what they see as the greatest number of potential buyers. They will put on rings that allow the most people to have the gearing they need most of the time. If they put on too high of gearing, people who live in the mountains will not make it to the tops of hills without agony. If they put on too low of gearing, people who trike on mostly flat ground will spin out, or find they could go faster if they only had a larger chainring. Thus, a common industry compromise is the 30-42-52 chainring combination, as 52 is about as fast as most average trikers can go, and 30 will get them up most hills. What if you tour on your trike, or have some serious mountains in which you ride?

**Consider this:** installing new ring sizes, or a whole new crankset might be wise. In fact, if you pull a trailer, it's practically mandatory to make a change from stock. A good combination for long haul trikers without a trailer is 26-39-52, which still provides a respectable top end, while allowing you to successfully cross the largest mountain passes fully loaded. Those are 13 tooth jumps between all rings, which allow for this excellent range, but is not too wide to cause

shifting issues. If you pull a trailer on tour, a 24 tooth small ring is highly recommended if you anticipate extreme uphill grades. The rear cassette sprockets are also a component of your gearing, which is covered in another Trip Tip.

**Trip Tip – (Cassette Sprocket Sizes):** Trikes have multiple sprockets on the rear hub, which work in conjunction with the front crankset to determine the overall gearing potential of your trike. Most trikes have 9 sprockets in the cassette, and when paired with the 3 rings on the front crankset, provide 27 different speeds ( $9 \times 3 = 27$ ). They call it 27 speeds but you will only realistically use 19 of them. As with front cranksets, manufacturers install cassettes that are best for general purposes for most trikers most of the time.

**Consider this:** For trikers who take long trips over varied terrain, a mountain bike cassette may be more suited because the largest ring has 34 teeth, instead of a more common 32, and the smallest ring has 11 teeth, instead of the more common 12. Does this make much difference? Well, if you're on the grandpappy of all long uphill mountain passes, those 34 teeth will make a noticeable difference in your ability to reach the top with the least effort, especially if you are very heavily loaded or pulling a trailer. Conversely, if you're screaming along on flat ground or a very slight downhill grade, those 11 teeth will allow you to eek out another mile per hour or two, which is not only more fun, but will get you to your campground sooner so you can chow down. Refer to the crankset Trip Tip for the other half of this gearing story.

**Trip Tip – (Pedals):** Does it matter what type of pedals you use on your trike? There are the original platform pedals, platform pedals with some manner of securing the foot to the pedal, and pedals with a binding attachment method. All types are used by tadpole trikers. Which type is preferable on a trike trip? **Consider this:** Unlike bikes, where the rider's foot is on top of the pedal, trikers' feet are behind the pedals. In other words, gravity works to remove your feet from the pedals. On trips, it requires effort and energy to keep your feet pushed up against the pedal platform ... energy better used to crank out the miles.

For the long haul, a binding system is essential on a recumbent trike, the kind where you click your shoe onto a mechanism similar to a ski binding. There are several reasons for this. First, your foot will

never fall onto the ground, leading to potential injury. Second, you never expend any thought or effort to keep your feet on the pedals. Third, you will deliver more power to the crank with each stroke, translating into more efficient forward motion. Fourth, you will significantly decrease the chances of crushing nerves or blood vessels in your feet, anomalous conditions that tend to occur with normal shoes and straps, which can lead to months of uncomfortable foot problems. Straps may work for around town and short day rides, but on overland journeys, use only a binding system with stiff soled cycling shoes.

**Trip Tip – (Shoes):** Is the type of shoe important for taking a trike trip of multiple days or weeks? Will a comfortable walking shoe be acceptable for a trike journey?

**Consider this:** If you pedal for hours each day, day after day on a trip, and you are using normal shoes with a strap system to hold your feet in place, your feet are physically attempting to wrap themselves around the pedal platform body with each power stroke. This is because normal soft soled shoes, even more rugged hiking shoes, do not provide anywhere near adequate support for the specialized rigors of distance cycling. Unlike walking, where your feet are flat and you push off with the front ball area of the foot, on a pedal, your feet become deformed where they extend past the platform on each end. This will lead to crushed nerves and blood vessels in short order, along with toe numbness that can last for months, even if you stop cycling altogether.

Typical hard soled cycling shoes with a binding attachment system circumvent these issues by providing a solid platform from which to push each stroke, keeping the forces more aligned with those of walking. Your feet are your weakest link in trike touring. If they go south, your trip is over, and if you keep pushing them in a compromised state using non-cycling shoes with straps, you will be compounding the damage, perhaps setting yourself up for more permanent injury. If you plan to keep long haul triking a regular part of your life, make sure you have the finest binding pedals and cycling shoes you can afford.

**Trip Tip – (Binding Tightness):** The vast majority of trike pilots who use their three wheeled steeds for long haul journeys have a special way to keep their feet on the pedals. Since a pilot's feet are behind the pedals, gravity tends to place a relentless pull on the feet and legs, which requires conscious caloric effort to resist for eight hours every day. And when gravity does its deed, and your foot slides off the

pedal onto the ground, it could hurt, especially if traveling downhill at speed. Most trikers use special cycling shoes that attach to a binding mechanism on the pedals, something akin to ski bindings, which can be adjusted for tightness. Does it matter how tightly these cleats are adjusted?

**Consider this:** What happens when a skier falls on the slopes if their bindings are too tight? It can result in a broken leg, damaged tendons, or a knee that never works properly again. This is because the ski, which stayed attached during the fall, applied tremendous twisting torque to the leg, hips, and spine. The whole idea of bindings is that they release in the event of a mishap. Trike pilot bindings are no different! We may get the erroneous notion that we won't fall like a skier, being so low to the ground, but don't be fooled. Normally, this is not an issue, but what happens if an outside wheel runs off the pavement on a steep slope in the hills? Or what about a driver who is asleep at the wheel and accidentally forces you off the road? Going over even a modest embankment on your trike may well result in rolling it over, and while you may just get bruised and scratched because you are wearing a helmet, ponder what it would be like if one or both of your feet don't release from your pedals!

This could be very disastrous, even worse than a skier, because you have an entire tricycle with loaded panniers applying colossal force to your human frame, perhaps 100 pounds twisting and tweaking you in ways that result in breakage and severe bone and tissue damage. One ski is bad enough (ask a skier who knows), but an tricycle could be a nightmare. So, tighten your SPD or other binding mechanism just enough to keep your feet attached under normal riding conditions, but loose enough that it is easy to remove your feet when you want to get up and walk around. If you crash, you most assuredly want that trike to go its own way!

**Trip Tip – (Tires, Tubes, & Flats):** Are flat tires an unwelcomed eventuality that comes with the territory when triking overland on epic journeys? If you read the chronicles of most long haul trikers, you are likely to conclude the answer to be in the positive for this very negative experience. There isn't a triker alive who would rather be hunched over attending to a flat on the side of the highway instead of merrily cranking out the miles and enjoying the scenery. It has been said by a few that changing a tire is no big deal, which may be true enough for some who are experienced at doing it, but there are

often hazardous sections of road and extenuating circumstances where attempting to change a tire could get you injured by a motorist or snuffed by inclement weather. Not all flats happen on warm sunny days on quiet flat backcountry roads.

**Consider this:** Flats are not part and parcel to trike touring, and not all tires and tubes are created equal. If you run standard cycling tires and tubes, your out of pocket expenses will initially be less, but you will indeed experience flat tires with annoying regularity. The upside to this, of course, is that standard tires and tubes are a snap to change because they are so light duty in their construction, which makes them easily manipulated by human hands. That is why sharp objects, like goatheads, penetrate them ... the rubber compounds are thin and not resistant to a breach. You may believe that you're saving money and getting a great deal on these tires and tubes, but if you look at the costs of replacing them often, along with the irritation of changing them in questionable roadside conditions, it may become apparent that installing the best tires and tubes you can afford is the preferable solution.

Superior tires also have longer tread life, which translates to more miles and years of service. Superior tires are heavier than standard tires, and they are not easily manipulated with your hands. Superior tubes are heavier than standard tubes, and spares take up more room in your panniers. The good news is that superior tires (such as the Schwalbe Marathon Plus) and superior tubes (such as the Kenda Q-Tubes) are as close to immune from flats as you can get, thus you don't need to carry numerous spares. Do your homework. Get tires with thick flat protection designed into the tire behind the tread. Get tubes that are extra thick in the portion that rests behind the tire's tread. They may be a bear to install at home initially, but you can count on them out on the road when other tires and tubes fail.

**Trip Tip – (Tire Liners):** Every accounting you'll ever read about trikers who talk about flat tires will provide the same impression: flats are no fun, a waste of perfectly good riding time, and fuel for triker gripe sessions on what can go wrong on a trip. Can you do more than just having the best tires and tubes to ensure a flatless experience on the road? Sure, there is one additional item that may help your tires on their way to invincible status.

**Consider this:** The more solid and tough material that is between your air supply and that nasty spike (whether it be a goathead needle, rusted steel belt wires from truckers' flats, or a small shard of

broken wine bottle), the better. Overkill? Some think so, but others prefer to take all the counter measures they can to remain up on three wheels. A tire liner (such as EarthGuards) is placed in your tire, behind the tread surface, prior to mounting. It weighs practically nothing, but the thick tough plastic material may be enough to deflect a sharpie that could happen through your tire tread. Now, if you have Schwalbe Marathon Plus tires, it is unlikely that anything will get through even the tire, but on the off chance that a sharpie is long and strong enough to make it past the quarter inch of serious flat buffer material in the tire, the liner is there to back it up. What this all amounts to simply is peace of mind. When you have superior tires, superior tubes, and tough tire liners, dependency on aerosol items like Fix-A-Flat are a distant memory.

**Trip Tip – (When Tires, Tubes, & Liners Aren’t Enough):**

There are few guarantees in life. In fact, there’s only one that is certain, so it’s a good thing to enjoy triking while you can. But with all the talk of superior tires, tubes, and liners, can a flat still happen? Sure, anything is possible, like you could be coasting down a steep mountain at 50 miles per hour and not see a sharp piece of metal that slices right through everything like butter, whether you have the best gear or the cheapest. Or a Martian could land in the path of your overland trip and melt your tires with its ray gun. But these things are not likely. What is more likely however, is a small sharp nail that you hit just right and it penetrates through to the tube’s air supply. You could just put in a new spare tube, but you didn’t bother bringing one due to your confidence that you were immune to flats altogether.

