11-1-1983

Wandering Wheels Newsletter, November 1983

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Dear Wheels' Family,

I am always thinking about things we do at Wheels that would be of interest to you "out there". It struck me this summer that you need to hear about some of our --the people who volunteer their time in order to keep the Wheels turning! 

Our history with Glenn and Skip Day goes way back. Glenn tells me that it happened when he and his son, Mark, first saw the 1968 coast-to-coast film. Mark then went coast to coast in '73 and enrolled at Taylor. Glenn's daughter, Connie, followed as a Taylor student and before we knew it Glenn and his wife, Skip, were a wonderful part of the summer cycling program. To date Glenn has driven lead truck--that's a little like playing lead trombone--on seven cross-country trips ('77, '78,'79,'80,'81,'82,'83), as well as on the '79 England tour and the '81 Nova Scotia tour. No one in our twenty-four times across America has done a better job of finding a place to stay night after night than Glennard has (that's his real name, gang!). The computer says that he has knocked on hundreds of doors to ask if he could sleep sixty to eighty tired bicycle riders for the night. If he doesn't get us hot showers he pouts and his day is made when he is able to arrange for a swimming pool!

The gift of SERVICE to the Wheels' program by Glenn and Skip cannot be measured in money. I could not afford to buy their services. Providing I could, however, it would be impossible to buy their love and friendship. That's what makes the difference.

Top photo: Can't keep a good man out of the kitchen! (Glenn with rider Sherry)

Bottom photo: We'll meet you at noon somewhere in Texas! (Glenn and Coach) Sorry, no picture of Skip...camera shy!

Tim Mahaffey received his fifth-crossing medallion '83 coast to coast. It is sterling silver but in no way represents the work at the close of the
put into five crossings. After his first crossing Tim became a staff rider. All his input has been voluntary. Having professionals in their own field join Wheels for the summer months has contributed heavily to our success. Tim is a school teacher in the Dayton area. His wife, Jan, is a plus to his involvement with us. First, she allows him, and even encourages him, to be with us. Second, she occasionally comes along and helps staff a trip. Thanks, Tim and Jan!

Photo: School teacher, Tim, on summer vacation working harder than any other time of year. Girl is Brenda Metzger, first year rider, also a teacher.

Phil and Jean Hand have been with us twice. On the '82 coast-to-coast trip Phil rode and Jean cooked. Jean "knocked us dead" with her cooking (not literally, of course!) and with plain old caring and love. Would you believe once was not enough and this past summer she volunteered to cook again? We had a double "whammy" because Phil was now experienced enough to be a bike group leader, so this past summer they were a big part of helping us put together one of our best coast-to-coast trips. Rumor has it that Phil is going to shoot for a silver medallion. Maybe he and Mahaffey will also go for the GOLD, signifying ten times across!

Photo: Jean Hand (Bad print...pretty girl!)

Oh, by the way, speaking of GOLD, our own Galen Classen made his tenth crossing this past summer and received his gold medallion. His was only the second one to be issued. Congratulations, Herr Classen!

Permit me to brag about the single greatest volunteer worker in our program—you guessed her, BARBI! She had been working on a part-time basis for years. However, for the past four years she has done secretarial work and then jumped in to help fill part of the position left open when Steve Manganello resigned. Hand in hand with pricing and scheduling Possum trips, Barbi coordinates the Kitchen-Retreat House and bike trip calendars. As if that's not enough, she does all the food buying for the bus trips and retreats, as well as most of the cooking for the retreats. Whew! She's really a tiger.
Incidentally, Barbi's #4 child, Dawn, is about to leave the nest! She has been a class volleyball/basketball player and has kept mom and dad on the run. In case you wonder about our house with all the outside activity...... well, it's holding in there!

SPIN OFF

Laurie Schoen, coast-to-coast '82, came into Ivanhoe's Drive In Restaurant sporting a beautiful ring. Needless to say, congratulations were in order! Her fiancé, Doug Walcon, coast-to-coast '80, hid her engagement ring in her water bottle and she discovered it when on a bike trip! "Gulp! What was that?" "Honey, I don't know. Did it have a familiar ring?" (Boo!)

