

# and sport



Tar Heel/Les Hamashima

Biking fits in with the type of lifestyle here. It's easy, casual and fun. And if you look around town and on campus you'll see that many people have taken the two wheel option just because they prefer it.

## Area offers much for avid cyclists

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Surrounding area of Chapel Hill, which includes Orange, Durham and Chatham counties, offers a variety of cycling terrain for day trips that is rare for such a small area.

"In the Chapel Hill area you can ride east and be in flatland or ride west and experience rolling hills," said Alfred Reid, manager of the Clean Machine Cycle Shop in Chapel Hill. In almost every direction from Chapel Hill, there are interesting sights including Historic Triangle, Durham and Duke Forest, and Pittsboro. Reid said it isn't a problem as long as the rider was aware of the traffic patterns at different times of day.

It does not have to be a superman to enjoy cycle touring, but

one of 12 maps included in the bicycle touring packet available at the Clean Machine in Chapel Hill. Information offered includes points of interest, facilities available and hazardous areas.

being in good physical shape is important. "Running, swimming and most other sports are good enough to develop stamina, but the best way to condition for a bike trip is to ride a bike," said Reid. "You use different muscles in bike riding, especially the buttocks." Reid said one of the most common mistakes that novice riders make is trying to pedal too big a gear. This mistake results in sore knees and ankles. "A cadence (complete revolution of the sprocket) of about 80 rpms is about right," he said.

"Be sure to carry plenty of water," said Reid. He said a breeze blowing against the skin will quickly evaporate sweat so it seems that you are not perspiring. If the water is not replaced dehydration may result. Convenient, frame-mounted water bottles are available for about \$10 at most bicycle shops. Reid cautioned against sunburn and advised carrying fruit and energy bars to replenish spent nutrients.

A small daypack or a handlebar bag allows sunscreen, snacks and small items to be within easy reach of the rider. The advantages of the handlebar bag are weight distribution and convenience. Most area cycle shops sell handlebar bags for about \$25 and up.

Before beginning a trip make sure the bicycle is in good mechanical condition. Jim Rumpfelt, manager of The Clean Machine in Carrboro, said that many people neglect the maintenance of their bicycle and then expect trouble-free performance. "Often these people end up in the middle of nowhere with a broken bike." He said critical areas to inspect before the trip include the condition of the tires, the lubrication of the chain and hubs, and the performance of the derailleurs.

"The quality of the bicycle and equipment is important up to a

point but the most critical consideration is the attitude of the rider," said Rumpfelt. The enjoyment of the actual trip is more important than the destination itself. "If you are in that much of a hurry to get somewhere you should just take a car," said Reid.

The beginning cycle tourist should not try to ride too far in one day and should try to plan a route of relatively flat terrain. A route of 10 to 15 miles is a good starter. Rumpfelt said the cyclist should remember that getting to a destination is only the halfway point of the trip and that he should allow time for fatigue and changes in the weather.

Planning for an overnight or a weekend tour is more difficult than a day-trip because it is necessary to carry more. Jim Whatley, of Tumbleweed Cyclery in Carrboro, said a cyclist interested in the longer rides could either bicycle camp or bicycle tour. A bicycle tourist sleeps in motels and eats at restaurants while a bicycle camper is self-sufficient and carries his own food and sleeping accommodations. "The nice thing about cycle touring is that you travel lighter so you can go faster," he said. Whatley said that the initial costs of bicycle camping are greater than bicycle touring because of the investment into the equipment that includes a lightweight tent, cookware and a sleeping bag, but that in the long run bicycle camping is cheaper.

Packing for the bicycle camper is critical because of the weight of the equipment and the distribution of the load. Reid suggested loading the bike with all of the gear being taken and ride for 20 to 30 miles with it to test the weight and load distribution. This should be done days before the trip, "It's better to find out it's too heavy now than to find out 30 miles down the road on your first day out and have to ride the rest of the way with it," he said. Reid

warned the bicycle camper against weighing down the weight distribution and recommending a rack, panniers (saddlebags), and handbags to condition by riding 10 to 15 miles a day for two weeks before the extended trip to the mountains.

The Clean Machine in Carrboro offers bicycle touring maps. The packet of 12 maps includes Historic Hillsborough and Duke Forest, such as points of interest, facilities available and hazardous areas. The packet retails for \$5.

The UNC Cycle Club, active in the Triangle, comes riders of all skill levels and offers bicycle trips. You do not have to be a student to join.

For statewide touring information, contact the N.C. Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 25201, Raleigh, N.C. 27611. The program also offers club listings and "how-to" touring information. The packet is free.

For those wanting to learn more about bicycle mechanics, "Bike Touring: The Complete Guide" by Raymond Bridger is a good book on the subject. Illustrated and easy to read, it offers basic instruction as well as technical information.

The Bicycle Program  
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