**Consider this:** Minimal intrusions by sharpies can be repaired right on the highway, by using little tube repair kits that take up practically no room at all. The job goes relatively quickly, and if done properly, which is pretty easy actually, the repaired tube will be as good as it was prior to the little hole that allowed all your air to re-enter the atmosphere. So really, this is the fourth level of protection against flats. Be ready for almost anything before your trip, and ride in triker’s bliss. Remember this motto: Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

**Trip Tip – (Cargo Maximization):** Trikes don’t have a lot of room to carry gear on a trip. Most of the usable space is centered around the rear drive wheel, and is utilized by attaching panniers, sometimes referred to as saddlebags, to the sides, with a smaller trunk

on top of the rack. There are several creative ways to do this, depending on which company's panniers you use, and their design. What if you have more cargo than will fit in the two panniers and trunk? Where else can you put stuff? Not much room on the front mainframe between your legs other than for small gear bags, such as those made by FastBack. Some riders also resort to the stacking solution, building their load skyward right behind their heads, held secure by bungee cords, although this may not have the slick and finished look that would suit everyone's fancy.

**Consider this:** There exists a triangle that is formed by trike seats, in between the rear wheel and the rider's spine. Often this volume is neglected, yet it offers up some potential to greatly maximize your load. You can place water bladders in special Cordura nylon containers that strap to the seat in this region. The load is low to the ground and out of the way. These containers can also be used for other gear than water bladders. Now, imagine this triangle extending laterally past the sides of your seat. Can you use that space? Sure, most notably by placing a set of Radical Design side seat pods there. The smallest size provides another 25 liters of cargo volume, and you can get bigger ones. You'd be amazed at how much extra gear can be carried when you spend some quality garage time inspecting your trike with your thinking cap on.

**Trip Tip – (Panniers & Rain):** If you're going to ride your tadpole trike cross country on a trip, it is a good bet to plan for precipitation falling from the clouds of the sky. The longer the journey, the greater the chance. Short duration treks can work around inclement weather, but those lasting a week, month, or more cannot. Most trikers ride in the spring, summer, and fall, yet even summer days can generate rain, sometimes heavy thunder showers in the higher elevations or flash floods in the deserts. Your panniers are going to get wet sooner or later, so how do you keep your cargo dry on these days? There are two basic types of panniers when rain is considered, those that are totally waterproof, and those that require a waterproof cover. Which is better? It's all personal preference, but each has its pros and cons.

**Consider this:** Totally waterproof panniers, like the Ortlieb brand, always keep your gear dry with no thought from you. If rain is coming in spurts, you needn't think about putting any cover on or taking it off. The downside is that if you place damp gear inside a totally waterproof pannier, the dampness has a tendency to remain

inside with your gear, so items may not dry well inside the bag, and you certainly will have damp or wet items on a trike trip (think tent or clothing, for example). Panniers that are not waterproof, although highly water resistant, will eventually allow rain to penetrate to the inside, thus requiring you to place a preformed waterproof cover over the pannier. While this may be annoying to deal with while riding in wet weather, the upside is that once the covers are removed, your gear inside can breathe much more efficiently, thereby allowing moisture from damp items to evaporate so your cargo can dry while riding. Panniers, like Arkel, have a waterproof liner inside their bags that may or may not be used. This is in addition to the outside waterproof cover. Opinions are split on the type of pannier that is “best”, so you’ll have to decide for yourself on this one.

**Trip Tip – (Pannier Volume):** Volume is the three dimensional space inside a pannier, and the size rating provides experienced trikers a good idea of how much gear they can store inside the bag. Only after having loaded all your gear in a set of panniers, either as practice or for a real trip, can you truly get a feel for volume ratings and how they will affect your given situation. Panniers all have volume ratings, just as backpacks do, listed in either liters or cubic inches. Cubic inch listings cater to the American market, which generally does not use the metric system like the rest of the world. Liter listings are more universal. A cubic inch is a tiny thing, essentially a square measuring one inch by one inch by one inch, which may be unrealistically difficult to visualize when the measurement system is applied to large volumes, such as a standard large backpack with a volume of 3,600 cubic inches; can you easily visualize that many little one inch squares? Only if you are an experienced backpacker will this seem a snap. Liters on the other hand, are more readily understood by anyone who is familiar with a one liter hiking water bottle, such as the Nalgene (a liter is slightly more than a quart). What is easier to comprehend: 11 liters or 700 cubic inches? There is a problem though.

**Consider this:** Manufacturers of panniers use both types of listings in their advertisements, but rarely both types at once, so when you compare pannier volumes before you buy you’ll get some in cubic inches and others in liters. Who wants to be figuring math in their heads to compare bags? Few people wish to spend their time doing mathematical conversions just to compare panniers in catalogs. Online, you’ll find handy “liter to cubic inch” conversion calculators that make



this easy, so if you can memorize a few of the more common sizes, you'll be better prepared for making your pannier purchases. Arkel Canadian panniers use both measurement models in some catalogs, which help with the process (like in the Cyclosource catalog, where they list the GT-54 pannier pair at 3300 cubic inches, or 54 liters).

How much practical storage can you get on a tadpole trike for a trip? Well, assuming no trailer in tow, just the trike only, it is safe to assume that you can carry roughly 90 liters of volume for your cargo storage, which includes 54 liter rack panniers, an 11 liter rack trunk, and a pair of 25 liter side seat panniers. Even more space can be found immediately behind the recumbent seat if you are creative, on the mainframe between your legs, or if you don't mind stacking items like sleeping bags atop your rack trunk. You might be able to figure 100 liters if you really work at it. Maximizing pannier volume for trips is like a puzzle, where you figure out the best bags, and how they will all fit together on your rack and frame. If you enjoy challenges, this is fun. Once you get it all dialed in, you never have to think about it again.

**Trip Tip – (Visibility & Safety):** Trikes are very low to the ground. This is the first and most concerning fact that the vast majority of potential and first-time trike owners ponder as they consider riding a recumbent tadpole trike in automobile traffic or on an overland journey cross country. The internalized fear of being struck by an inattentive or preoccupied motorist is very real, and often highly exaggerated, in the minds of newcomers to the triking realm. After all, they hear of bicyclists being struck, maimed, and killed from time to time, and realize that they sit much higher than a trike, thus deducing that tricyclists don't stand a snowball's chance in hell of surviving for very long. Additionally, well-meaning friends and family go to great lengths to warn potential trikers of all the horrible dangers, thereby further instilling a foundation of fright in the yet inexperienced mind. Are the fears and dangers real? While the fears most certainly are, the dangers are another story.

**Consider this:** Anything the human mind is fed a steady stream of eventually becomes routine, to the point that it is filed away in the back of the mind and rarely given much thought. Such is the plight of the average motorist with regards to bicyclists – they see so many bicycles every day while driving that it's almost as if the cyclists are invisible. Add to this the fact that most bicyclists have traditionally worn standard clothing that is not really visible in traffic, along with the

fact that they have rarely attached bright flagging to their bikes, and you have a recipe for disaster. But tricycles are so low, you say! True enough, they are, yet trikes have some significant factors in their favor that make them far safer on roadways than bikes.

First of all, few petroleum powered motorists have rarely, if ever, seen a tadpole tricycle while driving. They don't even know what they are seeing, and this is the key to a triker's survival. Motorists, even those illegally talking on cell phones, are jolted into a high state of awareness when they see a tadpole trike ahead on the road because they are attempting to identify the strange object, which is typically misidentified initially as a handicapped person in a new type of wheelchair (yet another advantage – who wants to strike a disadvantaged human?). Cell phone users end up mentioning the triker to the party with whom they are talking, further highlighting the issue. It's hard for motorists to hit a tricycle when they are intently staring right at the darn thing!

Another key factor that makes us safer is that we appear very wide to motorists, so they nearly always give tricycles much more room as they pass. This is commonly exaggerated, and motorists will frequently pass tadpole tricycles as if they are another car. Of course, visibility is yet another key factor, so if you add a flagpole with bright colored day-glow flagging, and if you wear high visibility clothing and use bright colored panniers and flashing taillights, chances are extremely high that your trips will proceed without negative incident.

Sure, a rare rude motorist who arrogantly believes cyclists of any type have no right to use paved roads may honk the horn illegally or crudely bellow a moronic grunt your direction, but at least the empathetically unconscious driver sees you; it's his (or her) issue, not yours, as most governments have a "share the road" rule that governs highway usage.

The bottom line is this: While there is always a chance of unfortunate mishap, and no one can guarantee your safety 100% of the time, the collective experience of the triking community is that the threat posed by petroleum powered humans is most always imagined. That is to say, it's in your mind. This epiphany will evolve over time as you gain experience out on the open road. The biggest genuine issue with automobiles is the annoying tire whine as they speed by – you get tired of hearing it while riding through towns. Fortunately, once out in the wide open country, the sound of rubber is replaced with the wonderful sounds of nature! That freedom is what we live for!

**Trip Tip – (Helmet Usage):** Why wear a helmet? After all, petroleum powered motorists readily recognize trikes because of the bizarre appearance of a tadpole tricycle, and chances are nearly nonexistent that a triker will be hit. Not only that, but let's assume for a moment a motorist does strike a triker, what chance does the triker have? He's toast, right? No helmet is going to save a tricyclist who is struck by a car or truck. No sense in wearing a helmet.

**Consider this:** While the potential for car/trike interaction is very slim, it can happen, but to jump to the conclusion that a triker will be instantly killed or horribly maimed is not warranted. A car contact can just as easily cause the trike to veer off the road and roll down a hillside, a case where the triker stands a good chance of surviving intact if the head is protected. I have seen photographs of an ICE trike that was struck from behind when the driver was blinded by the setting sun. The rear of the trike was significantly deformed, yet the mid and front portions were fine. The helmeted triker sustained only minimal injuries, and was quickly released from medical supervision. But automobiles are not the real consideration in helmet usage.

Rather, the greatest danger lies with rider error. On a cross country trip for example, where hilly or mountainous roadways contain drop-offs along the pavement, the potential exists for accidentally allowing your outside front tire to go over the edge, especially if you are riding close to the edge to avoid cars on a narrow highway, are admiring the beautiful scenery, or are getting drowsy at the end of a long day's ride. Rolling over into a ravine could cause serious head injury if landing on rocks or striking trees. Or what if a tire suddenly goes flat while you are speeding down a mountain pass at 47 miles per hour? Would a helmet be a nice thing to have on your head?

The only certainty about life is uncertainty. There is no predicting. What gets us is not what we contemplate ahead of time, but something that never occurs to us at the least expected moment. You only have one life, so protecting it to ride another day is wise. As the folks at Inspired Cycle Engineering are fond of saying: "If you've got a cheap head, get a cheap helmet!"

