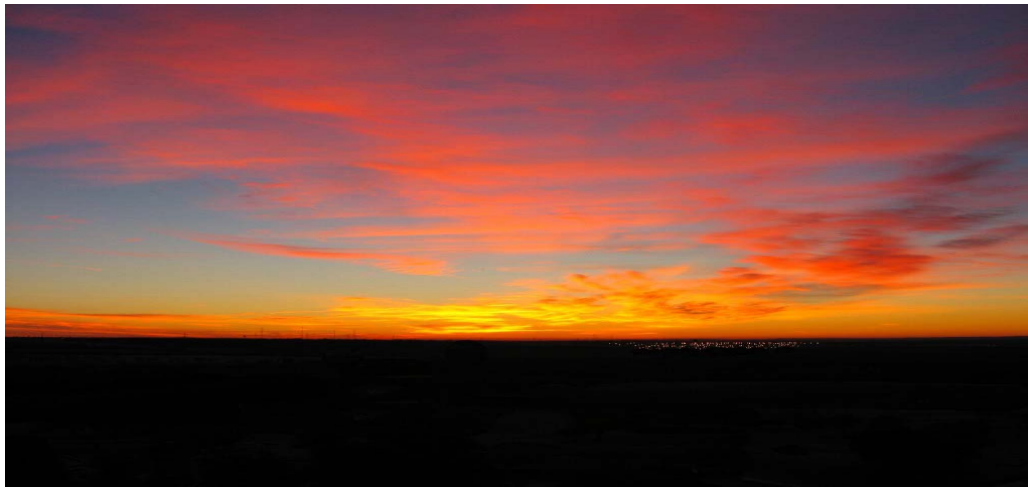




*The Newsletter of the  
The Hill Country Biking Tour Club*

*A Recreational Club for Central Texas  
<http://www.hcbtc.org> -[mail@hcbtc.org](mailto:mail@hcbtc.org)*

*Volume 5, No. 2- March- April 2004*



Get out and enjoy the beautiful sunsets we have around San Antonio

*Thanks to our affiliate associations.....*



## NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S MESSAGE

By Stan Siler, [Ssiler@aol.com](mailto:Ssiler@aol.com)

### Time to Ride!

The cold and dreary days of January and February are history!!! As March rolls in, you can feel the temperature rising, and the urge to ride boils up inside you. Of course, you may have to put up with some wind here and there, but the days are getting longer, and before you know it, Daylight Savings Time springs upon us.

As spring approaches, make sure to get your bike ready. Get air in those tires, lube the

chain, get new batteries for your speedometer, etc. The club has set up early evening rides, and these can be very enjoyable. One new ride will happen on Monday evenings, and Vern will lead this one out of Stinson Field. The Tuesday ride will begin again, and the Thursday Helotes ride (my favorite of all rides) will also take place. Make sure to join the fun and invite a friend along!!

### Club News By Sandy Barsun



### New Members, Welcome!

L. Wayne & Rusty Adams  
Nolan & Wlayne Kuehn

### Club Membership Dues

Hi ya'll,

This is to notify you that your membership for the Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club has or will shortly expire. Please send \$6 (make checks payable to Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club) to renew your membership for the next year. This covers the club liability insurance, membership in the League of American Bicyclists, advertising, and the printing and mailing of the newsletter. At only \$6.00 per year, this is a bargain. Send your membership dues to:

Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club  
PO Box 276637  
San Antonio, TX 78227

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sandy

Your membership coordinator

## Club Rides

### 2004 RIDES

By Mac McCormick

During the first two months of 2004, the club has experienced strong continued and even renewed interest in scheduled rides. Despite some dismal weather conditions at times in a fairly mild January and February, HCBTC members have consistently turned out for some great rides in all quadrants of the city and outlying areas.



Among the riders there have been a number of new members. It is most encouraging that they have chosen the club to be one of their preferred means to meet their recreational needs. As always, new members add to the life and vigor of a club and bring with them fresh enthusiasm, new ideas and invaluable friendships. We all benefit from their participation and sincerely seek their input to make the rides more accommodating, where possible, to their needs.

Also, the club was fortunate to have several members step up to become new ride leaders and they did outstanding jobs. Possibly, a little apprehensive on their first rides as lead, they soon found out what they already knew---that everyone is out to

have a good ride and enjoy each others' company, and that there is no really great weight of responsibility on the leader. The club thanks you all, and we are proud to have such motivated members as you leading our rides.

Several afternoon rides were scheduled to provide times that would be more convenient for those riders who have conflicts with morning rides. In that these rides have been well attended, we hope to schedule more afternoon rides until the heat of the summer is upon us. Of course this is dependent upon availability of ride leaders. So, if you are one of those who has enjoyed or would enjoy an afternoon ride, take the initiative and sign up to be ride lead on one of your choice. You and others who share your interest and who are just waiting for someone like you to do just that will be glad you did. It can bring you nothing but pleasure and satisfaction.

Please address any comment, ideas and suggestions (even complaints) concerning rides or ride schedules to your friendly Ride Chair, Mac McCormick at 614-5514 or [eemac2@earthlink.net](mailto:eemac2@earthlink.net).

