Wandering Wheels Newsletter, September 1981

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Dear Wheels' Friends,

Where do we start? So much has come our way, through us, and has happened around us, that to repeat it all would bore you.

One of our veteran coast-to-coasters, Faith Keirn, was blessed with a baby boy. She writes, "J.D. (Jacob Dylan) is the new biker in the family. I can testify to the fact that biking is good for having babies. Tom and I did a lot of cycling all summer. We even biked to the hospital on Saturday afternoon, August 29. We arrived at 3 p.m. and J.D. came at 6 p.m. the same day! Believe it or not, I was able to wear my Wheels' shorts up to the hospital and they were the most comfortable and modest summer outfit I had!"

Our last letter rather shakily suggested that Sue, our secretary, was going to be out of the office and we could be in trouble. She went home to Pennsylvania to be with her folks who were physically in need of a faithful daughter's attention. She was away for five weeks. Well, her mom and dad are doing better and yes, Wandering-Wheels made it through Sue's not being at the helm. We thank God for her sensitivity to her parents.

In the same spirit of Sue's going to be with her parents, two of our coast-to-coast riders this past summer responded in like manner. Paula Puntenney's dad went to surgery, so Paula pulled away from her dream trip and headed home. However, within about ten days she was back with the "pack" and continuing her coast-to-coast trip. In fact, the miles she missed were made up at the end of the summer.

As with Paula, Dave Nonnemacher had an ailing dad and bang, Dave was gone to join the rest of his family to help rally their father! Dave stayed with his dad until he was out of danger and then rejoined us. It has been impressive to me to see this bond between parents and children. ("HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER...")
Dane and Laurie Davenport, distant relation to Bob and Barbi (smile!), successfully brought a baby girl into the world—Carly Summers! Pretty, huh? And she's as pretty as her name!

For the last three years I have written across my calendar something to this effect: Thank you, God, for another successful summer! (i.e. I gave the January '81 trip a 9.6 on a scale of 10 and wrote the numbers in large print across the calendar page; at the close of this summer's tours I wrote across the whole page, "Yea! All done and good. Thank you, Lord!"

That statement came with cheerleader enthusiasm!)

The joy never ceases from getting a team across the states and safely back home. In my book it is something short of a miracle—who knows, maybe even a miracle! It creates in me the ability to deeply THANK GOD maybe more than anything else I do.

The and trip were equally successful. The gals continue to "knock 'em dead" on the more grueling trips, such as the mountain trip. Yea girls! There "ain't nothin' hardly prettier" than 120-pound gals keeping pace with the 200-pound guys. I like it when people find out these are plain old "church" kids—it must make God smile! The Nova Scotia trip had several riders who were past their teens—would you believe 66 years and down? One of our older gentlemen (50+) said, "There are sixty reasons why I should be miserable, but I'm happy!" Our mix was good and the spiritual were even better.

Having all of you out there involved in our lives here continues to be rewarding. I told a men's group, recently, that having 15 years' worth of Wheels' friends is like having a Savings Account—we keep receiving spiritual dividends! Stories filter back to us about new and special things taking place in your lives.

Paul Jenks, who rode with us several years ago, came into the office the other day. He had his wife and baby with him. After a little time of conversation he handed me a 10mm bicycle wrench which he said he had borrowed and forgotten to return. This happened a few years ago. We laughed about it and then he shared with me some exciting things that were taking place in his life one of which was that he and his dear wife and baby were headed for Thailand to be missionaries in the "back country", no less. That's putting it on the line! Oh the hours spent with guys like this on trips, arguing, discussing, bantering, praying, et cetera. What a blessing to participate with them and to be a part of the process that sees them taking these giant steps!

We received a good letter from a person who is responsible for several children in a children's home. Two of the teens traveled with our '81 coast-to-
coast team. They both had an excellent "take". A brief paraphrase of his good letter was that it would take many years of living experiences in the home to do what six weeks of coast-to-coast cycling had accomplished. Those of you who have experienced a coast to coast know what he is talking about.

A good reminder to you former "coast to coasters" of what you looked like after 3,000 miles of travel!

**WHAT'S HAPPENING?**

The fall and winter schedule is already a reality. Among other activities, we are taking a local bunch of people (a combination of Taylor administrators, professors, staff, students, community people and veteran riders) to Mackinac Island, Michigan. We hope to do more of this weekend stuff and you should feel free to join us...really!

The annual Fall Classic with the Taylor gang is well entrenched as a tradition. This will take place in October.

In January '82 we will do a three-week bicycle run from Monterey, California, to San Diego and east to Phoenix. For a three-weeker, this one is as jammed-packed as any we do.

I am writing part of this letter as I travel on a four-day, five-night Possum trip. The group on board is very typical--junior high kids with a few older ones mixed in and, of course, the sponsors--30 altogether. I often wonder if they ever listen to what is being said, but they really do. The good thing is that the staff input (playing, cooking, driving, and teaching) makes for solid memories upon which the kids can develop deeper feelings for God.

Boy, do they ever complain after climbing a tall mountain in the Smokys! They always comment, "I don't want to do that again," or "Wait until I tell my mom what I did," and on and on it goes. The beach burns it out of them. Most don't listen and try for a one-day miracle tan but burn instead. So they now have burns on top of sore mountain-climbing muscles and then it's off to 12 or 14 hours of Disney World attractions which is the final zapper. The staff has a lot of one-on-one and group devotionals which often result in genuine conversion or a good
start toward it. Both continue to serve about 3,000 kids a year. That's a bunch of kids and a bunch of miles!

Any little updates from you are always appreciated!

We can't do it without your help!

Love,

Bob and Staff

P.S. We will have our first retreat in the "kitchen" November 6-7. It will be a small one, just enough to get the ball rolling. We'll be giving you a big report on the kitchen soon.

P.P.S. I had already given Sue this newsletter in the rough. However, because of a beautiful experience this past weekend I wanted to share a little more with you.

Our one-ton truck, affectionately known as "Big Blue" and 165,000-miles old, blew a clutch on its way to Mackinac Island. We limped into Petosky, Michigan, with it which was the starting point of the trip. The local Chevy dealer gave us the cold shoulder, but the parts' man recommended the Mobil gas station in town. The Mobil man took the job. Another party was also having work done there. He recognized the Wheels' name on the truck and our Wheels' guys struck up a conversation with him only to find out that his daughter was a Taylor grad. Well, we phoned back to the garage from the campgrounds that night to find out the damages cost-wise. Would you believe the gentleman the Wheels' staff had talked to had paid the whole $255 bill! You could not have done anything more significant to bless the 46 riders on that trip! God works in strange ways! The real blessing was to see how a gift like this encourages others. In fact, I believe many in the group will go on to duplicate that act of giving.