**Trip Tip – (Night Rider):** Trikes are dangerous enough in the daytime – only a fool would ride one at night! Sounds valid. Probably most people would voice this opinion. Well, as we learned in other Trip Tips, riding a human powered recumbent tadpole tricycle is not fraught with all the dangers most people believe to be waiting out there on the

road. Certain ideas may at first seem logical to many folks, and thus take hold as givens. Only through actual personal experience can one determine if the demons truly exist. But why would anyone even want to ride a trike at night? That's crazy ... nights are for sleeping and/or procreating! Well, perhaps most of the time for most folks anyway.

**Consider this:** When riding a tadpole trike cross country on an overland journey of several weeks, you will notice that there are monthly cycles of a full moon. And if you are taking your trip during the warmer months of the year, these nights may well be comfortably warm, perhaps even more pleasant for hours of pedaling than during the hotter daytime temperatures.

Not only that, but riding at night brings with it countless unexpected joys, things such as: no automobile traffic, no whining tire noise, no sunburn danger, no bodily overheating, nocturnal animal eyes shining alongside the road in the bushes, clouds passing in front of the moon and casting phantom-like shadows on the landscape, ultimate solitude, animal calls, much louder sounds of rushing rivers due to cooler denser air and no daytime background noises, a feeling of intrigue and stealth due to the silence of the trike, and the knowledge that you are doing something that practically no other human being on the face of the Earth has ever done. As you ride your trike over a huge mountain range through the moonlit night, ask yourself: "Is any other person on Earth doing this same thing right now?" Nope! You're the only one! Now how often can you make that claim with any certainty?

**Trip Tip – (Night Visibility):** It has already been determined in another Trip Tip that human powered recumbent tadpole trikes are readily visible to sedentary petroleum powered humans during the daytime, despite the counter intuitive nature of the situation. Trikes are highly visible under typical daytime scenarios.

It has also been determined in another Trip Tip that riding a trike at night during a cross country journey is a joy of boundless magic, an unforgettable experience contemplated only by the dreamer, and undertaken only by the intrepid. Well, okay, let's say you are a brave romantic and want to give it a go ... but you realize that your eyes don't see things as well at night, and yes, there will be an occasional (but rare) gasoline ingesting vehicle speeding past your fragile human skull. Hmm, part of that last sentence was correct (about the eyes) but the rest was actually just expressing yet another myth. A lone nocturnal motorist rarely, if ever, will speed by you. The dumbfounded driver will

slow way down while (s)he stares at you in disbelief! You are completely safe.

**Consider this:** Most people don't drive through the night, so when they see you on a tricycle at 1:37 AM, 29 miles from the nearest town, you WILL have their full attention (they may think you're nuts, but who cares?). And we all know that it's practically impossible for a motorist to run over a tricyclist when the motorist is looking right at the tricyclist. Gee, car drivers are surprised to see trikes on the road in the daytime, let alone night. But how does the motorist even see you at all during the night? Well, remember, the full moon is helping a lot, but that's not the whole story. Mounted on your trike will be a high powered bright white LED headlight, a ten-LED blinking taillight, and an iris-piercing marine rescue strobe light, making you actually more visible at night than you are during the day!

The Cateye company, and others, make outstanding head and tail lights for those who are serious about their night riding. The Coast Guard approved marine rescue strobe, a very compact and light device used for watercraft in trouble, can be acquired online from marine websites or gear outfitters. It emits a super bright flash visible for miles every second or so. The combination of these three devices provide you unparalleled visibility from the motorist's standpoint, and between the full moon and the headlight, you'll have no problem seeing where you are going, even if it's downhill at 40 miles per hour. In fact, I turn on my headlight only if an infrequent car does happen along from the other direction, as experiencing a trike ride on a balmy night with only the natural moon illuminating the countryside is the ultimate high! You won't know until you go.

**Trip Tip – (Grocery Shopping):** Grocery shopping? Well sure, you're going to get hungry after all on a trike trip, and there is only a certain volume of food you can stuff in your trike's panniers. You could choose to pull a trailer, and have it loaded up with a two week, fifty pound bag of grub, so that you could eat anytime and anywhere you wish without ever having to visit a grocery store (as I did once), but trailers are heavy and they slow you down and make you work noticeably harder. So, what if it's only you and your trike, you're low or out of food, there's a market coming up, and you need to stop and resupply? Seems simple enough, and in a tiny country roadside village with a total population of 82 people, it is. A couple of locals amble over and contemplate your wheels while you step inside and raid the shelves.

But what about when you're passing through a big town during rush hour? Is it different? Most trike pilots, who have invested anywhere from \$2,000 to \$5,000 in their rig and accessories, are understandably hesitant about leaving it parked outside a store while they go inside and shop. If you are with at least one other triker on your trek, one of you can remain with the trikes while the other shops, but if you are on a solo journey, what do you do? Bicycles get stolen all the time. If your trike gets ripped off while you are picking out bananas and baked beans, you'll likely see this as a problem, and most certainly it will spell the end of your trip, a long way from home.

**Consider this:** No one will steal your trike or belongings, for a number of reasons: No one knows what it is, so they have no use for it. No one could ride it off anyway because of the bizarre little SPD pedals that don't work well with normal human shoes. No one knows how it steers or how it works. No one is interested in stealing dirty and smelly clothes out of your dirty trip-worn panniers. No one would contemplate stealing from a bum or handicapped person whose only vehicle is a little three wheeled bicycle. No one could "fence" the merchandise even if they did steal it because no one they know would have any use for it.

No one could lift it and put it in their truck because tricycles are the most unstable thing imaginable once picked up off the ground, especially heavily loaded tricycles. No one would dare consider wheeling it off in front of dozens of other shoppers, especially since you parked it right next to the supermarket's front door in full view of everyone. No one would want to take the chance of stealing it because stolen trikes are not that hard for cops to spot. No one would dare be seen taking it because everyone is staring at it anyway, and they all would have great descriptions of the thief for the police. There is another option: park it behind the store, out of sight behind a dumpster, where no one will even see it. Just hope it's not trash pickup day!

**Trip Tip – (Fear of the Unknown):** Most of us have it. Most of us hide it. Most of us make excuses to ourselves and others that cleverly conceal our fear of the unknown, for fear of reduced self esteem. Fear of the unknown is what keeps some trikers from venturing more than a half day's ride from their home. Half day out, half day back, all in known country, and close enough to home to be easily rescued by car. That's enough to keep me happy. Well, it may be for a while anyway. But then one day, I realize that my trike is very capable, it never breaks down, and my sense of adventure wonders what it would be like to go a

little farther one day, to maybe pack a sleeping bag, tent, and some food, and make a weekend out of it.

So I do it. I survive. It was a blast! The human spirit cries for more. Adventure is what keeps me truly alive, and out of the ranks of those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat. Only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go! There is no other way. But what about my fear? I don't know what's out there. I don't know what will happen to me. It's frightening on the open road on a trike. I like guarantees. No surprises.

**Consider this:** No! Guarantees are not necessary. In fact, guarantees make life dull. Life is one big adventure ... the only one I'll ever get, and I live for the experiences that await me. My trike is like a magic carpet that can silently and cleanly transport me wherever I have the spunk to venture. There are virtually no limits to where I can ride. The unknown, because of its ability to instill fear in the masses, is precisely the call that beckons me. If everyone was out doing it, it would be as common as a trip to the bathroom, but everyone isn't, nor will they ever be. Humans fear the unknown. If you decide to initiate an extended long haul trike journey, everyone will tell you you're nuts.

They'll tell you all the reasons not to do such a foolish thing. They'll tell you all about the unknown evils that will befall you, doing their best to instill rampant fear into your veins. And since you have an intrinsic fear of the unknown that took over once you departed the stages of early childhood, your fear feeds on what they are telling you.

It is a cycle that creates even more fear. Even if you stay home, tomorrow is unknown. You might be killed while stumbling down a stairway. Life only has one iron-clad guarantee, and it is because of that one that I choose to live life to the fullest while on my way. If I have to go, I'd rather have it happen out on an exciting and memorable trike trip in the wilds than lying in a bed at an assisted living facility. In fact, the very act of distance triking may well be one of the major factors that keeps me out of the facility in the first place. It's all a matter of perception, a matter of priorities. Don't be shackled. We have nothing to fear but fear itself!

**Trip Tip – (Primitive and Stealth Camping):** Sometimes used synonymously, primitive and stealth are actually different. Primitive simply alludes to the fact that the camp has no expected modern conveniences ... like toilets, beds, or a roof over your head. You're just out there as a creature on the planet, somewhat like primitive times of

yore, except that you have a modern fast moving trike as your companion, along with a state of the art tent, sleeping bag, and food you didn't have to hunt or pick from the forest. So, a primitive camp on a trike trip has clear advantages over truly primitive conditions. We call it primitive only in relation to our modern world of luxury and overindulgence. Stealth camping, on the other hand, is usually also primitive (although it need not be), but the key difference is that remaining hidden from other humans is called for in the situation.

You may find it necessary, for example, to camp in a place that modern social laws deem illegal, and being seen would lead to your forceful eviction by law enforcement officers. Accordingly, part of your adventure then requires you to use stealth to make yourself invisible to fearful eyes. I say fearful because the reality is that others are scared of you, some unknown intruder on three weird wheels who is setting up temporary quarters too close to their home.

**Consider this:** Unlike a car, where you can always plan where you want to bed down for the night due to the car's high speed capability, riding a trike can leave you in areas prior to nightfall where there are no readily apparent or logical sleeping options. Sometimes, especially if in remote areas of long distances, your only option might be to camp primitively in a wide turnout alongside the road. Out in the middle of nowhere, no one really cares, and the few cars that pass during the night likely don't even notice your dark camp at 65 miles per hour. Finding a few huge boulders and/or trees and bushes helps you to have a more secure mental feeling of course, as our well conditioned fears try to make us believe that if we are seen by other people, we will be victims of a crime.

Other times, camp time might arrive in a region that is either in a large town or on the outskirts of one, a place where overzealous graveyard shift cops relieve their boredom by sneaking up on, and kicking trike hobos out of perfectly comfortable housing arrangements, as if your tent being there for a few hours really is going to upset the rhythm of the universe. Some cops are cool, others are not; it's the luck of the draw. Well, if you feel this is a potential outcome where you need to sleep, make yourself invisible! How? Pull into the area where you will be pitching your tent as close to dark as you can. Hang out for a while, perhaps just eating some food, to access the situation. If no one hassles you, once it gets dark, set camp and hit the sack. Arise prior to first light, break camp, and get back to triking. No one will be any the wiser. That was a stealth camp. Hopefully the weather will be warm



enough in these conditions that your hands don't get real cold setting up or breaking down your tent.