#### Every Monday Evening (Starting on April 5th).

When we start this ride, we will meet at **Stinson Airport** at **6:30 pm**

**Directions:** Take Southeast Military East to Mission Road. Go right on Mission Road to Stinson airport (about 1 mile) Park across the street from Stinson. Ride will be about 15 miles, with a shortcut for the less enthusiastic. Ride Leaders are **Vern Jeys 675-0538** [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com), and **Sandy Barsun 635-8777** [barsun@aol.com](mailto:barsun@aol.com)

#### Tuesday Evening Rides - President's Ride.

Tuesday night rides will begin again in **April of 2004.**

#### Every Thursday Evening (Starting on April 8th).

When we start this ride, we will meet at **6:30 PM in Helotes** on Old Bandera Rd across from the **Helotes Bike Shop** and the **Floore Country Store** for a **16 mile** group ride at

a **Moderate (12 - 14 mph) pace**. We will eat at the after the ride. **Chris & Jan Marsh** will lead the ride, phone **210 681-5768**, email [cmarsh@texas.net](mailto:cmarsh@texas.net).

**Every Friday Morning.**

**Time: 9:00 am. -**

**NOTICE-!! Until further notice, the E-Z Riders Friday rides begin at 9:00 am.**

**Location: *different location each time***

Meet each Friday for a **30 mile Easy (8 - 11 mph) paced ride**. This is a totally laidback ride, with re-groups at every turn & rest stops every 5 miles or so. The group will be called, **E-Z Riders**, of the **Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club**. Contact **Vern** for information concerning time and location. Let me know if you would like to be added to the ride list. I will send out an e-mail each week for this Friday ride. Ride leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**.

**Friday, March 5th, Castroville Ride.** Time: **9:00AM**. Meet at the carpool parking area in Castroville for an easy paced 30 mile ride. Directions: Take hwy 90 west to Castroville. Carpool parking area is located Just across the street from Sammy's, by the river. Lunch will be at Sammy's. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Saturday, March 6th, Taft High School Ride.** Meet at **9:00AM** on the west side of the Taft HS parking lot for a 27 mile easy paced ride over mostly rolling terrain with a few hills. Directions: Taft HS is located about one mile outside of Loop 1604 west on FM 471 (Culebra Road). Ride Leader: **Mac McCormick 614-5514**, e-mail: [eemac2@earthlink.net](mailto:eemac2@earthlink.net).

**Saturday, March 7th, River Ride. (NOTE TIME)** Meet at **2:00PM** in **Gruene** in the parking lot across from Gruene Hall for a 28 mile moderate paced ride up the River Road to Satler and return. This is a very scenic ride along the Guadalupe River, consequently it is a mostly flat ride, and however there are a few serious hills. We will eat at the Grist Mill after the ride. Directions: Take I-35 North through New Braunfels and exit at the Canyon Lake exit (FM 306). Take 306 to Hunter Road (1.5 mi., look for Gruene sign on the right) turn left onto Hunter Road and when it dead-ends in Gruene, take a left and then an immediate left into the parking lot. Ride Leaders: **Ken and Mouse Kanagaki**, phone **341-6883, [kenk@texas.net](mailto:kenk@texas.net)**.

**Friday, March 12th, Harmon's Bbq Ride.** Time: **9:00AM**. Place **Harmon's Bbq**. Directions to Harmon's Bbq. at Cibolo Take IH-10 east towards Seguin. Exit at loop 1604. Left on Loop 1604 to Lower Seguin. (Look for Exxon Station) Right on Lower Seguin to Haeckerville Road (pass the Haeckerville Rd. on the right) Left on Haeckerville Road to fm 78. Cross fm 78 & take a left on loop 539 to main street. Right on Main street to Harmon's Bbq on the right. About 1 block (located in an old bank building, across the street from the police station) If you cross the railroad tracks you went too far. Park in the back of the lot. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Saturday, March 13th, New Berlin Ride.** Meet at **9:00AM** in New Berlin for a **28 mile group ride** at an **Easy (8 - 11 mph) pace** in mostly flat terrain. Lunch will be at New Berlin. Directions: Take I-10 East toward Seguin. Exit on Trainer Hale Road (FM2538) and turn right on FM2538 to New Berlin (8 miles). **Ride Leader: Amanda McCoy**, phone: **614-4475**, email: [amccoy@cfhp.com](mailto:amccoy@cfhp.com)

**Sunday, March 14th, Tom's Burgers Ride.** Meet at Tom's Burgers & More (IH-37 & Southton Road) at **9:00AM** for a **30 mile group ride** at **Easy (8 - 11 mph) pace**. Directions: Take IH-37 south to Southton Road and exit. Go left on Southton (under bridge) to Donop Road (less than 1 block). Go left on Donop about 200 feet to Tom's. Point of contact: **Vern Jeys, 675-0538**, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)

**Saturday/Sunday, March 13th and 14th, Bastrop Weekend Rides. POSTPONED INDEFINITELY.** Because Jan received some extensive injuries from a recent automobile accident, the **Bastrop Weekend Rides** are being postponed until she, as a ride leader along with Chris, is well enough to participate in it. Everyone is quite concerned over her condition, but we take heart knowing that her strength of spirit and firm determination will see her over this hill just as those same qualities have carried her over the many tough ride hills she has topped. Jan, we all pray that you have a complete and speedy recovery and that you will be back riding with the group again very soon. Until then you are really going to be missed. Ride Leaders: **Chris and Jan Marsh**, phone **210 681-5768**, e-mail [chrismarsh@satx.rr.com](mailto:chrismarsh@satx.rr.com)

**Friday, March 19th, Helotes Ride.** Time: **9:00AM**. Directions: Take Bandera road outside loop 1604 to Old Bandera Road. Left on old Bandera to Floores Country store. Park across the street. Ride will be about 25 miles. Lunch at Hickory Hut in Helotes. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538**, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)