Two of the favorites on the '83 coast to coast were Jerry and Jean Vinyard. They are no spring chickens (they are in my age-range--SMILE!). Actually, they decided about three years ago to sometime ride coast to coast and finally this summer they were able to join us and they made it across. They were really "family" to the rest of the team. Congratulations, Jerry and Jean! A lawsuit recently decided in their favor, circumstances being what they were, has given the whole Wheels' community reason to rejoice. The decision really brought smiles to our faces!

Brad Snowden, from the '82 Vermont tour, was asked by his parents what he wanted for his high school graduation present. He chose a second Wheels' trip and rode on the National Parks trip this past summer. It is a good feeling to be a part of one's graduation present!

COAST TO COAST '83

On a scale of ten, '83's cross country was bumping ten all the way. If it had been a gymnastics performer it would have received a gold medal! We started with a team of eighty-five—the largest ever—consisting of six sets of brothers/sisters, six married couples, a father/son combination, and a family of four. There were several over age thirty-five. We really had a family bond. To me, personally, the team as a whole was like a real friend, very similar to the twenty-three teams preceeding it.

The weather was perfect for us even though it was a hot summer for most. The ease and caring spirit of the group further complimented the tour. In fact, several of us thought of riding for a week after the trip just to wind down.
Never forget, next to Jesus, God's best gift is people; His second best is people enjoying other people. You can quote me on that!

VERMONT

The Vermont trip that followed had its special touches, as well. One of the couples on the trip, Don and Fran Herriman from Detroit and recently retired, came along to enjoy what Wheels called a "fun" trip. Their son, Bob, forgot to tell them about the hills! Fran was quiet and rather matter-of-factly used most of her energies just staying up with the "teeny-boppers". The last full day of riding we were standing outside a store at an intersection, and in the middle of the street was a beautiful garden area, a memorial of sorts. I heard hubby Don say to Fran, "Get out of there. It's not your garden." I directed my attention to where Fran was and, sure enough, she was leaning over pulling weeds out of the garden. Keep in mind that she's a very quiet person and one who minds her own business. She told us that she couldn't stand to see those flowers being choked out by the weeds. Before long one of the younger girls in the group was helping and, wouldn't you know it, soon our whole riding team of six wound up pulling weeds! The townspeople clapped and someone brought some boxes to contain the weeds. Up until then I hadn't seen the weeds. In fact, most of us would have stood all day oblivious to them. However, Fran wasn't happy until the flower garden was clear of the weeds. It reminded me that we all have eyes for some kind of improvement. We could easily tell ourselves, "It's not your garden and you can't come back day after day to enjoy your work. You'll get no thanks." Instead, we need to remember that it feels good just to help get rid of the weeds.

We had a "first" this fall when we did a three-day bike run in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It really was a good trip. The Amish were the object of our attention. God seems to have given them a special gift of hard work coupled with simplicity. I like their "brush stroke". It seems to be the same one used by so many of the people who have so greatly influenced others in the Christian faith. We had fifty on the tour. Keep in touch with us regarding interest in these week-enders.

ISRAEL

As of this writing, we will be off to the Holy Land come January '84. We now have a full team of about fifty-five people. Israel is one of our favorite places to visit on bikes. Dr. Win Corduan will be teaching, Chuck Newman will act as trip coordinator, and I'll be doing my usual "fun" thing of riding herd. Sue Savidge, after nineteen years of being around the program, is going to take her first international tour! What better place to start than Israel!
SPRING TRIPS The "spring thing" keeps growing. We started way back in the early '70's with biking in Florida in the spring. Taylor students made up our first team and then we added a high school gang or two. Spring of '84 will see four college groups and one high school group going south with us to ride bikes in Florida. (Sorry, but we can't take any more!) Some of our best spiritual stuff happens while on these ten-day tours.