A friend of mine named Dan Price, on a trans America trike adventure, once pulled in behind a rural police station after dark, and since trikes make no noise, none of the cops knew he was there. He pitched camp right under their noses, got up early the next morning, and got the heck out of Dodge while the getting was good. The good news is that if he was going to be hassled, at least it would only be by the police, not some dastardly hoodlum looking for trouble.

By the way, if you ever camp in a city park or on a church lawn, keep in mind the automatic sprinkler system that comes on at 2:00 AM – definitely not too much fun when it happens, but makes for a whopping great story later!

**Trip Tip – (Campground Camping):** Primitive and stealth camping is fun for a lot of people, but others don't like to rough things that much, so they try to plan their overnights around campgrounds. Of course, if you wish to utilize campgrounds every night, your trip must be on routes that are populated and popular enough that campgrounds exist at most every 50-60 miles apart. This is not always easy to accomplish, so plan on an occasional primitive scenario and you'll be fine. Even for trikers who are dedicated primitive campers, staying at a campground once or twice a week can be rewarding, especially if the campground has hot showers, which will feel mighty good after several days without.

Some state campgrounds have special areas called “hiker biker camps” that allow trikers to pay a minimal fee of perhaps \$4.00 instead of the usual higher fees paid by automobile and motorhome campers. There are some campgrounds however, like Mazama in Crater Lake National Park, that charge the high fee regardless of whether you have a 30 foot motorcoach or a 6 foot tricycle, so beware!

**Consider this:** Primitive campgrounds, such as those maintained by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will get you a few amenities at least, like fresh running water and sit-down outhouse toilets for a really cheap price. Often times, you might find the whole place to yourself if it is remote enough. This solution is a midway option, not quite primitive, but not quite modern. The nice thing about camping in a campground is that you needn't give a second thought to being evicted. Another perk of using campgrounds is that other campers will feel sorry for a lone triker, often providing food, drink, and

campfire companionship. It's true, and something I've experienced on many occasions!

**Trip Tip – (Hoodlums):** Well, you know they're out there, right? You see them every night on the television news, learn about them every morning on NPR, and your cortisol pumps steadily into your system to wreak havoc on brain cells and the immune system as you worry yourself sick over whether you'll be the next victim. Hoodlums! If you listen to media accounts, which focus more than 80% of their coverage on all the evil in the world, even though good in the world is the true 80%, you'll be convinced that riding across the countryside and state lines is suicidal for a person on a nothing more substantial than a humble tricycle. Media make their money feeding the unconscious human desire to reinforce its collective need for knowing all that is wrong with the world. Okay, so first world societies in general are sick and lost, but how does that impact a trike trip?

**Consider this:** The experience of the collective world of cross country trike pilots says this is nothing to worry about, and most assuredly nothing that should stop you from setting out on a journey that has the potential to immensely enrich your life in so many ways. Can you be accosted on your trip? Can your gear be stolen? Sure, all things are possible, but what we must consider is the probability of a given occurrence. The probability of hoodlums intercepting your activity is exceptionally slim at the most, and really quite unlikely, unless you happen to be pedaling around an inner-city ghetto for your vacation, and camping out with your tent in dark alleys each night.

Samuel Johnson, English author of the 1700s, once stated: "Nothing at all will be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome." Ancient Roman philosopher Tacitus is credited with telling those who might listen "the desire for safety stands against every great and noble enterprise." Eckhart Tolle, contemporary teacher of considerable wisdom, regarding a potential new endeavor, notes: "If uncertainty is unacceptable to you, it turns into fear. If it is perfectly acceptable, it turns into increased aliveness, alertness, and creativity." There are a million excuses not to take a trike journey. Perhaps that is why only one in a million people do it.

**Trip Tip – (Hair on the Human Head):** Is there any special consideration that should be given to the hair on your head? What about your hair has anything to do with a tadpole trike trek for days and

weeks out on the open road? Well, not much actually, if you are riding a populated automobile route and staying in motels or full service campgrounds each night, where traditional human cleanliness rituals may be easily observed. It simply doesn't matter in those circumstances. You can look as cool as you ever do on any day in your normal life. But what if you are one of those trike pilots who love the wild places, can't stand cars speeding by you all day long, and prefer to pitch primitive camps with your tent out in the middle of nowhere? If you meet that description, lots of people would call you a hermit, maverick, or rogue. Since that mode of triking is my preferred type, this Trip Tip will answer the all-important "hair" question.

**Consider this:** Hair is critical ... least if you wish to minimize and maximize that which should be minimized and maximized. Oh, that makes a lot of sense! To put it another way, if you are primitive camping, which can mean no shower for periods of time that may exceed your comfort zone, which would you rather have: long hair or short? Prior to my overland jaunts, I buzz the top of my head, giving me that Marine Corps look – won't win me any appearance awards, that's for sure, but it makes keeping my hair clean a snap! Just a couple handfuls of water briskly rubbed on my skull each day keeps all the bugs at bay and the dirt moving on ... off my head. Frankly, since I'm a guy and out on a rugged cross country enterprise, I don't care if my usual handsome mystique has been vanquished by the barber's clippers.

The other half to this is that I grow a beard prior to departure day. Thus, with my thickening beard and my buzzed head, the ambiance exuded when I stop in a store to purchase food is rather unconventional. Why do I grow a beard? For two very important reasons: 1) Shaving each morning on a primitive trike trek is no fun and absolutely unnecessary, and 2) the beard protects a large portion of my face from sunburn, which is a consideration because trikers are in the sun all day long. Never using sunscreen due to the known health issues, I use a natural screen, one that is built in to the machine ever since my late teens. I also wear a cap under my helmet with a large bill to shade my forehead, and a cape that further shades other portions of my head. On my nose, I do use a somewhat healthy lip balm to keep the tip of the old schnoz from burning.

Hair ... you've got it, so use it wisely! Of course, if you are female, some of these considerations may not readily apply, both from a physiological standpoint along with the vanity component (what gal is going to take a buzz job just to minimize hair washing, after all?).

**Trip Tip – (Rain Gear):** Riding a trike in the rain is probably not your first choice when you are experiencing your ultimate freedom on three wheels. You want sunshine, moderate temperatures, and a slight breeze going the same direction as you are ... trike nirvana, that's all. Well, things don't always work out that way. Summer storms are inevitable. You are probably going to get wet somewhere along your route if your trip is a multi-week affair. There's practically no getting around this fact of life on Earth. What do you do?

**Consider this:** Carry rain gear so you needn't be bothered by this eventuality. All you need is a waterproof Gore-Tex jacket, waterproof pants, waterproof gloves, waterproof booties, and maybe even a waterproof helmet cover. All these things slip on over your normal riding clothes, and take up minimal space in your panniers if you keep them rolled tightly. If the weather is really warm or hot, and you are the type of triker who wears spandex shorts and short sleeve shirts, you may just elect to go ahead and let the water cool and clean you as you pedal. After all, once the sun returns, you'll dry off in nothing flat. Of course, if it remains clouded, you may find yourself becoming chilled. If you wear standard clothes while triking, as I do, then the rain gear comes in handy. Everything's a trade-off. Rain clothes can cause you to overheat while pedaling uphill or passes. Once the rain stops, and you have wet rain gear, do you put it back inside your panniers wet? Or do you bungee it over your panniers on the outside until dry?

These are all personal preference considerations, and we all have our own ways of doing things. One friend of mine uses plastic newspaper bags over his cycling shoes while on tour, tears a little slot in the bottom for his cleat to attach to the pedal, and saves a bunch of money over buying neoprene booties to cover his cycling shoes. The challenge is to decide what is necessary gear to haul along, and what is simply taking up precious space. Only experience on the road answers these perplexing questions.

**Trip Tip – (Crank Arm Length):** Crank arms are the thick pieces of metal (or possibly carbon fiber if you are wealthy) that attach your pedals to the crankset. They go around in circles hundreds of thousands of times on any trip, and deliver your pedaling power to the front chainrings so the chain drives the rear wheel (unless you ride a Sidewinder, which is front wheel drive). Crank arms come in different lengths, which are typically noted in millimeters (mm), since most of

the world uses metric because it is the most logical and easily used system of measurement (1 inch = 25.4 mm, or 6 inches = 152.4 mm). A short crank arm length would be considered 152 mm, an average crank arm length would be around 170 mm, and a long crank arm would measure 180 mm. Does this make any difference? Yes, it most assuredly does!

**Consider this:** The shorter the length, the faster you will spin the crank around as you ride. That is to say, you'll be pedaling more revolutions per minute. You will also have less torque, or raw power you will be delivering to the crankset. A famous Greek fellow is believed to have once said that with a lever long enough, he could move the world – same principle applies to trike crank arms. The longer the lever (crank arm) the more power (torque) you deliver to the chain on each power stroke, but at the same time, the more effort it requires to deliver that power. Ponder extreme examples to help visualize this concept: a crank arm that is only one inch long versus one that is one foot long. How many more times will the short arm have to revolve to get your trike the same distance as only one revolution of the long arm? If your legs are strong enough, and your physical condition supreme enough, you'll be cranking out the miles much faster with the longer crank arms.

Crank arm length for a given individual is typically determined by leg length, with really short riders using shorter crank arms than really tall riders. I'm six feet tall, with a 34 inch inseam, and I find 170 mm crank arms fine for my needs. I have used 152 mm arms, but find them way too short to deliver the power I am capable of. If speed is your goal, longer crank arms combined with a large chainring of perhaps 54 teeth might be just what you need, but for overland trike journeys, mountain passes and long hills are an ever present consideration, so moderation is necessary. Talk with folks with experience to determine what will work best for you in your unique situation (load weight, body height, terrain, physical condition, etc).

**Trip Tip – (Offloading of Human Waste):** It's a fact of life for everyone, but is usually never discussed by civilized folks because taking care of the details is a private and easy affair for most of us most of the time in our usual lives. Overland tadpole trike trips, however, bring this topic to the forefront very quickly, as all trike pilots who do more than short neighborhood rides will readily assert (if they aren't too embarrassed to discuss it). Some people experience issues with waste

offloading while riding in automobiles, but since those vehicles have ultra fast speed capabilities, getting to the next restroom is usually an easy thing to accomplish, the next roadside opportunity to privately take care of business in an expected fashion. When a sign says “Roadside Rest 7 miles” car passengers think nothing of it, but a trike pilot pushing the limits on a long uphill grade realizes it could be an unbearably long seven miles. So yes, it is a fact of triking life that you will have to go “to the bathroom” many times when and where there is no bathroom present. If this concept lies way outside your comfort zone, then distance triking may not be your cup of tea, but since you’re reading these Trip Tips, I venture to say you’re ready for what it takes. Well, it often times takes stealth! You will use the natural world to do your business, just like animals always have done.

