

OMAHA PEDALERS NEWSLETTER



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BRAN 42

OPBC Signature Rides

Welcome!

Welcome to the OPBC's newsletter! Our next meeting will be April 23rd, 6:00, at Oklahoma Joes in Aksarben Village. Everyone is welcome. Bring your ideas and thoughts.

This is going to be an exciting year of cycling! The *Signature Rides* and *Monthly and Weekly Rides* are set and ready to go! The first organized OPBC ride is the **Great American Pie Ride** on May 18!

Other events and rides include the **Omaha Health, Wellness & Fitness Expo** on April 13 – 14. The **Ride of Silence** on May 15, 2024, honoring those who have been killed while cycling on public roadways. The OPBC **Movie Night** was back in 2024, on March 26th, with "Arthur the King" at Aksarben Cinema. And, **BRAN 42**, the Bike Ride Across Nebraska, is June 2 - June 8th. Happy Cycling!

Carole Becic, OPBC Newsletter Editor



2024's Elected Officers

President: Rhonda Hall;

Secretary: Stephen Schnitker;

Treasurer: Bob Mancuso;

Web Master/Signature Ride Coordinator: Rick Stein;

Membership Director: Kim Matney;

Newsletter: Carole Becic.

OPBC's Monthly Club Meeting

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Oklahoma Joes, Stinson Park • Aksarben Village

1912 S 67th Street, Omaha NE. 68106

Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome!





Other Bike Rides In 2024

Ride of Silence (Nationwide)

May 15th 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Twin Creek Trailhead 3601 Raynor Dr, Bellevue, NE
Honors those who have been injured or killed on the roads
<https://rideofsilence.com>

Big BAM Ride

(Bike Across Missouri on the Katy Trail)
October 6 – 12, 2024
<https://www.bigbamride.com>



Those Fun Weekly & Monthly Rides

Saturday Morning Road Ride

Check the OPBC website for specific Saturdays and times.

<https://opbc.clubexpress.com>

Meet at: Farmer Brown's
2620 River Rd Dr, Waterloo.

The Group will decide the route. No drop ride, social ride.
About 30-40 miles. Average 13-16 mph.

Ride Leader: Rick Stein, rick.m.stein@gmail.com

O.P.B.C. Rusty Spokes

Beginning in April weather permitting, check the website

When: Thursday Morning Rides.

Easy weekday Trail Ride 10:00 AM, Weather permitting.

Meet at: Karen Park, North Parking Lot,
62nd Buckingham Ave

Ride Leaders: Ken & Carol Deman - mbeardeman@cox.net- 402-339-2069

Bellevue Berry Farm Taco Ride

When: Thursday Evenings, Approximately 5:30 PM, Weather Permitting

An Easy Evening Trail Ride to the Bellevue Berry Farm for Tacos
Approximately 14 – 16 miles round trip

Meet at: Karen Park, 6288 H Street,

Or simply drive out and meet the group for great food and conversation.
(Contact Rhonda for time estimate)

Ride Leader: Rhonda Hall - rhalltulip@msn.com

Tuesday Star Party Ride

Next Ride: (check the website for the first ride date) 6:00pm

When: Second Tuesday of each month

Ride the West Papio Trail North of Lake Zorinsky, about 15 to 20 miles.

Stay for Star Party, starting about 8:00 PM, with the Omaha Astronomical Society.

Sponsored by: OPBC and Public Star Party by the [Omaha Astronomical Society](#),

Meet at: Soccer Field Parking, Zorinsky Lake Park,

156th & F Street, Omaha, NE 68135 - (South Entrance on the West side of 156th & F Streets)

Easy Rider Pace of 10 to 12 mph - no drop ride.

Lights are recommended since this ride goes until sunset.

Ride Leader: Kim Matney, 402-651-7497

***Follow park entrance road towards the West and the parking lot we meet at is first possible Right turn.**



Tales of BRAN and Other Cycling Adventures

Hello From Iowa

By Steven Schnitker

Hello from Iowa.

Once again Mother Nature smiled on the **Iowa Bicycle Expo and Ragbrai Route Announcement Party**.

It was Saturday January 27 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines. Staging an event in January in Iowa is always risky, but the good weather brought out over 5,000 attendees for this year's event. Exhibitors included our BRAN favorite, Pork Belly Ventures, the BIG BAM ride on the KATY, dozens of bike shops and bike trails and even free beer (samples) from Iowa breweries.



Jeffrey Bock had several examples of his hand built touring bicycles. I (mostly) resisted the temptations to buy more bike stuff. Over 1000 people attended the Ragbrai Route announcement party that evening.

