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Wandering Wheels Newsletter, October 1976

Wandering Wheels

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October, 1976

Dear Wheels' Friends,

The past four months have really been FULL of activities. We could write about any number of them with each one, on a single basis, providing SUPER data for filling a newsletter.

As I recall, our last letter was mailed just prior to the Bicentennial Tour in early June. What a privilege to live with sixty young people and twelve staff for seven weeks of adventure coast to coast across the United States.

We are growing more aware of the very presence of God; He is best felt in just being with people, especially other Believers. That's why living HARD with cycling teams is dynamic. In tugging and pulling with one another we come upon special times when the hardness and the tug and pull serve to show Him to us as only those experiences can. Usually, when one person is “up” someone else is “down”. The high’s and low’s experienced by a group striving toward a common goal create dynamics. It’s like an engine working; one piston is up while the other is down. This action drives the crankshaft, thus providing drive. The Scripture teaches that one should be happy when others

"To demonstrate the vitality of the Christian life."

TAYLOR UNIVERSITY
UPLAND, INDIANA 46989
Phone 317-998-2751
are happy and sad when they are sad. What a blessing to practice this principle!

We finished our coast-to-coast ride in great shape. There were no major accidents, all participating riders completed the tour, and real spiritual input, as well as output, was felt. Our riders had little trouble in evaluating the fact that God was in our midst. This summer’s coast-to-coast trip was our sixteenth. To date nearly 800 individuals have traveled with us. If the statistics of 800 riders x 3,000 miles x the number of road hazards x the number of speeding vehicles approaching and passing x the number of high speed coasts x the number of 110 degree deserts x the things we don’t even recognize as trouble were put on a computer, we would be overwhelmed with God’s obvious Presence!

More and more often former riders are telling us that they “turned the corner for Jesus Christ” on their coast-to-coast tour.

MUCH INPUT
MUCH BLESSING

Following on the heels of the coast-to-coast trip was our Rocky Mountain Tour. John Bonham and staff put together a great tour for about thirty young men. Many new friends were made and more “young guys” were given an opportunity to be with strong Christian leaders. These leaders served as models for the riders’ own growing experience in Christ.

Nova Scotia was one area where the Wheels had never been on tour. Not so any longer. August found us touring the southern coast of Nova Scotia with a team of riders. Two weeks of travel and fun mixed with devotions and prayer allowed us to bring off another successful trip. Just the feat of safely carrying the riding team
nearly 4,000 miles round trip in the bus, not to speak of the cycling, was something for which to thank God!

The buses, with Steve Manganello and "company", were doing yeoman duty all summer. Possum III, our newest rig, had one 7,000-mile tour and two tours of nearly 4,000 miles each. One Christian teacher uses the bus as a means to share Christ with his students on the secular campus. He has used the Possums on numerous occasions and his involvement with us has had a real impact on the whole school. Bruce Bendt, Wheels' staff, has been invited to be the commencement speaker this coming May as a result of the many bus tours. Exciting, huh?! Others write to tell us that the Wheels' staff and equipment provide the punch they need for sharing Christ.

Recently we took a top salesman and his staff on a two-day/three-night tour. The men took their wives along and together we were able to play ball, swim and enjoy the Florida coast. What a thrill to see those young marrieds walking late at night holding hands and experiencing new things together in Christian fellowship. Already we have received deep thanks for their mobile retreat.

The Possum was created for a youth ministry. Would you believe that just a few weeks ago we had a group "on board" that included two lovely ladies nearly ninety years of age! The average age of the group was over seventy! We are coming to realize that the adults are just as excited about this opportunity of travel and Christian growth as the teenagers are.

One whole family — mothers, fathers, kids, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc. — used the Possum for a reunion. Some of their "war" stories were out of this world! In New York, as a result of the bus breaking down, the "family" had a confrontation with several teens sitting on a wall at a MacDonald's restaurant. The ensuing conversation that took place drew the two groups together. The Christian "family" offered a witness the teen countered with questions. The teens later said that this meeting was the most meaningful thing they had participated in all summer. Needless to say, it also drew the "family" together in an unusual way.
We have never advertised, as such, through the Wheels' newsletter. However, Mr. Dan Boyd, '68 Wheels' veteran and Taylor grad, has recently put together some great work showing off Wheels. He created a poster, 23" x 34½", in beautiful colors of yellow, orange, red and black. It really does the job of giving one the feel for riding coast to coast. In order to help support him on staff we are selling these for $4 each (includes postage and handling). If you are interested, let us know. (These would make great Christmas presents to put in the stockings!)

We have a full winter and spring agenda with the following trips:

1. "Golden Coast Tour" in January — Galveston to Key West — basically T.U. students
2. Full bus tours during January, February, March and April
3. Serving two sister colleges during spring vacations with two bike tours
4. T.U. spring break tour
5. Tentative van/hostel Israel tour — Easter

Warmest regards in Christ,

Bob Davenport, Director

BD/ss

The picture of our staff should help you put some personality with the Wheels' emphasis this school year. The staff sometimes changes from month to month, but these are some of the more consistent members of the group. Your support of the program makes it possible for us to involve them in the program and, in turn, with the thousands of people with whom God allows us to work.

Top row, L to R:
Mike Swan — W.W. dorm resident, T.U. sophomore, head of office "clean up"
Mike Manganillo — W.W. dorm resident, senior staff, heads all vehicle maintenance, coordinates repair work, staffs weekend bus tours, has ridden coast to coast three times, U. of Maryland grad
Tom Geemert — W.W. dorm resident, T.U. senior, generally assists on many Wheels' projects
Steve Manganillo — T.U. grad, top seniority, heads up Possum bus program
Bob Davenport — Many titles, but one he appreciates most is THE BOSS
Carle Koontz — Butler U. grad, assists in office, coordinates bike tours, has ridden three times coast to coast (must be a record for a gal!) Geoff Schwartz — T.U. grad, W.W. dorm resident, senior staff, handles all major body work on vehicles, does custom painting, provides leadership on Possum and bike trips
Suelleh Savidge — "The Boss", has been with Wheels since start, secretary, bookkeeper, etc., etc.

Bottom row, L to R:
Bruce Bendt — W.W. dorm resident, U. of Maryland grad, chief coordinator of bikes, teaches on tours, heads up many tours
Paul King (Snowball) — "Artist in Residence", does all custom art work, assists in bus and bike programs, T.U. grad, W.W. dorm resident
Roger Varland — T.U. senior, example of many T.U. students who participate with us on month-to-month basis, has assisted on many major tours
Galen Claessen — Wheels' apprentice, great with his hands (carpenter, electrician, etc.), participates in many tours, W.W. dorm resident

Not pictured:
Dan Boyd — Wheels' photographer (awfully good one), W.W. dorm resident
Steve Speirs — T.U. senior, assists in bike tours
Bob Herriman — T.U. grad, keeps 16mm films in repair, looks after Wheels' grounds