**Consider this:** You drink water like it’s going out of style while triking, which means you will pee like there’s no tomorrow while triking, and you will have to do this before you get to the next bathroom much of the time. Bushes, boulders, trees, and hills are your friend! If you have yet to ever use the wild bathrooms that exist in abundance, give some consideration to this next time you are driving along in your car. Ask yourself where would be a good place to pee as you watch the countryside speed by. Is there a place now and then where you can pull your trike off on a dirt side road or turnoff where it will be hidden?

These places are much easier to locate at trike speeds, where you have tons of time to assess every little earthly nook and cranny as you pedal. Is it open desert with only creosote bushes, where the biggest bushes are what you want? Deserts often offer little concealment, but at the same time, you can see cars coming for a mile or more, giving you clues as to your timing. If you are riding solo, it’s all up to you. If you are in a group, get used to others knowing when you are peeing. Of course, there is more to this than liquid, and that is the next obstacle to overcome.

Fortunately, since you are burning off at least 5,000 calories each day, and perhaps as many as 7,000 depending on how many hours you ride, the vast majority of your food is converted to much needed energy because you are in a caloric deficit and losing weight, thereby automatically minimizing the frequency with which you feel motivated to poop. The good news is this: Even if you are riding an extremely remote section of highway out in the middle of proverbial nowhere, there is usually some form of sit-down toilet that happens by often enough to take care of the chore. Country stores are a welcomed sight,

in tiny hamlets of but 100 people or less. Even construction zone outhouses are preferable to squatting in a bush for most people. If you ride popular automobile routes, like the Pacific Coast Highway though, you'll have no shortage of toilets, especially in Oregon, where waysides are every few miles. Male or female, solid offloading is the same, but guys have the advantage over gals when it comes to the liquid side of things. Stealth is easier for a guy. In fact, if a guy is adept at this sort of thing, he could even give the illusion to passing motorists that he is admiring the scenery or taking a drink from his water bottle, something a gal couldn't quite pull off.

**Trip Tip – (Cargo Overload):** People are safety conscious, often too much or unrealistically so. Letting go of everyday securities is hard for most of us to do, and the thought of riding on a tricycle great distances is unnerving for nearly every first time distance triker. The unknown is spooky. Anything could go awry. To be sure that we answer every eventuality prior to departing on our long cross country journey, we pile everything but the kitchen sink onto our trike, and when that's not enough, we hitch up a trailer to boot. Yep, I'm gonna' have everything I need for anything that could go wrong ... right with me every mile of the way! The reason I am aware of this phenomenon is because I have personally experienced it.

My fears, although not sufficient enough to stop me from going on that first trip, certainly shackled me to the notion that I had to be loaded to the hilt with cargo at all times. I found that a fair portion of my gear was never necessary, and only added to my overall weight, thereby slowing my progress and causing a higher daily caloric burn, thus necessitating even more food. My trike guru Matt Jensen, an experienced long haul recumbent bicyclist with well over 100,000 miles logged thus far, discussed this with me during my preparation phase. Convinced I knew better, I acquired a huge trailer in addition to my large pannier volume on the trike, and the weight of me, the trike, the trailer, the panniers, and all the gear fell somewhere near 370 pounds (and my body weight was only 160 pounds of that total). Shortly into the trip, I mailed about 8 pounds of stuff back home, but I still had over 50 pounds of food in the trailer. Was this necessary?

**Consider this:** For most of us, this realization can only come with actual experience out on the road for a week or more. Of course, this is yet another chapter of adventure in our lives as we evolve into more efficient trip takers. We are not used to riding trikes everywhere,

so there is a relearning curve necessary when ditching the petroleum powered machines we are used to. As we realize that little stores appear often enough even in exceptionally remote regions, it becomes clear that keeping a two week supply of food at all times is totally unnecessary. Even in the secluded regions of Nevada, a two or three day supply should do the trick. Water is found in many places, so generally speaking, a couple of gallons on the trike alone is more than enough even in the desert. This can be had with the placement of two 100 ounce Camelbak water bladders, one behind each side of the seat, and two or three 24 ounce water bottles placed on the trike's mainframe somewhere.

But what if I break down, you ask! If things really look bleak, passing motorists can help, or a cell phone call can summon assistance from whoever you have backing you up. Can really unexpected and frightening scenarios happen? As with all things, yes, this is possible, but we have to weight the potential for given events against the practicality of what we bring along. You may just find that riding as light as possible will allow you a freedom of maneuverability and speed that makes up for your fears, and allows you to reach the next human hamlet quick enough to allay your worries. We are all ever evolving in our thinking and doing, and we all are at different places along our path of existence. No one is better than anyone else. We learn, we share, we have fun. It's all part of the game. Look at it this way, whatever does not kill you makes you strong, so cargo overloading will leave you stronger physically ... if not also psychologically better prepared for the next trip.

**Trip Tip – (Rumble Strips):** If you drive a petroleum powered vehicle, and you travel cross country on major highways, you know what these things are, and probably why the governments put them out there on the roads. They could be more aptly named “sleepy driver” grooves. Commonly, motorists who travel long distances tend to become mesmerized by the vast expanses of pavement, going on seemingly forever mile after mile, and they often begin to doze off while driving. Thus, our governments felt that to reduce traffic fatalities, if they etched deep grooves into the pavement, perpendicular to the direction of travel on the sides of the roads, when the tires of cars driven by sleeping drivers ran across them, a loud and sudden rumble sound would wake them up as their car begins to horribly shudder from the annoying vibrations. This strategy indeed works well to save the



lives of countless automobile drivers every year, but, as always, cyclists, and especially tricyclists, remain invisible to governing entities, and these strips can easily become our nemesis.

**Consider this:** Sometimes, governments get carried away with this solution, and are known to groove the entire shoulder portion of a highway, with the dreaded slits in the ground extending all the way from the white line to the dirt! Highway 95 in the American state of Nevada is a prime example of a road that is a trike pilot's nightmare, for although shoulders are very wide, easily enough for two trikers to ride side by side in places, the deep grooves take up the entire riding area. You cannot ride a trike over these depressions at any speed greater than a very slow crawl, thus the rider is forced either to ride in the dirt, which is even worse, or out in the traffic lane, where the speed limit for cars and truckers is often a whopping 75 miles per hour (heck, trikers are truly fortunate if they make 75 miles per day).

Bicyclists have it better, for they have only one tire line on the ground, which can be placed right on the road's side line, but tricyclists do not have this luxury. This situation requires intelligent reconnaissance prior to choosing your trip route, for to find yourself on such a road is not a good thing for your nerves and longevity potential. Use your computer and "Google" intended roadways ahead of time, as there are some websites that show numerous photographs of the actual road, and you can visually see these unwanted gremlins. If a road shoulder has only a nine inch grooving outside the white line, but still has enough ungrooved shoulder remaining outside of that, you'll be fine.

**Trip Tip – (Trike Ambassadorship):** It is very common to spot bicyclists every day who give the bicycling community a bad wrap. You know the ones. They repeatedly violate traffic laws in front of everyone without even a thought. They've been doing it since they rode bikes as kids, and as adults, the ingrained behavior is wholly unconscious. It's a good bet also that these same folks will cry fowl if struck by a car as a result of their riding practices. Riding on the wrong side of the road, weaving in and out of traffic without signaling, running every stop sign, and splitting lanes to get ahead are but a few images that come to mind. Their reasons are irrelevant. Their actions are a collective voice to motorists that they are exempt from the same laws they expect to protect them, the laws other road users must follow. Many trikers are former bikers. Should they continue violating traffic laws regularly

while using public roadways now that they are on tricycles?

**Consider this:** Tricycle riders are in an exceptionally tiny minority of people who use the public roads. Most motorists have never even seen a trike, they are so rare. As trike pilots, it is highly important to ensure our safety in every manner possible. Part of that safety factor includes having motorists respect us, and extend courtesies to us in situations where our riding area is minimal. How do we build that respect? One way is always being considerate ourselves, and always obeying all traffic laws we expect motorists to obey.

If we are pedaling on a narrow road with little or no shoulder, which is not uncommon as most governments pay no heed to the safety of human powered humans, and a few cars are piling up behind us due to heavy oncoming traffic, the courteous thing to do is pull over at the first opportunity and let the queue pass. This will earn all trikers a good name in the eyes of the motorists who witnessed your kindness. When we come to stop signs, we stop ... just like everyone else has to do. Not only is it always the law, but this seemingly trivial event also earns us respect.

Our own selfish reasons for running stop signs, riding on the wrong side of the road, or any other infraction are irrelevant. When I'm out in traffic, I wish to be respected and treated courteously by motorists, but if their only other interaction with a trike was a negative one, then that unconscious triker has indirectly put me in peril through a resentful motorist who is less likely to cut me any slack. This is why I make this point in my writings. We all need to be ambassadors for tricycling!

Whatever your own private feelings on this topic, please remember you are an ambassador for a very rare form of transportation, and because of a trike's unique appearance, all eyes are always upon it when in traffic. Do the right thing for us all. Make us all proud to be trike pilots. The life you save may be your own! Or mine!

**Trip Tip – (Living Lost Time):** That sounds hard to do, and in fact it is for the vast majority of people. The masses of first world countries are so consumed by their daily routines designed for the accumulation of wealth and status that they lose time on a regular basis, usually every day. Time is lost in a variety of ways, but for this final Trip Tip, I wish to speak of perhaps the most common: while driving the car. Most of us typically find ourselves in a hurry during our daily work and responsibilities, to such an extent that we can surely

understand wilderness author Melissa Walker's labeling of it as a “hurry sickness” that affects nearly everyone without their conscious comprehension of it. Who among us, while driving a car, isn't either thinking of the past, or anxious about the future? Who isn't thinking about their destination as they speed along in the automobile, totally consumed with just wanting to be at the other end of their drive for that errand or important meeting? People drive cars for one core reason: to get somewhere quickly and conveniently, rarely to enjoy the scenery or the trip itself. I know this because I did it for over 40 years. The car trip was simply a means to an end ... get me to where I wanted to go, now!

**Consider this:** The time that most folks spend commuting in petroleum powered automobiles is lost time, that is to say, not used in any productive manner. It's just a necessary thing to quickly arrive at another locale. We can't do anything but just wait as the miles speed by with our foot on the accelerator (at least nothing legally or safely). Human powered recumbent tadpole trikes are different however! Those very few of us who ride them already realize that they are considerably slower than cars, so we tend to think differently while on them. The distance a car can travel in one hour, a triker would be lucky to travel in one day.

Trike pilots are not consumed by hurry sickness, especially when taking an overland trike journey of many days or weeks. We have no choice but to pedal along in a different frame of mind. We enjoy the scenery, very up close and personal, as we have an abundance of time to view a particular landscape as we lowly and silently move through it.

