

Rollin'

Newsletter of the Silver Wheels Cycling Club, Inc.

January, 2014



Editor's Column

By Larry Best

So there I was, minding my own business as usual, when all of a sudden I decided to take a look at how many rides I'd done since the banquet in early December. The answer was darn few. I lead rides from CVS at 10:00am every Monday and Thursday. It seems like almost every Monday and Thursday we have gotten hit with snow, rain, slippery roads, very cold temperatures or rumors of Godzilla roaming the countryside looking for cyclists. If this keeps up I'll have to go to the gym and take some spinning classes. Spinning classes and riding trainers or rollers is, in my opinion, one of the most boring activities on the planet. It's like watching paint dry only it hurts while you're doing it. On the other hand it's better than what I've been doing, which is nothing. I shudder to think how much fitness I've already lost. SIGH! Speaking of the annual banquet, it

was very well attended. In fact I think it was a record. Tom's Country Place served up tasty food as usual and after we ate, awards were passed out. There were also door prizes and the upshot was that a lot of people went home happy, which is always a good thing.

I look forward to riding with you this year. One of my hopes for the New Year is that more members will get involved with the club by bringing their bikes out and putting on a few miles. Although Silver Wheels has lots of activities and opportunities to volunteer we are first and foremost a cycling club. Cycling is what we do, so I encourage members that haven't ridden at all or have ridden only a few miles to dust off the bike and c'mon out.

Something I regret deeply is that due to the lack of physical facilities I will be unable to

teach any of my classes in 2014. It's always possible that this could change if someone volunteers their garage, barn, or dungeon that I could use. If that happens I'll teach each of the four classes (*Care & Feeding of Your Bike*, *Dealing With Road Emergencies 101 and 102* and *How to make simple adjustments on your bike*) twice; once in the spring and once in the fall.

I also want to say that I have enjoyed being the editor of Rollin' for the past few years, but this might be my last year. There are other jobs within the club with which I'd like to become involved. So if you'd like to edit Rollin' you've got a year to think about it.



What Does That Mean?

By Larry Best

We've all heard statements like, "*That John Doe is a really **good rider**.*" *Jane Doe has improved a lot since she bought that new bike last year. She's a really **good rider** now.*"

OKAY, just what is "**a good rider?**" I think almost all of us upon hearing that term think of speed, endurance, or power. Does being fast = being a **good rider?** This is just my personal opinion, but no, I don't think so. There are certainly plenty of strong, fast riders who are good, but some of them, in my opinion, aren't. There are strong riders that I don't like to ride with. In fact, I don't like to be anywhere near them when riding. There are strong riders in our club that can't change a flat tire by themselves. They can't make a U turn on a two lane road without putting a foot down. They ride at an uneven pace, fast, then slow, then fast, etc. They can't make minor adjustments to their bike to keep them running well. I don't consider them **good riders**.

Another thing that might be considered is how many accidents a rider has experienced. If a rider has never had a crash does that make them a **good rider?** Not crashing is certainly a good thing. Eating pavement is no fun. But what about a person who has never crashed, only rides a few miles per year, and those miles are only on the bike path at a leisurely speed? I have to ask if they're familiar with their bike. Can they change a tire unassisted? Are they able to handle their bike in a competent way? Can they make a quick adjustment on a brake that's rubbing? Do they know how to make an emergency stop? If those answers aren't yes I wouldn't consider them a **good rider**.

So...exactly what does a **good rider** do or not do to be good? Please keep in mind that this is just my opinion.

I think a good rider has to be well balanced, (no pun intended) know the rudiments of how their bike works and be capable of making minor adjustments on their bike in case they break down on the road or trail. They certainly need to be able to fix a flat without help from anyone and not make excuses like “I don’t need to know that because I never ride alone.” They ride within their limits at a steady pace. They don’t take chances, especially when around other cyclists or in traffic. They know the rules of the road and are fully aware of what they’re doing and what’s around them at all times. They’re proficient at handling their bike. They know and practice counter steering, know how to make emergency stops, know how to make tight turns when needed. They don’t crash or cause crashes on a regular basis. They know how to corner and practice it often. They ride at a steady pace. When somebody says, “Car back!” they move to the far right and single up immediately unless they’re taking the lane or there’s some other danger involved. They don’t attempt potentially dangerous maneuvers like drafting in a pace line if they’re not comfortable with them. They check their bikes while at home to make sure they’re in good working condition before leaving on a ride.

They’re always considerate of other cyclists by calling out major road defects like large holes or significant gravel on corners. They use proper hand signals when in traffic or when riding in a group with other cyclists. They always carry I.D. a working cell phone and enough tools to make minor repairs or fix a flat while on the road. They’re comfortable riding with other riders and they know that others feel the same way about them.

Nobody, but nobody has not committed the “sins” I’ve outlined. Everyone makes mistakes, everyone loses concentration once in a while, and everyone does something stupid occasionally.

The good riders, in my opinion don’t make these kinds of mistakes very often. Those are the kind of riders I like to ride with. I don’t care how fast or how slow they are. Fast or slow do not = good.