**Saturday, March 20th, Pearsall Road and 1604 Ride.** Meet at **9:00AM** in the empty lot across from the **Bar B Q Patio cafe** on Pearsall Road for a **30 mile group ride** on rolling terrain at a **Moderate (12 - 14 mph) pace**. Lunch will be at the cafe after the ride. Directions: Take US 90 West toward Castroville and exit Loop 1604. Take a left on Loop 1604 to Pearsall Road. Turn left on Pearsall Road and go to the end of one long block to the empty lot on the left. Ride Leader: **Heidi Lynn**, phone **682-8107**, email [flynn@satx.rr.com](mailto:flynn@satx.rr.com)

**Sunday, March 21st, River Ride. (NOTE TIME)** Meet at **1:00PM**. in **Gruene** in the parking lot across from Gruene Hall for a **28 mile Moderate (12 - 14 mph) pace** ride up the River Road to Canyon Dam and return. This is a very scenic ride along the Guadalupe River, consequently it is a mostly flat ride, but there are a few serious hills. We will eat at the Grist Mill after the ride. Directions: Take I-35 North through New Braunfels and exit at the Canyon Lake exit (FM 306). Take 306 to Hunter Road (1.5 miles, look for Gruene sign on the right); turn left on Hunter Road and when it dead ends in Gruene, take a left and then an immediate left into the parking lot. Ride Leader: **Lourdes Vera**, phone **690-4816**, email [Lourdes.Vera@afnews.af.mil](mailto:Lourdes.Vera@afnews.af.mil)

**Saturday, March 27 American Red Cross Ride.** Some members of our club (*Vern, Jackie, Amanda & Heidi*) are planning to participate in the **American Red Cross "Bike the Bay"** ride, sponsored by the **Coastal Bend-Texas Chapter**, and held in **Corpus Christi, TX**. You can find information about the ride at <http://www.cbtredcross.org/> , by calling **(361) 887-9991** or **(800) 656-9991**, Email: [coastaltx@cbtredcross.org](mailto:coastaltx@cbtredcross.org).

For additional local information, contact **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Saturday, March 27th, (OPEN) Local Ride. Ride leader needed.** If you are unable to enjoy the Corpus Christie weekend rides, here is an opportunity to set up your favorite ride or a new one close to your area. Other members who also cannot make the Corpus trip will appreciate your lead.

**Sunday, March 28th, Leon Springs-Fair Oaks Ride.** Meet at **9:00AM** in the **Park and Ride** lot at I-10 and Boerne Stage Road in Leon Springs for an easy paced 30 mile ride. Eat at Rudy's after the ride. Directions: Take I-10 West and exit at Leon Springs. At the four-way stop, turn left for a block to the parking lot on the left. Ride Leader: **Isabel Mendoza**, phone **256-2573, [rimmendoza@satx.rr.com](mailto:rimmendoza@satx.rr.com)**

**Friday, April 2nd, Bear Moon Baker Ride. (NOTICE TIME CHANGE)** Time: **8:00AM**. Meet at Leon Springs Carpool Parking Area. Directions: Take Highway 10 West of Loop 1604. Take Boerne Stage Road exit. (Exit 551) Left on Service rd to Stop sign by Rudy's Bbq. Left at stop sign to carpool parking area. (L H side of road) Ride is about 25 miles & includes a stop at the Bear Moon Bakery for goodies. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Saturday, April 3rd, "Llano Bluebonnet Getaway" Ride.** Meet at The Hill Country Suites in Llano, at **8:00 am**. for a **38 mile ride**. Directions Take hwy 87 to Fredericksburg, then h\Hwy 16 from Fredericksburg to Llano. After you cross the river, look for the Hill Country Suites on the left hand side of the road. (less than half a mile). Jackie & I are going up Friday evening & we will be staying at the Hill Country Suites on Friday & Saturday nights. There will be a 38 mile ride on Saturday. **No ride on Sunday unless you want to go on your own**. Checkout time on Sunday is 11:00 am. Rooms are very nice. Each suite has 2 rooms with a TV in each room. Phone # is **1-325-247-1141**. Address is **609 Bessemer**. but it is on hi-way 16. There are ride maps of Llano on the HCBTC website. Ride Director is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Friday, April 9th, Alamo Ride. (NOTICE TIME CHANGE)** Time: **8:00AM**. 30 mile ride. Meet at Alamo smokehouse, located on hwy 181. Directions: Take 37 Hi-way south & get off on hi-way 181. Take 181 South about 4 miles beyond 37 Hi-way. Alamo Smokehouse is located on right hand side of hi-way. Park by the fireworks stand, just beyond the cafe. This ride is semi-hilly. I will try to get the owner to open up in the morning for restrooms. If not, there will be one about 3 miles in to the ride. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Friday, April 16th, Castroville Ride.** Time: **8:00AM**. Meet at the carpool parking area in Castroville for an easy paced 30 mile ride. Directions: Take hwy 90 west to Castroville. Carpool parking area is located Just across the street from Sammy's, by the river. Lunch will be at Sammy's. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Friday, April 23rd, Harmon's Bbq. Ride.** Time: **8:00AM**. Place **Harmon's Bbq.** Cibolo TX. Directions to Harmon's Bbq. Take IH-10 east towards Seguin. Exit on loop 1604 & take a left to lower Seguin Road. (Look for Exxon station) Right on Lower Seguin to Haeckerville Road. (pass the Haeckerville Rd. on the right) Left on Haeckerville Road to fm 78. Cross fm 78 & take a left on loop 539 to main street. Right on Main street to Harmon's Bbq on the right. About 1 block (located in an old bank building, across the street from the police station) If you cross the railroad tracks you went too far. Park in the back of the lot. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Friday, April 30th, Helotes Ride.** Time: **8:00AM**. Directions: Take Bandera road outside loop 1604 to Old Bandera Road. Left on old Bandera to Floores Country store. Park across the street. Ride will be about 25 miles. Lunch at Hickory Hut in Helotes. Ride Leader is **Vern Jeys, 675-0538, [vjeys@satx.rr.com](mailto:vjeys@satx.rr.com)**