Seen here on the left is Donald Kaul's bicycle restored to its original colors for the live auction.



After a falling out with the Des Moines Register, Kaul had painted over the original colors of his Ragbrai Special. The Ragbrai Team Culte Cyclist had the winning bid of \$8,500. Proceeds went to the Ragbrai Dream Team, a charity that works with at-risk youth to build their self-confidence by training for and participating in RAGBRAI.

Three days later found me back in Des Moines for the **Iowa Bicycle Coalition Lobby Day** at the capitol. We, pictured at right, were lobbying for three initiatives; Crosswalk protections for all users, Equal penalties for motorists causing injury or death to cyclists, and prohibition of use of hand held devices while driving. Prospects for all three initiatives were good. The story of the hand held device ban turned into a sad tale of how sausage is made in Des Moines. Rep. Brian Best, from Glidden introduced legislation limiting distracted driving with hand held devices. The Iowa Bicycle Coalition strongly supported the bill.



Distracted driving sure scares me! The couple in the lower right corner of the lobby day picture lost their daughter when she was hit from behind by a driver who admitted he was shopping for fence posts on his cell while driving. Turns out looking at your phone while driving is not illegal in Iowa, as long as you're not actively manipulating it. It seemed like Brian Best's bill could be a winner. Enter Sen. Brad Zahn, Urbandale. Seems Sen. Zahn's son was driving the family car when he was caught speeding by a traffic camera. "Unconstitutional!" cried Sen. Zahn. So he added an amendment to the distracted driving bill to outlaw automated traffic enforcement (ATE). The Iowa Bicycle Coalition was caught on the horns of a dilemma. Do we support a bill that saves lives by limiting distracted driving, but will cost lives killed by more speeding? We joined about 100 police, state troopers, and insurance representatives in the sub-committee room voicing our opposition to the amendment. The courts have ruled that ATE is constitutional, but Sen. Zahn, not to be deterred by that pesky separation of powers thing, passed the bill out of committee. Luckily, the full senate has greatly modified the bill although it may still limit enforcement. One loose spoke can throw the whole wheel out of balance.



Kipers Cross the Country

by Melanie Kiper

On March 14, 2023 – two weeks after retirement – we departed Ocean Beach, San Diego, California, for a cross-country bike ride. On November 2, 2023 – after 44 riding days and 3,078 miles – we finished the ride in St. Augustine, Florida. Ed was on a bike; I was in a support van. Our silky terrier, Sisi, joined us. Here are a few of our favorite memories.

California. We read that coming out of San Diego is the hardest part of the route. We agree. It was a challenge to follow the route which alternated between city streets and trails. We leap-frogged from point to point, having to occasionally backtrack to get back on route.

After about 42 miles, we were on I-8. Many western states allow cyclists on interstates. This was a new experience for us.

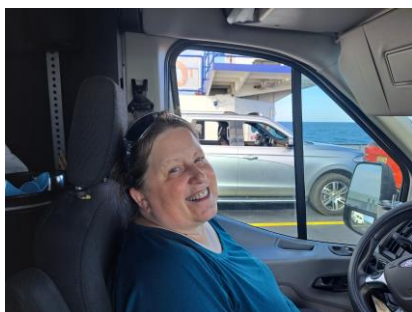
The second day we woke to rain. This was the only full day we were stalled by rain. The weather was mostly temperate, but we were glad we had both cold weather gear and air conditioning.



Ed takes off from Ocean Beach, riding into the sunrise

The following day Ed climbed the Tecate Divide (3,890 feet elevation) and then enjoyed the exhilarating miles long downhill, reaching speeds over 38 mph.

Ed had a lot of fun -- and a lot of flats -- zigzagging through the Imperial Valley.



Melanie behind the wheel



A view inside the back of our van, after a few weeks on the road



Taking a break at a rest area

Arizona. It took three days to get through Phoenix. The route weaved through the city, on a combination of trails and busy city streets, many under construction. Overall, we were pleased by how many bike trails and lanes are available in southern cities. Drivers seemed more accommodating and accepting of cyclists.

Ed made great time through the Mazatzal Mountains, even with stopping to check out the beautiful vistas and watch the Salt River Wild Horses at the Butcher Jones Recreation Area. One night we boondocked within the San Carlos Apache Reservation and woke to drumming in the distance. We later learned it was their annual Pow Wow weekend. It felt surreal.



Ed biking through Phoenix traffic

New Mexico. The ride west of White Signal was difficult with few services, high winds, and a 20+ mile, steep uphill over the Continental Divide (6,355 feet elevation), with no rewarding downhill.