We are part of our surroundings, out in nature, not boxed up in a fast steel vehicle, apart from nature. The time that we would have lost on a particular trip if in a car is time that we actually live on a trike, as we are pedaling and appreciating each moment of each mile. We do not lose time fretting about yesterday or worried about what tomorrow brings. Trikes have a way of bringing us into a more present and lucid state, elevating our consciousness about what life really is. Details are alive, and that life seeps into our very being. We can actually lose ourselves in periods where thoughts do not consume us, a place of elevated consciousness where we transcend the mediocrity, hypocrisy, and egoic states of everyone else flying by in their toxic two ton machines.

Trikes have immense life altering powers that we come to appreciate the farther we ride them. Sure enough, they're a preferable solution to seeing a psychologist, and a whole lot cheaper too. They

bring life into a more realistic focus for the long haul pilot, a state that local errand riding trikers may not yet know. So get out there on a long journey and live lost time. Trikes! They're just different ... like the people who ride them!

**Trip Tip – (Nail Removal Service):** If you have an advanced case of toenail fungus, a possible part of the solution is medical removal of the nail. This nail removal service is provided by licensed doctors for a substantial fee that may be covered by some insurance plans. It also has absolutely nothing to do with this trip tip, being only a feeble attempt to inject curiosity and humor into this otherwise mundane tip.

You are a trike pilot, one of a rare breed of adventurers that by its exclusive nature, forms an invisible bond of shared camaraderie. We all help one another, and love to come upon others while out on the road. Heck, if we see another triker while on an overland trike trip (chances close to zero), it is such a rare occurrence that hours could be spent talking, or even making a common camp that night to extend the sharing. One of many ways we can help each other is by nail removal. What does that mean?

**Consider this:** Trikes are slow compared to automobiles, so we sometimes find ourselves riding on the road's shoulder or in gutters to remain alive (unless there's no traffic, in which case we can joyfully hog the entire lane). Shoulders and gutters are repositories for all manner of road junk, like broken glass, nails, truck tire cords, rocks, dead animals, bananas, diapers, tampons, bags of Fritos ... you name it, and you'll eventually find it alongside the road someday. Since governments aren't too eager or motivated to spend money cleaning highway shoulders and gutters, trikers ride in some of this stuff on every trike trip. Thus, since we are an elite association of kindred three-wheeled spirits, we must help one another however we can, even if we don't know any other trikers may be coming along anytime soon (you never know – there may be a two-wheeled bicyclist behind you who might be your friend if you express a random act of kindness).

Bottom line: Anytime you notice a nail, broken glass, or other nasty tire eating item in your path, it is usually an easy thing to simply put a hand down a few inches, pick it up as you pedal by, and give it the old "heave ho" off the side of the road somewhere (just don't let the local constable see you, lest he think you just littered). It all comes back to that ambassadorship ideology spoken of elsewhere. Do the right thing for fellow trikers. Leave a good impression for everyone wherever

you ride ... every time!

**Trip Tip – (Eye-wear):** How important is it to give careful consideration to what you wear over your eyes while on your most excellent interstate trike journey? This is one of the most important contemplations prior to departure. And it's not just to keep the wind out of your eyes on high speed mountain descents. There are several critical aspects of eye protection to ponder, because if you can't see, it's pretty hard to trike.

**Consider this:** You are at automobile tire height on your trike. Cars whiz by you, sometimes at speeds of 70 miles per hour. Car tires throw up little stones (have you ever gotten a cracked windshield?). If a small tire-thrown rock can crack an auto windshield, think what it will do to your eye! You absolutely must wear polycarbonate lenses in front of your eyes, probably in the form of polarized sunglasses to dramatically cut road glare at your low level. Polycarbonate lenses will probably stop any stones from contacting your eyes, as these lenses are built from material designed not to shatter.

Wearing glass lenses is clearly not advisable. If you have prescription glasses necessary for distance vision, make sure the ones you wear on your trike trip have lenses that are of polycarbonate construction. What if you get in a dust storm? Maybe a polycarbonate goggle type eye-wear would be good, something sealed around the edges, like the ones they sell at True Value hardware, something akin to swimmer's goggles but made for dune buggy drivers.

Most of us will have heavily tinted eye-wear for the long hours in the sun, but should we have a clear pair for night riding? Yes, it would be a good idea, although sunglasses work in a pinch. But you say you won't ride at night. Well, I thought that too until my first interstate ride, when the full moon beckoned for a truly incredible experience that only comes in the dark when there is no car traffic. It was so memorable that I did it two more times that trip. Even if you don't voluntarily choose a night ride, it may choose you, depending on circumstances. Yes, it is possible to get caught up in something that requires you to ride at night, so keep it in mind.

\* \* \* \* \*

Add your own tips online at: <http://trikeasylum.freeforums.org>



## Meet Wild Steve

Most “About the Author” pages in books are written in the third person, using the pronouns “she” or “he” to give the appearance the piece is written by someone other than the author. This supposedly lends an aura of credibility to the author, and removes any potential for inferred arrogance, as the mysterious third person can wax poetic about the book’s writer and no one mistakes it as ego out of control. Well folks, I am the author, and I’ll be using the pronoun “I” in this piece, as there is nothing to boast about. I’m just a modest and mellow explorer of the natural world doing my best to quietly and harmoniously enjoy my time here on the planet I call home.

It’s a pretty good planet too. And the universe isn’t half bad either. I get the sense that I’m all linked into it somehow, and one of my life endeavors is to learn more. So here I am, searching my world and sharing a few tidbits about myself for anyone who is determined to find out just how crazy I really am. Stop reading now if you’re a normal human being who believes in the status quo. All others proceed at their own risk (don’t say I didn’t warn you) ...

Life is a journey, and we all travel different paths. And yes, it is the **journey** that counts, not the destination, for the destination most assuredly is one few of us wish to discuss if we want to avoid rather unsettling thoughts. Of course, occasionally retaining the grim reaper’s destination in view reminds us to make the most of our journey while we are still on it, not fretting and fettering away the time each day over trivial gripes and complaints that have a stranglehold on so many people. The trike comes in handy in this regard. Not only does it increase our physical health and fitness, but it also improves our spirits, for who among us can not help but love the experience each time we

slip into the cockpit, click onto the pedals, grab the handlebars, and rocket off for yet another adventure, be it around town or across the country?

Okay, yep, it's hard for me to stop talking about trikes and focus on myself, but since you paid for and probably expect some "About the Author" chatter, let's change course and talk about Wild Steve instead.

It's Saturday morning, the ninth of April 2011. The sun is rising and the air warming. It's springtime! Little over an hour ago, as I was just emerging from sleep, in a semi-conscious state where my mind tends to have amazing epiphanies, I thought, "Aha, it's time to awaken!" It was more than simply opening my eyes and getting out of bed, as it occurred to me that this chapter of the book, which I had originally written last fall while awaiting the contributors' submissions, was nothing more than continuing talk about tricycles and why I ride one. So now, I'm doing a rewrite.

Most "About the Author" sections of many books are also pretty anemic, only a short paragraph long, with scant information about the writer. You end up knowing where the person lives, who the spouse is, and how many kids are running around the house. That's about it. Well, since this is a big book, the equivalent of two 370 pagers, perhaps a big bunch of words about its presenter is in order. We'll put some meat in meet the author. Further reading is optional however if you already know enough and have better things to be doing today.

Let's begin with a tad of info about who I think I might be. I will pull thoughts from my past, which is all I can do here because I'm in the present. Oh gads, he's getting philosophical? Well maybe, after some brief history. The "wild" of Wild Steve came about because of my life-long love for the wilds of nature, a feral condition initially realized in early childhood when I couldn't get enough of hiking. I always had to know what was around that next bend of the canyon, or just past those trees.

Mom, dad, sis, and I would go on a two week vacation every summer, to many points across the western United States, and once even to Tennessee, because word had it that we were somehow descended from Andrew Jackson, that fellow on the twenty dollar bill. When they were young, mom and dad once visited Death Valley on a 1947 Harley, consequently getting hooked on the terrain, so the family went there from time to time through the years. My most recent visit was in 2009, when I set out from Oregon on a tricycle to go there and talk about one of my Death Valley books. Oops, tricycles again. Back to

the author spiel. So what was my former life like?

The school years were pretty mundane, laced occasionally with episodes of pure terror when I had to get up and give a report to the class, or the gym teacher would have us all do a pull-up test. Gary States was the class stud, and could do 31 pull-ups at a crack. I was the class slug, and could only do one with every ounce of strength in me. I was always the last guy picked for gym teams. Embarrassing!

The class bully, Bob Fredericks, sensing my weakness, shallow ego, and mental vulnerability, continually teased me, called me names, put gum in my hair, or tripped me. He was a skinny guy with a face that resembled John Kerry, but he scared the daylights out of me. Near the end of my senior high school year, Bruce Hueners, a star on the varsity football team, introduced me to weight lifting. Motivated by immature hostility towards Bob for years of imbecilic transgressions against me, I dove into the weights with a vengeance, and within a few years, Charles Atlas would have been proud. Weaking to bodybuilding muscle-head, my formerly fragile ego was clearly growing out of control.

These were the beginnings of my nearly endless college years, through which I studied journalism, photography, criminal justice, communications, and how to be a school teacher. Never one to get stuck in any particular subject too long, a well-rounded education made it into my skull over time. I ended up with ten colleges and universities in my resume, went from my former C+ grades to Summa Cum Laude and the National Dean's List, and eventually realized that was enough of proving myself in educational settings. After all, when was I ever going to live life itself, rather than always just preparing for it?

Regarding careers, dentistry originally was on my mind, as my childhood dentist was a cool guy I really respected. I wasn't smart enough for medical school though. Then, mining engineering popped up since I loved to explore old mines in the Mojave Desert, and my dad thought there might be a match. I wasn't smart enough for engineering school either – quit after first semester. Okay, dad was a journalist, so next I entered journalism school – now that I got (although if you find an typo I mised in this boook, you may wander).

Then on to photography school, which I loved. Bought my first Hasselblad camera back in the days when they had this ancient method of image capture that required a messy thing called film. Learned all about darkroom processing too. When I began to doubt my ability to actually “earn” a living with cameras, I switched gears again and joined a law enforcement agency so I could help people in distress (most of



my peers joined so they could throw bad guys in the slammer). What a head-trip it was to carry a gun and badge at that age. I don't own any guns anymore 'cause I don't need to kill anybody nowadays, but I still have a badge with my name on it (great for getting out of speeding tickets, but now that my only vehicle is a trike, top speed is too slow to worry about citations anyway).