**Looking ahead to April Rides.** (Details will be provided later.)

- |                         |                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>April 3rd, Sat.</b>  | Taft High School ride with 30, 37 and 45 mile options. The short ride is flat; the longer ones both have some hills. |
| <b>April 4th, Sun.</b>  | OPEN (How about someone picking up lead for a P. M. ride?)                                                           |
| <b>April 10th, Sat.</b> | Harmon's BBQ ride out of Cibolo, a favorite ride for many.                                                           |
| <b>April 11th, Sun.</b> | Tom's Cafe ride, another favorite.                                                                                   |
| <b>April 17th, Sat.</b> | The first in a series of prep rides for the MS 150 in October.                                                       |
| <b>April 18th, Sun.</b> | OPEN (A chance to go on a great Spring ride of your choice.)                                                         |
| <b>April 24th, Sat.</b> | A new Century (100 miles) ride is being mapped for this date.                                                        |
| <b>April 25th, Sun.</b> | Bubba's BBQ (a new ride by Sandy)                                                                                    |

### HCBTC Logo Decals Available

A black and white decal resembling the club logo is available through special order for a nominal fee. It is similar to the size and quality of those seen for school activity groups affixed to the outside of vehicle rear windows.



The decal can be made with or without your name above the logo. The club web site address is located below the logo. The cost is \$10 regardless of the configuration. It usually takes about three weeks for delivery. Contact Evelyn at 614-5514 or

[eemac2@earthlink](mailto:eemac2@earthlink)

Cycling is full of prodigious numbers—the distances ridden, the calories consumed, the tires trashed. Another statistic that can seem astounding is the number of pedal strokes made.

Let's suppose it takes you six hours to ride a century and you pedal at the rate of 90 rpm throughout. As you cross the finish line, you will be making pedal stroke number 64,800.

Whoa, that's a lot! But it barely registers on the scale of what happens during a full season. For example, during the year in which I had my biggest mileage total, I figure that I got there by pushing the pedals around approximately 13,340,000 times.

Can you say, "Repetitive use injury? You can see why cyclists are good candidates, especially if we aren't pedaling from a nearly perfect position.

Your body and bike must fit together and work together in near-perfect harmony for you to be efficient, comfortable, and injury-free. The more you ride, the more essential this is. If even one thing is out of whack, it's a good bet that it will cause a problem during thousands of pedal strokes.



Fortunately, it isn't difficult to arrive at an excellent riding position. But it does take time and attention. You need to be careful with your initial bike set-up, and then conscientiously stay aware of your body and the need for occasional refinements. As time goes by, your position will stabilize and you'll be riding in a smooth groove.

The following guidelines come from my experience and the advice of various experts. One is Andy Pruitt, Ed.D, the director of Colorado's Boulder Center for Sports Medicine. Andy has probably solved more position problems than anyone during his years of work with elite cyclists.

As you work on your riding position, always remember Pruitt Rule No. 1:

**“Adjust your bike to fit your body. Don't force your body to fit the bike.”**

**Frame:** Measure your inseam from crotch to floor with bare feet 6 inches apart, then multiply by 0.68. The answer is a good approximation of your road frame size, measured along the seat tube from the center of the crank axle to the center of the top tube. As a double check, this should produce 4 to 5 inches of exposed seat post when your saddle height is correct. When the crank arms are horizontal, the top tube should be right between your knees when you squeeze them together.

**Arms:** Keep your elbows bent and relaxed to absorb shock and prevent veering when you hit a bump or brush another rider. Hold arms in line with your body, not splayed to the side, to be more compact and aerodynamic.

**Upper Body/Shoulders:** Don't be rigid, but do be fairly still. Imagine the energy wasted by rocking side to side with every pedal stroke on a 25-mile ride. Save it for pedaling. Also, beware of creeping forward on the saddle and hunching your shoulders. There's a tendency to do this when pushing for more speed. Shift to a higher gear and stand periodically to prevent

stiffness in your hips and back.

**Head and Neck:** Resist the temptation to put your head down when you're going hard or getting tired. It takes just a second for something dangerous to pop out of nowhere. Occasionally tilt your head to one side and the other instead of holding it dead center. Change your hand location to reposition your upper body and give your neck a new angle.

**Hands:** Prevent finger numbness by moving your hands frequently. Grip the bar firmly enough to keep hands from bouncing off on unexpected bumps, but not so tightly that it tenses your arms. For the same safety reason, keep your thumbs wrapped around the bar instead of resting on top. Move to the drops for descents or high-speed riding, and the brake lever hoods for relaxed cruising. On long climbs, grip the top of the bar to sit upright and open your chest for easier breathing. When standing, hold the lever hoods lightly and sway the bike side to side in synch with your pedal strokes, directly driving each pedal with your body weight.

