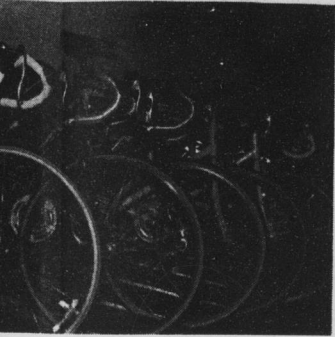


for getting to class anymore

Women who want to find out more about biking are invited to a series of free clinics sponsored by the Spinners and Performance bicycle shop. The clinics will be held at the shop at 7 p.m. each night beginning Monday, and ending Friday. Seminars on mountain biking and road biking will be held Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

For those of you who want to strike



out on your own, Wayne Pein, a research associate for bicyclist and pedestrian studies at the Highway Safety Research Center, offers these tips:

■ "If you are going to be on the road it is important that you follow the rules and be predictable" by not making any sudden turns and by using hand signals.

■ Take a map with you, especially if you are biking off-road. (Maps can be obtained by calling the N.C. Department of Maps at 733-7600.)

- Wear a helmet.
- Ride with a partner.
- Take a basic repair kit, which should include a tire patch kit, a pump, tire levers (to remove the tire from the wheel) and perhaps a spare tube.
- Carry a water bottle.

Also, it is important not to be too ambitious, especially on the first few rides, Pein said.

"Pick a distance that you feel you can easily accomplish for the first time," he said. "Push your horizons later."

Recommended Biking Hotspots Off-Road Biking

- Near Chapel Hill High School
- Behind the Forest Theater
- Falls Lake in Raleigh
- Umstead Park
- Duke Forest
- Seawell School area

Road riding

- Calavander Road area west of Carrboro
- Near Jordan Lake

Bike Types

Road — Used for road touring, road bicycles have drop handlebars, a light frame, a long wheelbase and 14 or 21 gears.

Hybrid — More popular among students, hybrids have upright handlebars and a heavier, mountain bike-type frame with road bike wheels.

Mountain — Also popular among students, mountain bikes have upright handlebars, heavy frames, smaller wheels and thick tires for rough off-road adventures.

le and your passport and go cycling abroad

for everyone, only those in good physical shape and with a genuine sense of adventure. Tours generally last from a few days to several weeks, costing anywhere from a few hundred dollars to several thousand.

You need not be Tour de France winner Greg LeMond to enjoy such trips, however. "If a person is in good shape, they don't have to be a cyclist to enjoy the trip," Jackson said.

Tours typically cover from 35 to 45 miles of cycling daily, but most people can cycle more than they think, once pacing themselves in a group, Jackson

"It's possible to go almost anywhere in the world with a little planning."

— Gladys Young

said. The group can really enhance a trip, since bikers will spend a lot of time together. Jackson advised checking into a group before committing to a trip, because "a college age student may not want to spend two weeks cycling with a group of 40- to 50-year olds."

Aside from camaraderie, structured

tours offer some advantages over traditional "grab-a-backpack-and-go" independent expeditions. Knowledgeable native tour guides, planned accommodations and meals, and good directions are usually included with company planned tours.

But some bikers prefer tackling vacation destinations on their own.

Gladys Young, a cycling enthusiast from Greensboro, pedaled through Germany's Mosel Valley this summer with a companion. She said she found the experience "more of an adventure, since it was easier to meet people, due to no insulating wall between you and the locals." Young cycled about 35 miles per day, but the freedom to wander off and linger meant that she did not go as far as planned.

Young also plans to publish a guide she wrote detailing the summer trip, offering tips to other cyclists setting out without a guide.

"It's possible to go almost anywhere in the world with a little planning," she said. "Marco Polo did all right."

Whether alone or with a tour group, bicycle vacations do have a lot to offer. Jackson cited several reasons that he prefers biking over more

traditional land travel.

"Travelers get a better feel for the area and see things a lot more in depth," he said. Bikers set their own pace and have a lot more options of routes to take, he added.

So why isn't everyone grabbing a bike and signing up for a tour? Fisher said more young people would probably be interested if the economy was better and the dollar had more value in Europe. But if you have the bucks and the cardiovascular strength, consider several factors before signing up: the degree of difficulty (terrain and mileage), cost, people in the group, and length of the trip.

Try a bicycle tour and come back with not only memories of your adventures with the locals, but also with buns of steel.

photos by Andrea Braddus and DTH file



You may have to get your fingers dirty; make sure you are all alone



Although Mr. Omni is about four feet too short to ride a bike, he nevertheless was able to tackle the pressing cycling questions we got this week:

Dear Mr. Omni, Why do the chains on your bike always pop out when you're right in front of a bunch of people? How do you get them back in?

Dear Reader, Your luck just sucks, I guess. Bike chains occasionally pop out, says Tom Davis, manager of Precision in Carrboro, because the shifters are out of whack. You just need to have them adjusted. But you can just stick 'em right back in line, Tom assures me. "But you might have to get your fingers kind of greasy."

Dear Mr. Omni, what's the deal with tires? They're thin, they're thick, ... they're thin, they're thick. Why not just pick one thickness and stick with it?

Dear Reader, seems you have quite a complex. You need a hobby. According to Tom, the thinner the tire, the more "high performance" biker you're dealing with. Really big thick tires are for people who like to ride their bikes up and down mountains (gee, what fun), while the moderate-thickness tires are for getting around town and campus.

Dear Mr. Omni, How often do I need a tune-up, and how much do they cost?

Dear Reader, a tune-up will set you back about \$40 at most places and includes adjustment of brakes, gears and bearings. How often depends: if you rode your bike back to Chapel Hill from home or wherever during last weekend's "Storm of the Century," you're probably due a tune-up. For fairly avid bikers, every 6 months to a year. For those who just bought a mountain bike to fit in with the rest of the student body, less often.

Dear Mr. Omni, how come you never see banana seats anymore?

Dear Reader, same reason you don't see the Donny & Marie show, Slip-n-Slides or Shawn Cassidy anymore. They're part of the social depression you knew in your 1970s childhood.

Dear Mr. Omni, what's the coolest color bike to get?

Dear Reader, word is, they have salmon-colored bikes at Precision. Imagine. A salmon-colored bike.

Dear Mr. Omni, what's up with the little air pumps attached to the bars of some bikes? I mean, if you're that scared your tires are going to pop, shouldn't you stay in your house?

Dear Reader, I suppose so. Say, when's the last time you got out or your house?

Dear Mr. Omni, is it cool, or is it a bike foul to have a bell?

Dear Reader, I personally can't think of anything cooler than a bike bell. Actually, they aren't terribly effective, because if you're riding along a crowded sidewalk or trail, ringing a bell isn't going to endear you to any of your fellow bikers, and they're not going anywhere. If you're riding alone, who are you going to ring your bell at?

Dear Mr. Omni, how about a basket?

Dear Reader, baskets are a great idea. Someone at UNC has an ingenious one. He or she has bunged a plastic milk crate to the back of a bike, providing a dandy-sized basket that looks really cool.