DIRT COAST TO COAST It's on! We have mapped the route. Yeah, it's possible and the invitation is out for any and all to ride a bicycle 3,000 miles without touching any pavement! Impossible? That's what some people say! Hey, it wasn't too long ago that we didn't even have trails and back then they threw in Indians just to make it tough! We will leave June 9 and we don't have any idea when we'll finish the trip.

25TH CROSS COUNTRY This one leaves June 19. It'll start in San Diego and run through D.C. and on to the East Coast. Paul King, alias Snowball, will head this one up with a solid staff of veteran riders. This should be a great trip covering a favorite route.

THOUSAND MILE 10 MONTH This trip will start February 1 of 1985 and run through Thanksgiving. Plans are moving along well. A semi-truck has been located and mapping is underway. The team will consist of fifty riders. As many as twenty will be invited to join us for as long as four weeks during the ten-month tour. We'll start in Williamsburg, Virginia, and circle America and come back to Williamsburg. The Florida coast, New Orleans, Shreveport, Dallas, Austin, El Paso, Tucson, Phoenix, southern California, San Francisco, Oregon coast, Seattle, Yellowstone, Minneapolis, Grand Rapids, Cleveland, Portland (Maine), Boston, New York/New Jersey area, D.C. will all be en route.

We'll be together about 300 days (over forty weeks)--over 200 riding days with about 88 days off the bikes. We're expecting to ride about fifty miles per day. One day each week will be given to a work project in a small town. Does any one need his house painted?

Kitchen Update

As I write this letter, 8:30 in the evening, the lights are on in the Kitchen-Retreat House. There is a Taylor group using it tonight. It is gradually coming to full bloom. It's a lot more work than we realized, but it is good work. As I have shared with you in previous letters, the Kitchen is allowing us to meet many people in the community who simply need a friend. The things of Christ seem to be much more relevant when offered in service to others. "You can't pursue happiness and catch it. Happiness comes upon you unawares while you are helping others."
Like a giant quilt, the many directions of Wheels' activities make for a beautiful warm pattern. The one thing we do that helps us minister year round has to do with our buses.

Our hopes of buying another bus have materialized. Illinois-Swallow Lines, the company from which we have purchased two previous buses, has given us a good deal on a 1977 "like-new", top-of-the-line bus. We put $1,000 down on it and have $84,000 to go! That sounds like a lot, but a new one costs $150,000! We really need this rig. Kids point so heavily toward their trips that it hurts not to get them on the road.

A few weeks ago we blew a differential on Possum 4. It was towed back to our garage and a new $3,600 differential was put in by our staff. We really need to have a third bus to back us up in a situation like this; thus, the purchase of Possum 6. I come begging to you. I am going out on a limb to finance this one. If we can get $30,000 in gift money to put down on it we can pay the $50,000+ by February of '85. You who receive this newsletter have done such a faithful job of supporting Wheels that it seems unfair to come to you for this request. HOWEVER, if you have a few extra bucks this time around we could put them to good use.

As you know, Wheels had the "mother" idea for the Possum concept. The men involved in the year-round running of the buses deserve the best equipment. It will be a real shot in the arm to equip them with Possum 6.

On one of our trips, recently, a new friend to Wheels donated a "like-new" diesel engine to the program. What a blessing! This gives us a spare engine. In fact, we are now getting ready for a turn-around since Possum 4 is pushing 600,000 miles on its first engine.

The Possums are used to the max. We are still trusting God for a diesel mechanic. We'd really like to have a pro. With three buses in operation we would be able to keep a guy busy.

We'll be headed into the winter months and icy roads on our ski runs to Colorado. Somewhere in the house make a note reminding you of our need for prayer. Better than that, cut the picture out below and post it on the refrigerator door as a reminder.

By the time you receive this letter the Holiday Season will be upon you. The staff, Barb and I especially want to wish you and yours a Blessed Christmas and New Year! You continue to encourage us and as a single group of people, about 1,400 of you, you are our greatest supporters!

Warmest regards in Christ,

Bob Davenport, Director