**Handlebar:** Bar width should equal shoulder width to open your chest for better breathing. A bit too wide is better than too narrow. Make sure the hooks are large enough for your hands. Modified "anatomic" curves may feel more comfortable to your palms. Position the bottom, flat portion of the bar horizontal or pointed slightly down toward the rear brake.

**Brake Levers:** Move them around the curve of the bar to give you the best compromise between holding the hoods and braking when your hands are in the hooks. Most riders do best if the lever tips touch a straightedge extended forward from under the flat, bottom portion of the bar. The levers don't have to be positioned symmetrically—remember Andy Pruitt's rule. If your reach is more comfortable with one lever closer to you than the other, put

'em that way.

**Stem Height:** Start with the top of the stem about one inch below the top of the saddle. This should give you comfortable access to every hand position. As time goes by, think about lowering the stem as much as another inch (not all at once) to improve your aerodynamics. If your lower back or neck starts complaining, or if you notice you've stopped using the drops, go back up. Never put the stem so high that its maximum extension line shows, or it could be snapped off by your weight on the bar.

**Top-tube and Stem Lengths:** Combined, these two dimensions determine "reach." Depending on your anatomy and flexibility, your reach could be longer for better aerodynamics, or it may need to be shorter for back or neck comfort. For most riders, when they're comfortably seated with their elbows slightly bent and their hands on the lever hoods, the front hub will be obscured by the handlebar.

**Back:** A flat back is the defining mark of a stylish rider. Notice I didn't say a great rider. Anatomy and flexibility have a lot to do with how flat you can get. Lance Armstrong, for instance, has a rounded back that's not picture perfect and yet he still manages to go down the road pretty well. The same was true for John Howard, once America's dominant road racer. I'm in their boat (back-wise, not speed-wise). Once you have the correct reach, work on flattening your back by imagining touching the top tube with your belly button. This helps your hips rotate forward. You don't want to ride this way all of the time, but it'll help you get more aero when you need to.

**Saddle Height:** This is the biggie. You'll find various methods for calculating this critical number. Here's the one I like best. It has become known as the LeMond Method, because Greg brought it to us from his Renault

team in the 1980s. (Invite a friend over so you can help each other and both wind up with primo positions.) Begin by standing on a hard surface with your shoes off and your feet about 6 inches apart. Use a metric tape, measure from the floor to your crotch and press with the same force that a saddle does. Multiply this number by 0.883. The result is your saddle height, measured from the middle of the crank axle, along the seat tube, to the top of the saddle.

Add 2 or 3 mm if you have long feet in proportion to your height. If you suffer from chondromalacia (knee pain caused by damage to the underside of the kneecap), a slightly higher saddle may help overcome this problem. However, it should never be so high that your hips must rock to help you reach the pedals. If this formula results in a big change from the height you've been using, make the adjustment by 2 or 3 mm per week, with several rides between, till you reach the new position. Changing too fast could strain something.

**Saddle Tilt:** The saddle should be level, which you can check by laying a yardstick along its length and comparing it to something horizontal like a tabletop or windowsill. A slight downward tilt may be more comfortable, but be careful. More than a degree or two could cause you to continually slide forward, putting pressure on your arms and hands.

**Fore/Aft Saddle Position:** Sit comfortably in the center of the saddle, click into the pedals, and set the crank arms horizontal. Hold a weighted string to the front of your forward kneecap. For most of us, the string should touch the end of the crank arm. This is known as the neutral position. Loosen the seat post clamp so you can slide the saddle to get it right. Seated climbers, time trialists, and some road racers may like the line to fall a centimeter or

two behind the end of the crank arm to increase pedaling leverage. On the other hand, track and criterion racers may like a more forward position that breeds leg speed. Remember, if your reach to the handlebar is wrong, use stem length to correct it, not fore/aft saddle position.

**Butt:** By sliding fore or aft on the saddle you can bring some muscles into play while resting others. This is a technique favored by Skip Hamilton, my teammate in the 1996 Race Across America. Moving forward emphasizes the quadriceps muscles on the front of the thighs, while moving back highlights the hamstrings and gluteus—the powerful butt muscles.

**Feet:** Some of us walk like pigeons, others like Charlie Chaplin. Your footprints as you leave a swimming pool will tip you off. To make cycling easier on your knees, shoe cleats must put your feet at their natural angle. This is a snap with clipless pedal systems that allow feet to pivot freely (“float”) several degrees before release. Then all you need to do is set the cleats' fore/aft position, which is easy. Simply position them so the widest part of each foot is centered on the pedal axle. If you experience discomfort such as tingling, numbness or burning (especially on long rides), move the cleats rearward as much as a centimeter.

**Crank arm Length:** In general, if your inseam is less than 29 inches, use 165-mm crank arms; 29-32 inches, 170 mm; 33-34 inches, 172.5; and more than 34 inches, 175 mm. A crank arm's length is measured from the center of its fixing bolt to the center of the pedal mounting hole. The length is usually stamped on the back of the arm. If you use longer crank arms than recommended, you'll gain leverage for pushing big gears but lose some pedaling speed.

## MS 150 - 2003 --- A Painful Learning Experience

The last first: Made it all the way and caught the one pm bus back to San Antonio. It did not look like that that would be the way early Saturday afternoon.

But to start at the beginning.

