

Another Milestone (100,000 miles) Bites the Dust

by Mike Munk

As many of you know, I've been riding bicycles seriously since August 1989 at the young age of 42. Oh, I had a Bridgestone touring bike that I bought in Okinawa in 1974 at a BX sale for \$89 but I never really did more than ride around the neighborhood with my daugh-

"Some of my 'friends' around here would make me subtract the 9 miles Barbara pedaled me when my crankarm came off while riding the tandem"

ters. In 1989, it was collecting dust and rust in my shop when I dropped into Cycle Escape, a local bike store, and purchased a Giant Kronos for \$350. This purchase almost put my family into bankruptcy and caused Barbara to seriously consider leaving me for reasons of insanity. Since then, I would hate to tally up the amount of money I've invested in cycling but I believe that it was money well spent and it's allowed me to see and do things that I never imagined that I could do. Even Barbara has come to understand that it was not a wasted purchase and has led to fitness and enjoyment over the last 12 years. It's been said that when I take up something I usually go into it big time...cycling has been no exception.

At first [??? - ed.], I was a mileage junkie. My career in the military prevented me from riding as much as I really wanted so I was never satisfied with the local club distances and would usually ride to the ride start, ride with the club, and then ride back home. My lowest mileage in one year was 6570 miles and my best has been 11,292 miles. After 3 years of riding I started racing but soon found out that it required a lot of miles dedicated to intense training and it detracted from the enjoyment of just riding. Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed the competition, but it required certain days of intervals, sprints, distance, and forced rest days to make a well-rounded program that detracted from lots of long interesting rides. Therefore, I never raced a lot but I focused on a couple important events every year like the Military Regional, Military National, and district road races. That allowed me to ride more for enjoyment and not focus on training all the time.

Looking back, all those years of riding has resulted in several memorable milestones

aside from competitions. I'm sure you will say I'm anal retentive since I have meticulously logged every mile since 1989...you're probably right. I remember my first milestone was reaching 1000 miles. That didn't take long but at the time it was a big deal. I still remember exactly where I passed that milestone on Wares Ferry Rd. Another goal was to ride a century. In 1991, John Leofsky took me to Birmingham and helped me ride my first century...actually 125 miles. I'll never forget the feeling of accomplishment I had after that ride. After a couple of those, I aimed at riding them under 5 hours...then under 4. Soon I had enough miles to encircle the earth...24,901.7. I passed that goal in June of 1993 while riding BRAG, the Bicycle Ride Across Georgia. I couldn't believe that I'd ridden that many miles...geeze, enough miles to encircle the world! Upon retirement my goal was to ride coast to coast across the US. I did that in 1996 and since then I've done that 10 more times so that one's history. Another goal for some reason was to ride 10,000 miles in one year. I did that 3 years in a row from 1996-1998.

Finally, the most recent milestone is the one I'm most proud of so far...I don't know why, but for some reason it is a bit special. On January 21, I passed 100,000 miles since I started logging miles on that Kronos in August 1989 (Some of my "friends" around here would make me subtract the 9 miles Barbara pedaled me when my crankarm came off while riding the tandem). The crankarm incident aside, that's still a lot of miles and I would venture to say that many people haven't driven that many miles in their car since 1989. I figure at this rate, I'll be about 154 years old when I reach 1 million miles so I'd better keep pedaling. In those 100,000 miles, I've had some unique experiences on both ends of the spectrum. Just to mention a few, I've experienced excruciating pain while training for and participating in competitions, I've experienced extreme fatigue fighting the relentless head winds of the mid-west, I've endured misery in the intense heat of summers in the south, and I've lost 3 dear cycling friends to accident or disease. Ironically, all were named Jim. All those experiences, on the surface, seem to be negative but each made me a stronger person and my relationship with my 3 friends enriched my life beyond measure. On the other hand, there's nothing to compare to the intense sensation of screaming downhill at 55+ MPH. Plus, I've absorbed our beautiful country in a way much different than those who drive automobiles. It's hard to explain the awe of riding through majestic mountain ranges and having the time to con-

template how they evolved over the years and what they will be like thousands of years after we are gone. I've met some of the most interesting people, and have the satisfaction of knowing that I'm doing something that keeps me young at heart and inspired to keep moving in my later years. Can you think of a better way to spend retirement?

What does it take to get you or a loved one on a bike? Maybe, like me, it's setting some goals. You don't have to be as anal as I am and put your head down for 100,000 miles, but maybe you just want to lose some weight, improve your cardiovascular system, or just ride 10 miles without stopping. Whatever your goals, they are important to you and are a necessary ingredient to your motivation. Plus, don't you owe it to yourself to do something that is healthy and enjoyable? I encourage all of you to get involved with the club and ride for whatever reason. There are many roads you've never seen even as close as Montgomery County...unless you are Frank Buckner who has ridden every road within 100 miles of about everywhere. You may never ride 100,000 miles but as they say, it's not the destination but the journey along the way that's well worth the effort.

My next goal is to ride in every state in the continental US. If all goes to plan, I should pick up my last state, Oregon, in June 2002 when I lead a cross-country ride from Astoria OR to Portsmouth NH. I'm looking forward to that with great anticipation as another item checked off and will sip a glass of champagne to acknowledge that event. I wonder what will be next? How 'bout 4 medals at the 2003 Senior Olympics...hmmm, that could be painful, but definitely worth consideration. I'll see you on the road sometime during the second 100,000...keep riding. ☺

Alabama Sports Festival Metric Century and 20 mile Fun Ride

June 23, 2002 (Sunday)

Course Scenic ride along flat area of historic Mobile Bay and then onto rolling hills and back to the water view.

Be part of the sports festival's olympic torch ride!

For more information visit the games website at www.alagames.com

What's on the Web

So you're sunburned, it's too hot to ride, and/or you keep falling over in your clipless pedals. Hey, we understand. Just head on over to www.mgmbikeclub.org where you'll find everything from links to other regional cycling clubs to info on time trials to routes for the next club excursion.

There is also information on MTBing, time trials, a current list of officers, information about the next club meeting, and an application.

The newsletters, formerly on the

"Member's page," are now on the main page.

To subscribe to the e-mail list, see instructions in the article below. 🚲

Less than 100 training days left until the Autumn Challenge!

USE YOUR
HEAD!
WEAR A
HELMET!



The MBC Email Mailing List

The latest word on who's riding this Saturday. An audience for your question on bike trails in central Alabama. It's all there on the MBC Email list.

How does it work? When you send email to the list address, it is copied to everyone who is subscribed (including you). Everyone gets your message, and can reply to you individually or to the entire list.

How does one subscribe to the list? The easiest way is by going to <http://jschool.troyst.edu/~kc4lkw/maillinglist.html>

and using the online form. If you don't have web access, send me some e-mail at gary@mgmbikeclub.org and I'll send you instructions on how to subscribe by email. 🚲



As Seen on E-mail

"I ended up having one of my better solo rides (I wrecked, my chain came off, and somehow, bubble gum got wound around my spokes)."

- A. Nonymous