For a several years in the eighties, I owned and operated Globe Gym, not far from the Burbank movie studios. It was a small coed fitness center where I really got into helping my 425 members with their fitness goals. It wasn't uncommon for some of the members to share their life problems with me, apparently feeling that since they trusted their bodies to my care that the mind was a natural extension. A few said I should have gone into the ministry, or become a spiritual teacher. Guess my advice must have had some merit at least. I've always loved to help people, bring a smile to their face, and share my knowledge and whatever wisdom was in stuck in my head.

Epiphany struck me after 13 years working at cop shops, and I decided rather than arresting folks after they had already entered a socially unacceptable line of work, I'd help them out as kids before they even got to that point. So, into elementary education I went, teaching the adults of tomorrow. Some pretty good perks came with the territory too ... like summer summer vacations! Never got that as a cop.

During the teaching years, I was introduced to windsurfing, an adrenaline charged sport of racing across the top of water, powered only by the invisible air. I liked it even better than downhill skiing because there were never any lift lines, so it was continuously full throttle as long as the wind kept blowing. Of course, that was part of the problem with this activity, and time was always spent sitting on the beach waiting for the next big blow. Trikes never need wind!

I lived in southern California for the first 31 years of my life, but remedied that mistake once my brilliant mind figured out there were big mountains in a state called Colorado. One of my duties while there was the county Search & Rescue (SAR) director, coordinating county, state, and military field rescue operations. People are continually lost (in more ways than one), so they needed a guy to go find them, preferably alive. Our motto was: "Support Search & Rescue – Get Lost". Also, I made a home at 9,000 feet in the wilderness, suffered irreparable brain damage from the thin air, jeeped all over the old mining roads, climbed 14,309 foot peaks, and shoveled four feet of snow each morning during the winter in temps that dipped to 40 below.

What an experience – so fantastic I would have been happy to die there. Didn't work out that way though.

I'm still alive, but now living at sea level on the Oregon coast. Brain functioning has improved with the heavy salt air. This is an exciting place too, especially when 9-point earthquakes hit and 50 foot tsunamis race onshore. Always something to keep me on my toes! My current dwelling is one mile from the beach. To the west are 5,000 miles of ocean and then Japan. To the south are 9,000 miles of ocean and then Antarctica. Above are 93 million miles of space and then the sun. So my triking is limited to some extent in the directions I can ride. That's okay however, because the trike can take me anywhere inland I have the spunk to venture.

During my earlier years of working out, I thought that I needed up to 400 grams of animal based protein daily to build a strong body. Well, the notion worked all right, but in the ensuing decades, I came to realize that functional longevity and overall health were more important than just being the biggest baddest guy pumping iron. Overloading the body like that would not get me to 122 years. Now, after 20 years of bodybuilding competition and 42 years of weight and aerobic training, my nutritional intake is predominantly vegan – organic and locally grown whenever possible. Other than an occasional meal that includes a small portion of salmon for the omega-3 fatty acids, I eat no animals or anything that is excreted from them, such as eggs, milk, or cheese. Additional omega-3s find their way into me from plant based sources such as flax, but the ALA form is not efficiently converted to the EPA and DHA forms used by my body, thus the salmon supplementation.

I probably shouldn't get too far off on a nutritional tangent here, lest I end up writing a whole new book about fitness and longevity, so suffice it to say that some of my food includes: blueberries, oatmeal, soy products like tempeh, beans, brown rice, plenty of fresh vegetables, lots of fruit, and many other wonderful items from the plant kingdom. Avoided at all costs are genetically modified organisms (GMO). I eat as close to nature as possible, never drinking fruit juices, as that overworks and ultimately burns out the pancreas – eat the fruit instead.

Commercial gyms no longer get any money from me. I work out at home, three days per week for just over one hour. Multiple times daily, when I walk up the stairs to my work area, I take them three at a time, further strengthening the body. I prefer to be in motion, to use the body so as not to lose it. At this writing, I've been riding a trike for a couple of years, which has greatly supplemented my walking. No

longer owning a car provides many excellent benefits, not only for my personal health, but also that of the air I breathe each day. Trikes are so much fun that it doesn't even seem like routine exercise.

I also live close to nature, as I am part of the natural world. My control-happy ego insists I am separate from everyone else and my environment, but such is not the case. My ego exists to make sure I am always right, my thoughts are always the best ... at the expense of other humans. These thoughts, based on the totality of my past experiences and conditioning in life, are essentially unconscious, and when I identify with them, I become shallow and unaware, stuck in the daily machine of rote existence.

My ego provides me plenty of ingrained images about who I am, and I have been using those past ideas in this chapter when relating me to you. Is this what and who I am? No. Most of what I have said here is from another time, which does not exist now. Remaining in the present moment, free from passing judgments on people or events, and free of resisting that which is, now is me. What I do to others or my planet, I also do to myself. If I poison my air, I poison myself. If I make someone else sad, I make myself sad. I wish to be an ambassador of human harmony, bringing smiles to all, while helping folks see there are alternatives to what we believe life is. Idealistic? Sure, but it's my way!

I watch a world about me that falls yet deeper into the clutches of power and greed, fueled by the lust for almighty currency. I see governments corruptly run by corporations, soothing the citizenry into believing democracy is at work. I view electricity producing paradigms that fail repeatedly over the decades and fill the Earth's habitats with deadly radioactivity, leaving a world where there are no longer any safe havens. I learn of the latest religious mayhem carried out in the name of jealous deities, an egoic universal human mindset that hasn't changed for countless centuries. I wonder if the blindness will ever see a light.

On a planet with finite resources, a collective measurement of societal success that is based on materialistic consumption is ultimately self destructive. Our personal egos are out of control in our need for more, better, and faster, and thus our collective ego has become an invisible selfish prison that perpetuates suffering. "Our country is the best." "Our deity is the only one." "God bless America" I hear. Why not sanctify the entire population of humans? What about all of life? Our ego centered mindsets have sadly separated us from "the other" and dehumanized any not the same as ourselves. It makes us feel safe, yet it's not true. We are not better than others. We are all one.

I also see hope in a growing universal awareness of enlightened folks who are becoming wise to the fact that the status quo isn't working for us, an increasing number of people who know our ways will not sustain not only our species, but all the others of this planet. These are genuine people who step away from who they have traditionally perceived themselves to be, have stripped away all the egoic stories our thoughts would have us believe, and in that state of presence, are moving towards an awareness of life itself. They are seeing that life includes everything in our natural world, from rocks and animals to sky and space. There is an interconnectedness of all things, and these new ambassadors of universal peace and harmony each take their little steps, which feed into the new collective of hope.

Perhaps I've taken my writing too far today. Perhaps I have made some folks uncomfortable. Who wants their boat rocked when they have fancy houses, fast cars, big incomes, and glorious heaven? I have personally gone through a ten year period of acute psychological unrest in this process, for it requires a hard look at self, and a determination of whether my actions and thoughts are for "ME" or for the greater good of all life (of which I am but a minuscule part). Breaking free of the ego's iron grip is the most challenging worthwhile thing I can be doing. I am proceeding through my metamorphosis as an evolving being, and am now entering the most exciting time of my life, despite the fact that my financial situation would likely be wholly unacceptable to nearly everyone reading these words today.

I named this book *Free on Three*, pointing towards the freedom of the open road on a trike. Freedom is a wonderful thing. How about freedom from money, greed, power, and ego too? The trike allows me physical freedom to silently move through the countryside, and also a time of being in the here and now, where my spirit can better assess life and my part of it. To break free of that which we believe we need to survive is not easy, yet for me, the rewards have been unimagined, and are continuing to unfold every day. In 2008 I sold my final petroleum powered vehicle to better meld with Earth, and now see it as a symbolic measure that foretold my ever widening transition in life itself.

So there you have it! The tip of the Wild Steve iceberg. More than you bargained for in a book about human powered recumbent tadpole tricycles, I would imagine. Well, it was the trike that further defined aspects of what I've discussed here, so it's all interrelated.

There are two sentiments that have long spoken to my essence. "If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space."

Yep, sure enough, I'm out on that edge now, and with writings like this, am only going farther out. Yet I like it out here. I find a more peaceful realm out past the mass of society. "Only those who risk going too far will discover how far they can go." Some may likely insist I've gone way too far in this chapter – their egos erecting impenetrable defenses they cannot see. In days past, I would have reacted the same way. I'm risking going too far, and the benefits are incredible. This journey has begun, and the grand adventure awaits at every turn! Like on a trike ...

Your fellow trike pilot & life explorer,

**Stevie G.**

Triker, Hiker, Naturalist, Philosopher, and all-around Cool Guy

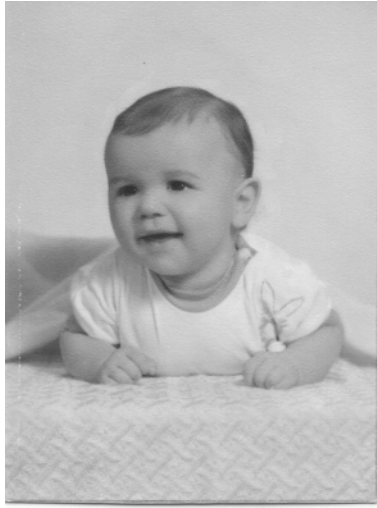
## **EXPEDITION**

by Wild Steve

The adventurous day was wearing on,  
so I pitched my tent so tattered;  
On the mountainside above the flat,  
nothing else in life really mattered;  
Out here in nature's wonderland,  
where the birds and brooks do speak,  
I inhale life and feel so grand  
at the foot of snow covered peaks.

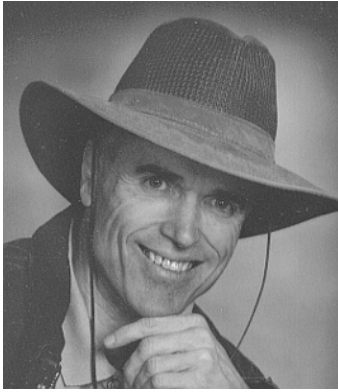
Up with the sun, I am at one  
with all that surrounds this child;  
The more I heed, the greater my need  
to follow the call of the wild;  
So over the hills I trike once again,  
to new vistas I have yet to find;  
It's the way I am, and will always be,  
a spirit with a primal mind.