Riding resumed after a long hiatus in May of 2000 with the purchase of a Raleigh Hybrid, faster on the road than a mountain bike and better on trails than a racing or touring bike, i.e. a master of none. A co-worker had completed the MS 150 -1999 and with machismo I thought if she can do it I can do it. She and her husband took me on my first ride, 15 miles on the Hike and Bike Mission Trail. They next took me from a friend's house, essentially 1604 and Culebra, to Rio Medina and back. There was a week's recovery time after each of those rides. The Raleigh got extra padding. We had seen some HCBTC shirts riding on the way and they knew about HCBTC. At that time the Express-News was still carrying a weekly list of bike rides. Did two rides with HCBTC. One of them was all the way from Helotes to Castroville and back - the same distance as from San Antonio to Kenedy - the lunch stop on the MS 150. If you can make it to lunch, the longest stretch between meals, you can obviously make it to Corpus Christi. Did one more long distance ride prior to the MS 150 - 2000. Didn't check the weather but it felt warm as it was early afternoon so took an extra water bottle for the 40 mile solo jaunt from Ingram Park Mall area down 410 access to and along Highway 90 West access. Stopped frequently to drink. I rested for a little bit under a bridge on the return. Had picked the day the temperature hit 115. Total riding prior to MS 150 - under 300 miles.

Lesson Learned: to always check weather.

On the MS 150 - 2000 stopped at every stop. Ate, drank, refilled water bottles, talked, used

facilities frequently, which let muscles start to tighten up by spending too much time at rest stops. Struggled into Beeville around 4:30. Not looking forward to attempting Corpus Christi the next day. Saw the massage therapists at their tables. After 15 minutes legs were 200 pounds lighter.

Lesson Learned: getting a massage pays off the next day.

Lesson Learned: get many miles at distance under belt before attempting long rides.

Briefly caught onto a peloton moving out of Beeville. Fell off the peloton after only 15 minutes. Riders, some 800, had spread out to the point where no riders were visible behind and only one in front - Martha Espinoza. Rode with Martha most of the rest of the way into Corpus Christi until she blew me away on the bridge about 5 miles from the finish. I had foolishly tried to pick up the pace and away she went.

Joined HCBTC. Went for a number of rides. Skipped MS 150 -2001. Had decided to make it an every other year event. Did a triathlon instead.

As MS 150 - 2002 rolled around, I listened more and more to draw on Chris Marsh's experience. New bike, 27 gear, 17 lbs before additions. Started doing most local errands of 30 miles or less and not carrying too much by bike. Rode at least every other week with HCBTC, looking for the 40 to 60 milers and started riding the shorter evening rides. Also working out weekly at military gym building up from leg press less than body weight to leg press over four times body weight in two years. - 2002 was the one where the road was closed for about half an hour due to a squall with high wind (40 mph plus) and a rain hail mix. At Kenedy had grabbed sack lunch and put it in

small bag on front handle bars. Got to eat lunch on road under improvised shelter as squall went through. No lost time.

Lesson learned. Drink at rest stops, eat while riding.

Had blow out about 20 miles from Beeville. Had just got off bike and started to take out tools when SAG arrived. Put me and bike in Van and drove 10 miles back toward San Antonio where another SAG vehicle was functioning as a stationary repair shop. Back on the road in less than five minutes to cover the same ground again. Into Beeville by 4:00 pm and headed immediately for massage tables. Next day held back an hour by dense fog. Beeville start moved to 8:00 am. Hooked onto and stayed with some 20 to 25 mph pelotons. Into Corpus Christi by noon.

MS 150 -2003 Now a veteran MS 150 rider. Had done some centuries both with HCBTC and SAW. Had done some hills. Went with the owner, Carlos, of Planet Bike for an hour and 20 minute ride on the 26 mile Old Helotes - Highway 211 loop. Bring the 150 on!

Shock # 1, 2500 riders take up a lot more space than 800. Crowd was released in three waves. Got to starting gate 20 minutes after first riders had left. Once on open road started pushing pedals. (Had a 6 pm appointment in Corpus Christi so had to be in Beeville and at friend's house where I would stay no later than 4 pm.) Skipped every other rest stop. Hooked up with fast peloton whenever possible. Into and out of Kenedy before noon.

An hour later legs started cramping on slightest upgrade. Loaded up on bananas and Gatorade. Struggled into next rest stop. Got off bike with difficulty. Stretched, drank, rested. Hit the road. 15 mph, then 12 mph, then 10 mph, then 8 - 9 mph, then 8 - 7 mph. Legs stiff. Not sure what was going on. Years younger competing for a

spot in the Olympics, (didn't make it) would run a quarter mile in 45 seconds or 20 mph. Now couldn't go half that speed on a bicycle! Tried to recall all I knew from a half century of competitive running and swimming. Potassium and electrolytes should be ok with all the bananas and Gatorade. Pulled off road. Had to lay bike over on its side in order to dismount. Tried stretching. Thinking I'm going to need a SAG ride into Beeville. In retrospect, thankfully no SAG in sight. Got back on bike. Right leg not as cramped as left. Used hill climbing gearing on flat. Spun pedals with right leg only. Took well over an hour to cover a ten mile interval. Somehow made it to next rest stop. Could not dismount. My thighs looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger's biceps. I didn't know leg muscles could bulge like that.

Then a small miracle. Just as I pulled in and was straddling the bike unable to dismount, a rider pulls up next to me. She identifies herself as a Physical Therapist and starts to knead the muscles. She says, "Your muscles are oxygen starved. Take some deep breaths." On the third deep breath all the tension in the muscles relaxes. Dismounting is a snap. Into Beeville by 3 pm deep breathing all the way.

Lesson Learned: Don't take breathing for granted. At the first sign of cramps deep breathe.