Light Up Your Life

From Active Cyclist

My first experience with bike lights was back in the day of Eco-Challenge. We would ride through the night on our [mountain bikes](#), through all types of terrain, and would need strong, reliable lighting. Back then, the choice of our team was Nightrider. The very strong light was connected by a cord to a battery pack, which held (I believe) four or six D-cell batteries! It weighed a ton, and it was placed in your water bottle holder.

Talk about progress! Today, there is a great variety of highly efficient, cost-effective, and

super easy-to-use [lights for your bike](#). As many of us are riding early and late in the day, we have come to appreciate the need for a front light that can help us see what's ahead ... as well as be seen by cars approaching, cars coming in from the side and cross streets, as well as driveways and such.

In this regard, we are only looking at front lights for this review; but, obviously, one must also have a bright rear light to be [highly visible](#) by cars traveling in your direction.

What to Look For

From Mark LaLonde of Planet Bike: "Choosing the right head light for your bike can be a daunting task. There are a lot of different lights out there, for a bunch of different purposes. The first question you'll need to ask yourself when choosing a light is what do you want the light to do? Are you looking for a light to see with, or to be seen by motorists and other cyclists? How much do you want to spend? Do you want to use rechargeable batteries?"

How Do You Measure Brightness?

The standard measure of brightness is "lumens." For example, the very simple, straight-forward Nightrider "Mako 1 Watt" is rated at "100 Lumens;" while, their higher end "MiNewt.600 Cordless" is rated at "600 Lumens." The latter would be significantly brighter.

However, when considering the light emitted from a [bike lights](#), one should also consider the "distribution" of the light.

"A very powerful light that shines directly in the horizontal plane acts a spotlight, but does not actually illuminate any of the terrain surrounding you," says Torsten Abel, professional triathlete and fan of the "Nova Star" (which can emit up to 540 Lumens). Liz Weiss, marketing manager at Cateye, adds: "The 'beam pattern' and different modes will help ensure a

cyclist is seen in the dark, fog, etc." How Long Can the Light Hold a Charge?

Along with brightness, one should consider a light's power source. Some are powered by standard batteries, while some by USB rechargeable batteries. The ones we looked at ranged from a single charge life of a low 1.5 hours (with supreme brightness) to an amazing 320 hours for a flashing Cateye HL-EL 135 (a low-cost commuter light).

Of the lights we reviewed, here are our favorites, ranging from the high end, to the most affordable lights:

NiteRider MiNewt 600 Cordless

Warning: do not stare directly at this light in its high beam setting! At 600 lumens, this is the brightest light we tested; however, it pays for that brightness with only a 1.5 hour charge at that level. If your [bike commute](#) is less than 1.5 hours, though, it is easily USB rechargeable while at work; or, with its "low" setting of 275 lumens, you can squeeze out 4.5 hours. At \$150, you get a ton of illumination for the dollar! ([niterider.com](#))

Nova Star

Like the NiteRider, this light is crazily bright, when on its full high beam—540 lumens—and gets 4 hours of battery life at that level (10 hours at 180 lumens). With a unique mounting strap, this light can also go on your helmet nicely. This is the newest bike light just now coming onto the market; so it has not been fully vetted by the public, in general; but, our test was quite positive, and those we know who have been using the Nova are very happy with it. At \$135, it boasts of its value of "dollar per lumen." ([ibikesafe.com](#))

Cateye Nano Shot

It was tough to choose between this excellent mid-range light, or Cateye's entry level HL-EL 135. We chose the Nano, though, due to its

combination of being quite lightweight, USB rechargeable, a very powerful beam of 250 lumens—all at a cost of \$100. With Cateye's unique "optcube lens technology," also, the light seems even brighter. Quickie on the HL-EL 135: basic, easy commuter light—super long battery life (80-320 hours) ...just 20 bucks! (cateye.com)

Planet Bike Blaze

My son has been both a pedicab operator and bike messenger, and was quick to point me to Planet Bike's products. I can see why. As a company, Planet Bike is a strong supporter of bicycle advocacy, and their products are simple, straight-forward, and cost-effective. We tested the Blaze 1W which, at \$46, up to 76 lumens, a battery life of 7-20 hours, and a super simple attachment/detachment mechanism makes it a nice, dependable, modest choice for the everyday commuter. (planetbike.com)

So, from \$20 to \$150 (and more), there are some terrific lights out there, to help you see and be seen in the early mornings and evenings.

Larry Sez:

I commuted by bicycle for years when I worked at N. Ridgeville High. It was an 18 mi one way ride that started at 5:00am. It's pitch black then and I needed a light so that I could see as well as be seen. I bought a NiteRider MiNewt 350. When I took it out of the box I was disappointed when I saw how small it was. I put it on the bike and was I ever surprised! That little thing would light up previously unseen portions of the moon. I always ran it on the highest power setting and cars would routinely flash their lights at me because they thought I was a motorcycle with my high beams on. The Nightrider MiNewt 350

pictured below is about \$80.



I can only imagine how much lighting power the new ones have with almost double the lumens. Of course they cost a lot more, too. Some lights are going for between \$500-600.

The light, on the left, is about as long as your thumb and maybe twice as thick. The battery, on the right, Velcro's to your head tube and is the size of a cigarette pack cut in half. The whole thing including the battery weighs only 10 ounces. The battery is good for 2 hours on high & recharges in about 1.5 hours.



LAST PAGE