On March 28, we took our first rest day in Silver City. The next day we headed home. While biking through Silver City, Ed spilled his bike and broke his collar bone. This injury takes six to eight weeks to heal, so going home to recover was the best option. Ed did not let this deter him from completing his goal.

On September 29, we were back in Silver City and on our way over Emory Pass, the highest elevation on the route (8,166 feet). Ed reached the top in four hours; 38 miles and 2,200 feet gain in elevation. He earned the 33-mile downhill, dropping 3,800 feet.

While in the Black Range Mountains, Ed ran across an Adventure Cycling group doing a 600-mile loop tour. This was one of the few times we saw other cyclists along the route. After El Paso and into Texas, the road became desolate, with long sections of no services. Ed had a lot of flats on this section.



Ed at the top of Emory Pass

Texas. Texas is about one-third of the entire route. It took us 16 biking days to get through it. Ed ate up the miles on the flat, straight roads -- a nice break from the mountains in the west. We often travelled along the Rio Grande within sight of the border wall.

The route goes through the hill country of central Texas, including the TX337 portion of Three Sisters, a popular motorcycle route known for its twists, turns, and steep inclines. Biking through Texas cities was tricky at times, but there are great trails and bike lanes. Austin even has dedicated traffic lights on bike lanes.

We saw lots of wildlife, both alive and roadkill: antelope, deer, hawks, vultures, armadillos, turtles, and seagulls. Highlights include visiting the Prada Merfa art installation; camping at the El Cosmico festival grounds; crossing the Amistad National Recreation Area; getting a glimpse of the new National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg; biking through Bastrop State Park; fighting the crazy traffic around the Round Top Antique Week; viewing a partial solar eclipse; celebrating Ed's birthday; and watching (from a distance) a tarantula cross a parking lot.

Louisiana. We got caught up in the late October deadly Super Fog event that resulted in a miles-long pileup on I-55 west of New Orleans. At the time, we were not aware of the seriousness of the fog, but Ed was cautious while biking through it. One day our route and a parade route merged. I got trapped in a church parking lot for 4 hours; Ed had to walk his bike alongside the closed road.

The route included several miles of the Mississippi River Trail in both New Orleans and east of Baton Rouge. In New Orleans, the route goes through a sketchy part of the French Quarter.

Soon after -- continuing until western Florida -- we experienced many long, high bridges over the Intercoastal Waterway (IW). I had no idea such bridges existed. These seem dangerous for cyclists since they are often two-lane with no bike lane or shoulder, and the wind is magnified over the water.

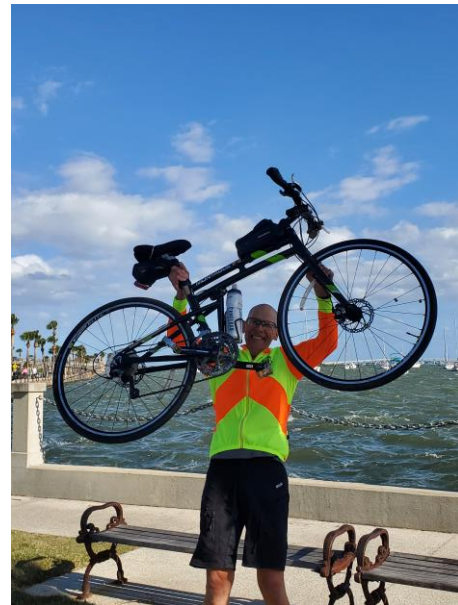
Mississippi. Over 23 of the 76 miles ridden in Mississippi were along the Mississippi Sound and the beautiful shores of Long Beach and Biloxi.

Alabama. The scariest of the IW bridges was the Gordon Persons Bridge -- at three-miles-long with an 83-feet clearance -- leading us to a ferry port. Using the Mobile Bay Ferry is part of the route. The ferry had been closed for several days due to high winds, but we got lucky. They did one run the day we arrived at the dock and we got on it.

Soon after debarking the ferry, we were travelling along the Gulf of Mexico near Orange Beach. I stopped to walk barefoot in the beautiful white sand. Winds along the coast were 25+ mph. The mileage, steep bridges, and wind combined to make this the hardest day of the ride for Ed.

Florida. The last state went by in a blur. The roads were flat. The weather was great. The scenery was beautiful. On the last day, Ed biked 24 miles into St. Augustine. We spent a bit of time near the Bridge of Lions on the Historic Bayfront along the Mantanzas River. Then we headed home.

It was an amazing adventure. Here are some specs for the geeks.