In Beeville went to the Medical tent, took some of the US Marines "Vitamin M" (Motrin) or Ibuprofen. Made it into Corpus Christi in time. Back to Beeville and bed by midnight. Up at 6:00 A.M. Headed to College at 6:30 am. Dark, very heavy fog. My friend, who was driving on a four lane road, almost ran over six bicyclists who were riding two abreast, taking up one full and half of the other lane in our direction without lights or reflective gear! I saw them through the blue blocker driver's glasses I wear and shouted. He swerved even though he had not yet seen them. All last vestiges of

sleepiness left! While waiting for the fog to lift took another 800 mg “Vitamin M”. Feeling confident after yesterday’s lesson. Took off and hooked onto some 20 to 25 mph pelotons, even taking the lead for a few miles, until the killer Taft to Portland stretch.

For those who haven’t ridden it Taft to Portland is approximately 120,000 half inch hills to the mile and that’s where the road is smooth. The road is basically a narrow, fairly straight, two lane country road where the potholes have their own potholes. There are at least five layers of pavements plus assorted patches. Like the potholes the patches have their own patches. When the ride starts at 7 am this stretch of road is usually traversed before the ocean breeze kicks in. The hour delay in the start, which was definitely a needed safety measure, meant beside the road surface there was a 10 to 20 mph headwind to ride into. The pelotons that had been rolling at 24 to 25 mph were maxing out at 15 mph and with considerably fewer riders per peloton.

I tied onto a large framed man who was riding at about 12 mph at first. Within a couple of miles he was down to 9 mph. When I went to pass him and felt the full force of the wind I again dropped behind him. After a few more miles he pulled over with his body language looking like mine the day before. I pulled over with him, dug out the honey gel pack and

offered him one. He mentioned sore legs, and I asked him about Vitamin M which he had with him but had not taken. We killed about 10 minutes, by which time both the honey and Ibuprofen should have started to kick in. I offered to break wind for him and set off at a 12 mph pace. As he started falling back I dropped back to a 10 then an 8 mph pace. We stayed between 8 and 10 into Portland. We arrived in Portland at 12:37.

I had wanted to catch the first bus back to San Antonio, the 1 pm bus. Used the rest facilities, grabbed a banana and gulped Gatorade. Left Portland at 12:42 with only a little over 6 miles to the finish and the bus. Picked up a couple of riders who were rolling along about a hundred yards in front. Road smooth. Wind blocked by buildings. Started deep breathing. Years of competitive racing kicked in. Used the riders in front as targets to overhaul. Gradually picked up speed. Passed them going 25 mph. Hit the ramp up the bridge at a little over 30 mph. Crested the bridge at 26 mph. Kept speed up to the finish. Dropped bike off. Picked up Bags. Caught the 1 pm bus and started to breath slowly again.

Looking forward to MS 150 - 2004 and its Lessons to be Learned.

Alan FitzPatrick

## **The Economic Burden of Obesity in San Antonio: Is there a Cure?**

Obesity is related to at least 33 different diseases commonly treated by your primary care provider and has passed smoking as the number one cause of preventable deaths in the US. Obesity is a major contributor to the health care crisis in America today. ABC News reported on 21st of January 2004 that obesity costs the American economy 75 billion dollars per year. Medical research has clearly shown that obesity can lead to diabetes. Obesity has

increased by 74% in the US from 1991 to 2001 while diabetes has increased 61%. San Antonio currently spends 1,050,000,000 dollars per year treating diabetes. The medical complications of diabetes can cost a single patient over \$40,000.00 a year to treat. The obesity driven health care crisis will ultimately affect health care providers. The medical journal “Resident and Staff Physician” has reported that economists predict that if obesity and diabetes

continue to increase at the current rate, the cost of treating obesity related diseases will bankrupt the health care system by 2035.

Medical detectives, called Epidemiologists, are working feverishly to discover the causes of the current obesity epidemic. They know that the causes of obesity are both genetic and environmental. Studies in identical twins have shown that genes influence 60% of obesity. But the rapid rise in the rate of obesity in the US from 1991 to 2001 cannot be explained by a change in genetics. This means that the current epidemic of obesity most likely is caused by environmental factors. If this is true, the best way to stop the epidemic is to identify the environmental factors that are causing the epidemic.

Epidemiologists from the National Institutes of Health are studying the Pima Indians. These Native American Indians are genetically predisposed to develop obesity and diabetes when they adopt the Western lifestyle. One out of every three Pima Indians living in America is obese and almost one out of two have diabetes. Their cousins in Mexico are not overweight and only 5 out of 100 develop diabetes. Mexican Pima Indians engage in moderate hard physical activity 29 hours per week while their American cousins do only 2 hours of similar exercise per week. This means that in the Pima Indians, it is likely that exercise can diminish their genetic tendency to become overweight in a Western society.

Hispanics in San Antonio share 45% of Native American Indian genes. The Bexar County Community Health Collaborative, a group formed by the major San Antonio hospitals, conducted a telephone survey of the citizens of San Antonio. The survey found that in the Northeast, where 30 % of the population is Hispanic, the rate of obesity was 19%. On the Southside, 83% of the citizens are Hispanic; the rate of obesity is doubled at 40 %. A further indication that Hispanics in San Antonio are genetically linked to the American Indians was suggested when a U.S. Government Survey in

2003 found that San Antonio was the fattest city in the country and was second among the major metropolitan areas in the rate of diabetes among its citizens.