## PHOTO SCRAPBOOK:

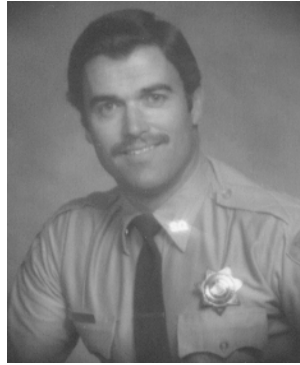


Now that's a cute baby! You may notice I have that "far away" adventurous twinkle to my eyes, and am already crawling out from the safety of my covers here at the midpoint of the twentieth century, seeking a wild time in nature. Below: Family in 1957. I'm on the left, the crazy triker boy with the silly laughing mouth:

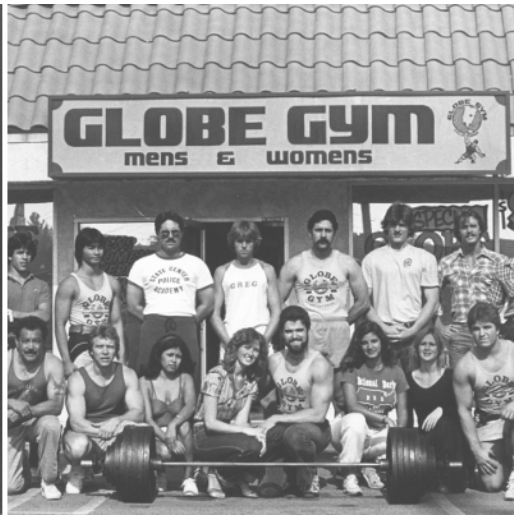




2007 Wild adventure guy.



1987 Conservative cop guy.



1975 Egoic muscle head onstage at Mr. Los Angeles bodybuilding contest (photo by Jim Morris, 1973 Mr. America). Early eighties gym business near Burbank movie studios.



1993 Windsurfing fanatic far from shore, on a Seatrend shortboard



2010 Hiking Glacier National Park, Two Medicine Lake

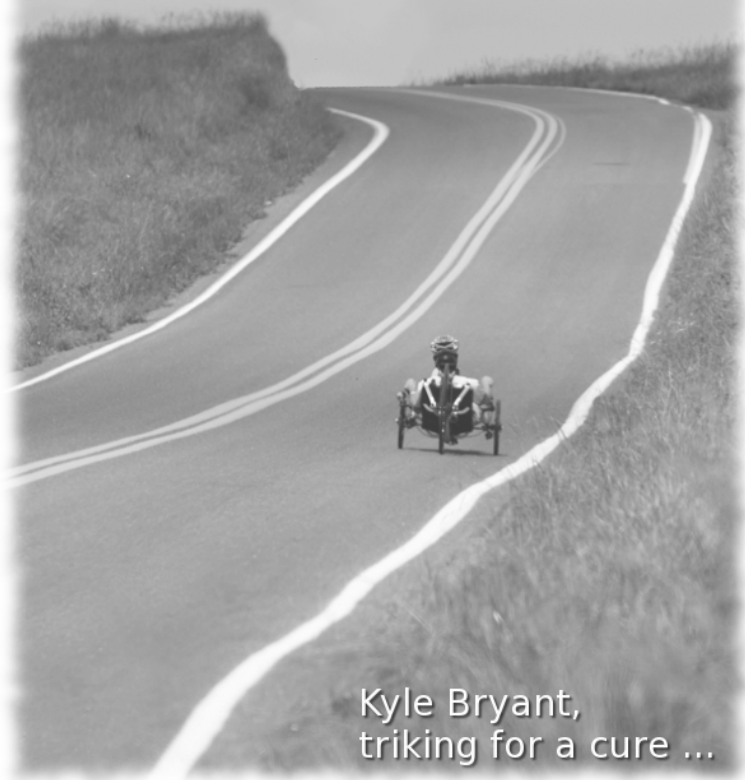


**Part Seven:**  
**Tadpole Tricycle Resources**



# FREE on THREE

He who returns from a journey  
is not the same as he who left.



Kyle Bryant,  
triking for a cure ...

## **Trike Resource Support** **To continue your journey**

~

**Arkel** (Canada – trike pannier manufacturer)  
888-592-7373 panniers.com

**Berserker Cycle** (USA – trike manufacturer)  
734-368-3809 berserkercycle.com

**Bicycle Man** (USA – trike dealer)  
607-587-8835 bicycleman.com

**Bryan Ball** (USA – Bent Rider Online)  
bentrideronline.com

**Catrike** (USA – trike manufacturer)  
407-905-0626 catrike.com

**Charles Coyne** (USA – Recumbent & Tandem Rider Magazine)  
rtrmag.com

**Dan Price** (USA – TransAm rider)  
moonlightchronicles.com

**Denise Lanier** (USA – NYC Marathon rider)  
wonkybent.wordpress.com

**Don Saito** (USA – TransAm rider)  
cycleamerica2009.blogspot.com

**Greenspeed** (Australia – trike manufacturer)  
+61 3 9753 3644 greenspeed.com.au

**Hostel Shoppe** (USA – trike dealer)  
800-233-4340 hostelshoppe.com

**ICE** (England – trike manufacturer)  
+44 0 7969 973114 icetrikes.co

**Innesenti** (England – trike manufacturer)  
innesenti.com

**Janet Buckwalter** (USA – TransAm rider)  
BikeWriterUSA.com  
crazyguyonabike.com (*then search her name*)

**Kerrel Cycle** (USA – trike designer)  
kerrelcycles.com

**Kyle Bryant** (USA – RAAM rider)  
theataxian.com & cureFA.org

**Radical Design** (Netherlands – trike pannier manufacturer)  
+31 599 513482 radicaldesign.nl

**Sidewinder Cycle** (USA – trike manufacturer)  
866-524-3022 sidewindercycle.com

**TerraTrike** (USA – trike manufacturer)  
800-945-910 terratrike.com

**Trike Asylum** (USA – trike knowledge base)  
trikeasylum.wordpress.com (*website*)  
trikeasylum.freeforums.org (*forum*)

**T.Ryx Recumbent Trikes** (USA – trike dealer)  
760-741-0411 t-ryx.com

**Utah Trikes** (USA – trike dealer)  
801-804-5810 utahtrikes.com

**Craig Prophet Design** (USA – graphic designer)  
Bicycle Man logo artist  
607-587-8833 prophet@infoblvd.net

**Wild Steve** (USA – cool trike guy)  
wildsteve.wordpress.com

## 16 Trike Safety Considerations

Courtesy of Inspired Cycle Engineering: ICE

Amongst all of us here at ICE, we've ridden many thousands of miles on trikes, and we've all developed good road sense. The following safety considerations are for your benefit; please do give them serious consideration prior to heading out on your trike:

~

We recommend always wearing an approved cycling helmet. Get the best you can afford. If you've got a cheap head, get a cheap helmet!

We highly recommend the use of clipless pedals. Shimano's SPD system is a good choice, and there are many SPD compatible shoes and pedals on the market. Most cycling shoes will come with the necessary fittings that allow cleats to be fitted, and the only other thing you'll need is a set of pedals. Pedals are available with cleat bindings on one side and a standard platform on the other (allowing you to go for a quick spin without having to change into your cycling shoes). For those who have not experienced clipless pedals, they have a small binding mechanism built into the pedal, which locks onto a cleat fastened to the bottom of the shoe. It works in a similar fashion to a ski boot binding. To lock your foot in, you hook the cleat into the binding and push. To remove your foot, you twist your heel sideways and the binding releases the cleat. Once you are clipped in, you will not need to put your feet down until you want to get off; being clipped in is comfortable, lets your legs relax when you are not pedaling, and allows power to be transferred more effectively to the pedals.

Check your trike before each ride. In particular, check the tyres and brakes to ensure they are in good working order.

If you are riding at night, make sure you have a legal white headlight and a red taillight. We recommend using both non-flashing and flashing LED taillights in tandem. The flashing light is very noticeable at a great distance, and the non-flashing light is better for other road users to judge your distance from them.

Use your rear view mirror, but don't rely on it. You must also turn your head to check behind you before turning or changing lanes.

Be careful of carrying too much speed into corners. The immense stability of the trike is not absolute, and sharp high speed cornering may cause you to lift the inside wheel, or even roll over. As you ride more, you will gradually learn what the limits of the trike are.

Be careful also of downhill speeds. It is VERY easy to reach speeds in excess of 40 miles per hour (60 kilometres per hour) when going downhill. Although you may feel in perfect control, be wary of and allow for road hazards and other road users doing foolish things.

Drum brakes on a trike can get very hot after long descents. You can burn yourself on the hot metal surfaces.

The usual practice is to brake evenly using both hands. You can brake at the maximum rate with the front brakes only. ICE trikes are designed not to brake-steer if you brake only one side (a safety feature necessary if you are braking and signaling a turn at the same time), but violent, single sided braking can cause the trike to pull slightly to the braked side.

Use your flag. Most road users haven't ever seen anything like your trike, and will give you much more attention and room on the road than they would a standard upright bicycle. Nevertheless, using the flag will help to ensure you've been seen, especially in heavy traffic. You are low, and reversing cars may not be able to see you. Ride defensively, as if others can't see you.

Consider bright visible clothes. They make good sense regardless of what you are riding.

You might consider fitting a horn. The "AirZound" is a lightweight air horn, charged with your tricycle tyre pump, and it is LOUD! It is available at most good bike shops.

Although you are far more noticeable than any other cycle, motorists will almost always underestimate the speed of an approaching trike. They just don't seem to understand how fast you can be traveling. Be

wary of cars that assume you are slow and pull out in front of you with little warning. Also be wary of cars overtaking you close to a junction. They will often misjudge the space they have to get in front of you, and are rarely certain of what to do once they've realized their mistake.

Like any other cycle, try not to ride close to parked cars. Drivers can fling open a door or pull out suddenly.

Don't ride close to the edge of the road. Rubbish tends to collect there and your tyre is at a greater risk of picking up a puncture. Although a trike is only a little wider than the handlebars of an upright bicycle, it is seen as being very wide by other road users. If you move out a little into the road, it is less likely that drivers will try to force their way past. Likewise, pay attention to timid drivers who refuse to overtake you (because you are so wide!). Pulling to the side to let the queue pass will earn you the respect of other road users. Like Steve Greene is always saying, be an ambassador of good will for all trikers everywhere. It pays dividends for our community of trikers.



**Adventure awaits on three wheels ... go find it!**  
(ICE Vortex on the road)



Country Freedom on TerraTrikes





Unlimited Freedom on a Greenspeed



Mobile Freedom on Sidewinders



Backroad Freedom on the Innesenti



Open Road Freedom on a Catrike



Hobo Freedom on a TerraTrike



Bent Rider Freedom on a Scorpion



Day Riding Freedom on a Catrike

*The voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes,  
but in having new eyes.*

*Marcel Proust*

*French novelist and philosopher (1871 – 1922)*



*And the trike shall grant each pilot new life ...*