Celebrating the finish line in St. Augustine, Florida

Bikes: Ed started on a Cervelo road bike. After persistent flats in Texas, he switched to the Montague Fit folding bike brought as a backup. He changed over a dozen tubes and replaced one tire.

Van: I drove a 2019 Ford Transit 250 cargo van, mid-top, 148" wheelbase, outfitted with a roof fan, Disc-O-Bed stacking cots, EcoFlow portable power station, and interior bike storage.

Route: Adventure Cycling Southern Tier Route. The printed maps were helpful for planning. They include helpful information like riding conditions, field notes, service directories, and elevation profiles. We used AC's Bicycle Route Navigator app extensively during the trip.

Overnights: We used the Campendium and StayFree apps to find overnight parking. We overnights at a combination of staying at pet-friendly hotels; parking on BLM land, campgrounds/RV parks, picnic areas, truck stops, parking lots; and boondocking on the side of the road. We felt safe and only once was asked to leave a location.



Movie Night at the Aksarben Cinema

By Carole Becic

Movie Night is back! On March 26, 2024, the Omaha Pedalers Bicycle Club (OPBC) sponsored the movie "Arthur The King" at the Aksarben Cinema, in Askarben Village. Promotion tables were set up with items from Greenstreet, the Book Worm, and BRAN. It was a fun evening for the 45 to 50 attending fellow members and friends.

The movie “Arthur The King” is based on a true adventure captured in the book “*Arthur The Dog Who Crossed the Jungle to Find a Home*”. Mark Wahlberg portrays Mikael Lindnord, who is driven to compete but with great compassion for his fellow teammates and a special amazing dog. “Arthur The King” follows an Adventure Racing team racing in the 2014 Adventure Racing World Championship race across South America. The team meets Arthur who becomes the fifth member of the team. This is a wonderful movie of determination, devotion, strength, and loving caring friendships!



Our Frosty Bike Ride

By Rhonda M Hall

I had been on the Frosty Bike Ride a few times before, but my work schedule and the pandemic prohibited the ride for a few years.

I signed up early this year, even though it was pricey. I spent \$100 but that included an awesome sweatshirt.

As you probably recall, we had bitter cold weather in January and February. The cold weather worried me, as I didn't want to ride in twenty below temperatures.



As luck would have it, it warmed up a bit for the ride. Around 48 degrees. Linda Grundman and I met in Lincoln and took off on the ride. I kind of remembered the route from before, but it had changed a bit. We didn't download the map. We used the old, “We'll just follow everyone else.”

We did the best we could. We enjoyed the sights in Lincoln and loved a town that supports cyclists. Their bike lane is divided with a barrier, so you are separated from motorists. They also have lovely traffic lights with red, yellow, and green illuminated bicycles. That reminded me of Madison Wisconsin. I've spent many a weekend there not only for Sagbraw but a writer's conference I loved to attend. Lincoln and Madison are both college towns, so it made sense.



We got a little lost on the first leg, but luckily, we ran into people on the trail who helped us find our way. At the halfway point, they had hot chocolate waiting for us. The last time I did it, it tasted like weak watered-down chocolate, but this time the hot chocolate was awesome and hit the spot.

When we arrived at the Bike shop/halfway point, about twenty bikers were hanging out inside and out. Linda and I were relieved we could follow them back. We said we better make our rest stop short. We shopped a little, drank hot chocolate, used the facilities and hit the road.

Not a single biker was left! Que the ominous Twilight music. If it hadn't been for the occasional car; I would have thought it was the second coming.

“Do you remember where we turned in?”

“Does this look familiar?”

“Did we cross this road?”

We rode until we found familiar streets or non-familiar streets or an occasional jogger to help us navigate our way back. We tried using our phones, but we were both losing battery power quickly and didn't want to run them down completely. Plus, it was directing us down busy streets and we wanted the trails.

And then it started to rain. Luckily, I wore a heavy sweatshirt and never got cold. Linda wasn't so lucky.

I said, “Someday we will be sitting in a nursing home and say, ‘Remember that time we got lost and it rained on us? Good times’.” It was actually fun, we've been rained on before. It got heavy at times, but mostly just a light rain fall.

Finally, I saw a police car sitting slightly under an interstate ramp. I stopped next to him. He rolled down his window.

“We're lost.”

He offered to pull up so the interstate would completely block the rain for me. He said we were on the right track and to keep heading in the same direction for “quite aways” then turn right.

I said, “Everything you said was good until you said, “Quite aways.”



Rhonda's Photobomb



We finally made it back to familiar territory and got back to the starting point. Neither one of us was stressed and we just enjoyed our ride. Our only two concerns were, would they run out of food and they had a bike giveaway. If we aren't there and we win, would they give it someone else?