One of the major medical mysteries of our time is: "What are the major environmental factors that make the Western lifestyle so unhealthy for Hispanics? Dr. Robert Trevino, who is currently studying overweight children in San Antonio, is firmly convinced that the major cause of the obesity epidemic in children is a lack of exercise. In his opinion, diet of the children of San Antonio has not changed appreciably during the obesity epidemic. However, as other countries adopt the typical fast food diet of Western society, the children of that country become overweight. Since a fast food diet is high in calories and fat, can we completely ignore these dietary factors in our search for a cure?

In the January 2003 issue of *Scientific American*, Harvard medical school epidemiologists, Walter Willett and Meir Stampfer, wrote an article entitled "The government's flawed diet advice." They point out that in 1992 the U.S. government's advice to eat 60% of our calories from carbohydrates instead of the 45% being consumed at the time may be contributing to our national epidemic of obesity and diabetes. The Harvard researchers have recommended major changes in the consumption of rapid and slow breakdown carbohydrates in their article in the January 2003 *Scientific American* in order to prevent obesity and diabetes.

When we eat carbohydrates, the body breaks down the starch in the carbohydrates into sugar. The starch contained in certain carbohydrates, such as potatoes, white bread, and rice, is rapidly digested. This can cause a rapid rise in the blood sugar and an over production of insulin. Excess insulin may cause a low blood sugar, an increased appetite, and eating excess calories. Insulin also causes the body to store excess calories as fat and can inhibit the release of these calories as fuel for

our muscles. Other carbohydrates, like beans and corn, contain starch that is slowly digested resulting in a slow, gradual, and sustained rise in the sugar in the blood. This results in a much slower rise in insulin that does not increase hunger or over eating.

When patients need to lose weight doctors typically prescribe a low fat high carbohydrate diet. The success rate of this diet has been dismal at best. Most patients who manage to lose weight regain the weight within one year. Should we blame the diet prescription or the patient for this poor rate of success? Regular exercise suppresses insulin production, decreases appetite, burns calories, and temporarily raises metabolic rate. Weight loss can best be maintained if the diet prescription also includes exercise.

The medical evidence that we should avoid carbohydrates that break down into sugar too rapidly has been increasing. To address the question “Does rapid digestion of carbohydrates into blood sugar promote excess calorie consumption?” Dr. David Ludwig, an endocrinologist at Boston University School of Medicine, compared low fat, high carbohydrate diets composed of starch that broke down rapidly into sugar to a moderate fat, moderate carbohydrate diet with starch that broke down into sugar more slowly. The calories were the same and the weight loss was the same in both groups, but the subjects on the starch that broke down rapidly, consumed more calories when they went off the diet compared to the subjects who ate the starch that broke down more slowly into sugar.

Diet books classifying foods into quick and slow breakdown carbohydrates have been out for sometime. All have the words “Glucose Revolution” in the title. One of my patients in the University Lipid Clinic was on a low fat diet and exercised every day at the gym. He needed to lose more weight to raise his good cholesterol. I recommended that he read the “Glucose Revolution Life Plan” He did and lost 8 pounds in one month. Working with a dietitian, we taught 17 executives in San Antonio this new food plan. It decreased their hunger and they lost an average of almost 6 pounds in 3 weeks.

While exercise is absolutely essential to the success of any weight loss and weight maintenance program, due to the current health care crisis, all new avenues to promote weight loss should be extensively explored. I have decided to begin offering free lectures on the benefits of food plans that emphasize carbohydrates containing slow breakdown starches. If you would like to attend one of these lectures, please call 771-7836 or write to the address:

R. George Troxler MD, MPH, Clinical Associate Professor  
University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, Mail Code 6205  
Department of Medicine, Division of Clinical Pharmacology  
7703 Floyd Curl Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78229-3900  
Please include your name and telephone number.

## **Texas Bluebonnets** **By Stan Siler**

Texas is blessed at this time of the year with one of the most colorful flowers, the Texas bluebonnet. With the abundant amount of rainfall we have had recently, the flowers should be spectacular. While you are riding around the Texas landscape, be sure to stop and smell the bluebonnets!



“Discover Lance Armstrong’s passion for the “beautiful, peaceful and soulful” Blue Ridge Mountains. Pedal some of the miles he traveled in his comeback from cancer and experience for yourself the magic of the Blue Ridge.



Heritage fills these hills and will fill your eyes and ears each evening with music, dance and storytelling. Stay in three fully equipped

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Tailwinds,  
Jimmy Coan

**Club Discounts - The following Bicycle Shops offer members of the HCBTC a 10% discount.**

**BikeWorld**, 5911 Broadway, 828-5558 and  
*Blanco at Lockhill Selma 344-2303*

**Britton's Cycles**, 4109 Naco Perrin, 656-1655 and  
*803 E. Blanco Rd. Boerne, 830 816-2305*

**Hill Country Bicycle Works**, 1412 Broadway, Kerrville, 830 896-6864 and  
*702 E Main, Fredericksburg, 830 990-2609.*

**Ride Away Bicycles**, Huebner Oaks Shopping Center,  
*11075 IH-10 West, Suite 305, 696-9925 and  
8509 Culebra Road, 520-4789*

**Cycle Logic**, 12319 Wetmore Road, 210-490-8251

**Planet Bike**, 5819 NW Loop 410, Suite 133, 210-682-2050

**Action Bikes** 2921 Pat Booker Road, 104 Universal City, TX, 210-657-0155

**A big thanks for their support to our club.**



Come join the fun! Ride with Hill Country Biking Tour Club!