Neither was the case, we missed the drawing, but we didn't win, and they had plenty of food. It was good to get back on the bike and start our cycling year off with a fun ride. Seventeen miles that was supposed to be 14.

Hopefully, next year, we'll download the map.



BRAN 42

June 2 - 8 June 8, 2024

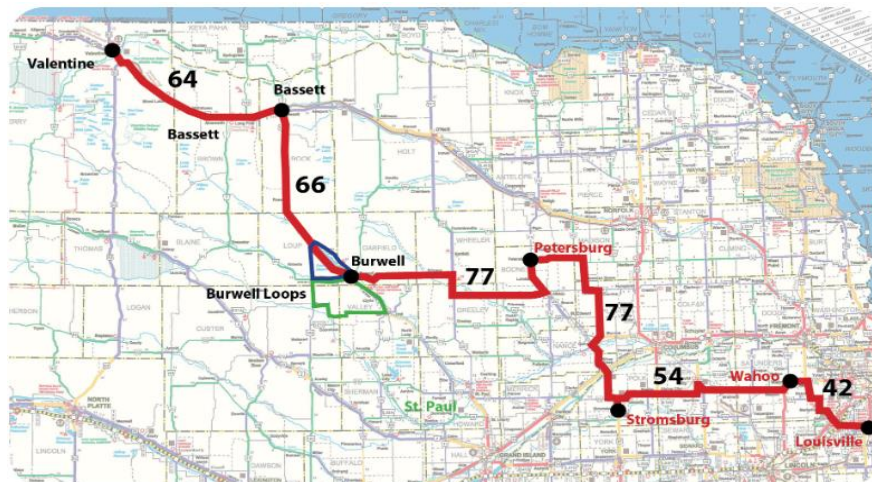
<https://www.bran-inc.org>

Excitement is building!
Registration is open!

The route begins in Valentine and winds its way diagonally into Louisville.

For the first time, a two day/night stay, midweek, is scheduled in Burwell.

Be sure to register for the Tubing and Tanking activities available for our Burwell stay.



Valentine -> Bassett -> Burwell (two nights) -> Petersburg -> Stromsburg -> Wahoo -> Louisville

Check the website <https://www.bran-inc.org> for details, updates and information.



OPBC Signature Rides

Please check the OPBC website (www.opbc.clubexpress.com) for updates.

Great American Pie Ride

When: May 18, 2024

Meet: Missouri Valley Park at 8:30 AM

For rides of 22, 38, and 50 miles (4 pie stops)

Fully supported.

Bring money for pie!

Member Family Picnic

When: June 15, 2024

Members Only Please.

Ride the Wabash from Council Bluffs

and stop in Silver City for a

Gourmet Hot Dog Roast with all the fix'ns.

Glacial Till Summer Wine Ride

When: July 14, 2024

Meet: At the Round the Bend Steak House

Ride to: Glacial Till Tasting Room in Ashland.

Long ride: via Church Road **Starts at** 10:00 AM, 35 miles.

Short ride: Down Hwy 66, **Starts at** 11:30 AM, 13 miles.

Enjoy wine and food at the Glacial Till Tasting Room.

Omaha Historical Tour

When: August 4, 2024

Starting and ending: Starbucks at 15th & Douglas

Urban ride to some of central Omaha's Historical landmarks.

Annual Corporate Cycling Challenge

Mark Your Calendars: Sunday August 18, 2024

ONABIKE XXXI Weekend Tour

When: Friday August 23 – Sunday August 25, 2024

Three day self-contained ride,
Ride with a group to Onawa, IA.
Tent-camp at the Library,
Ride ONABIKE XXXI August 24th.
Return to Council Bluffs.
140–180 mile options over three days,
A good introduction to self-supported touring,
Each rider pays his or her own way.

Wabash Overnight Weekend

When: Saturday August 31 and Sunday September 1, 2024

Labor Day Ride on Wabash Trace (54 miles) to Shenandoah, IA
For overnight camping.
Optional short ride from Shenandoah into Missouri.
Fully Supported. (Fee Required)

Magnolia Member Appreciation Ride

When: Saturday September 14, 2024

Ride to the Sawmill Hollow Aronia Berry Farm
(Near Magnolia)
Club paid Aronia Berry chili lunch for OPBC members
Fully supported

Pedaler's Pasta Pigout (P3)

When: Saturday September 28, 2024

Short ride from Omaha Public Safety Training Center
To Elk City and back
Meal at Mangia Italiana in Irvington



That's all folks! (for now 😊)