



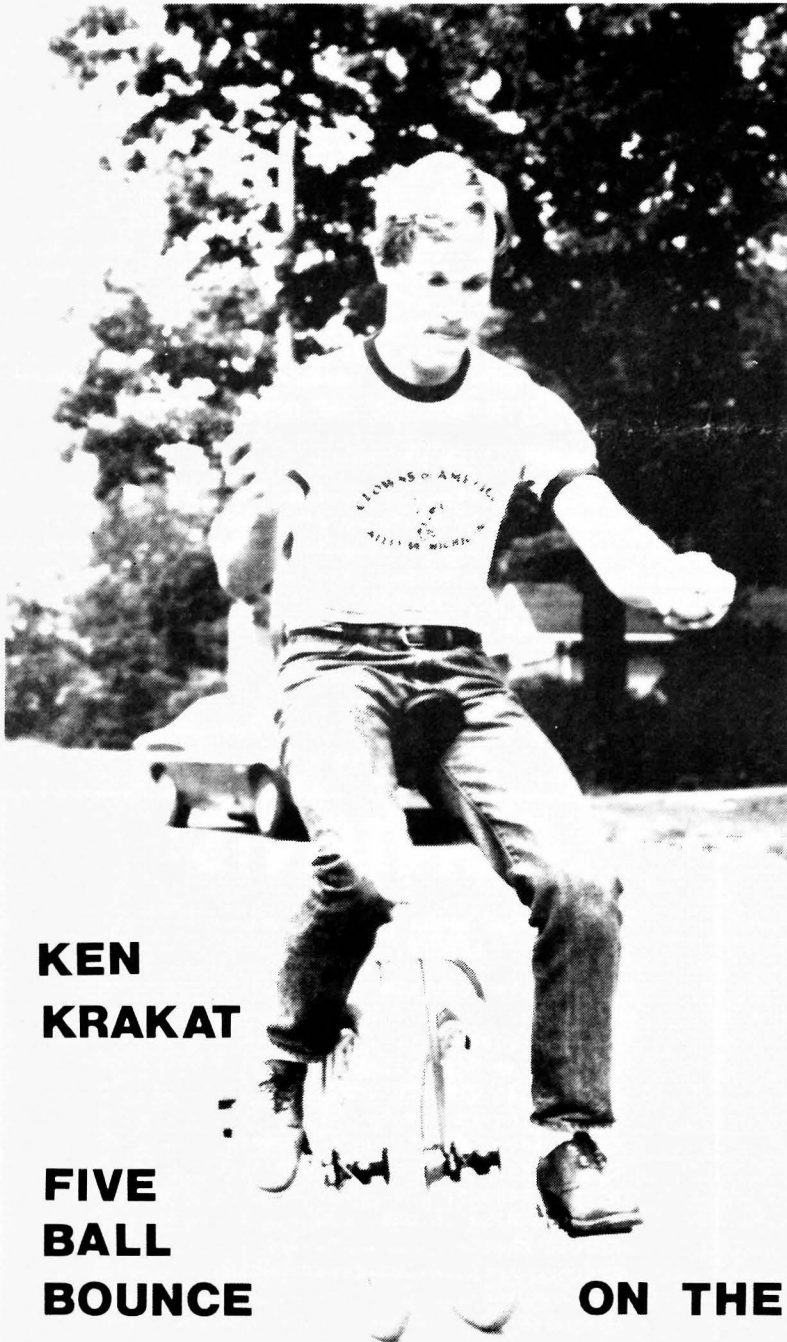
ON ONE WHEEL!



Volume 10 No. 3

QUARTERLY

Summer 1983



**KEN
KRAKAT**

**FIVE
BALL
BOUNCE**



**"What a way to save
money on dates!"**

**Sissy Weber and
Jared Troclair.**

See page 4

ON THE UNI-BIKE!

See page 3

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UNICYCLE HOTLINES: Call these people for up-to-date information on unicycle news, and the upcoming National Meet.

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FROM YOUR EDITOR:

Hi, folks, welcome to the Summer issue. Even though the National Unicycle Meet has already happened in Syracuse, NY, for the time being your mouths will only be watered by this photo of one of the slow races. That's RENE SEEL on the left, riding next to her sister RACHEL, I believe. The meet was again one of the best ever, with many members attending who had never had the chance in the past. More about that in the Fall issue, which you can expect to be out quite soon.

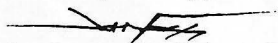


Next year's meet is already on the planning board. 1984 USA President JAN LAYNE will be overseeing the 1984 meet in Findlay, Ohio. The scheduled weekend is the weekend of July 20. The meet will be held at Findlay College, with facilities basically the same as at the 1979 NUM, which was also held there. We are all looking forward to another great get-together in Ohio in '84!

Another major unicycle meet is planned for 1984. It is to be the first INTERNATIONAL UNICYCLE CONVENTION. Sponsored by the IUF (International Unicycling Federation), the convention is planned to take place the weekend of July 27, or in other words the week after the NUM. The place is Syracuse University in New York, using the same facilities that proved so successful for this year's meet. Competitive events will not be as extensive as at the NUM's; with maybe a few races and artistic riding events, the emphasis will be on riders' getting to meet, ride together, and share their experiences & knowledge. Also to promote the sport of unicycling in any way possible on an international as well as national level. More details will be in upcoming issues of ON ONE WHEEL!

In the meantime, keep on riding, and pushing the idea of one wheeling to everyone you come across with an interest. Also continue to keep those questions, comments, suggestions, articles and pictures coming. We would especially like to hear from the areas of Texas and Calif.; we know you members are out there, what are you doing?

Stay on top,


John Foss, the Uni-cyclone

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Dale Granberry

NEWS FROM MOBILE, ALABAMA

USAm SETH GRANBERRY writes that he and his two sons, GLEN and DALE, have enjoyed the past two National Unicycle Meets that they have been to. Since the '82 NUM in Minnesota they have built an ultimate wheel and both Glen and Dale can ride it. Glen is also working on mastering the freemount on to his 6 ft. and the side jump mount. Dale is working on hopping and is starting to learn to juggle (off the unicycle).

As far as the MOBILE UNICYCLE CLUB goes, they now have 27 active members, the majority of them being between 11 and 14 years old. They do have one Senior Member, JOHN ENFINGER, age 61. Seth says, as far as he knows, they are the only club in the Southeast area of its kind.

Last February the Mobile club rode in three Mardi Gras Parades and performed in a half-time show for the University of South Alabama & Bathone Cookman basketball game. Their performances include group riding, a half-dozen riders on 6 ft giraffes, several handle bar units, two "horse" unicycles, one foot riding, backwards riding, teeter-board riding, juggling on 8½ ft unicycles, and on ultimate wheels. They also had a basketball routine where one rider on a standard unicycle dribbled down court and shot only to be intercepted by a rider on a 6 ft who shot at the other end and was blocked by a third rider on the 8½ ft who dribbled down court for a slam dunk.

Their members have also participated in the Diabetes Bike-O-Thon the last couple years, with Glen winning a Schwinn Bike (two wheels) for collecting \$382.00 in pledges, the most for that year. Dale rode his Miyata 16" the first year (10 miles) at the age of 6. That's 13,200 pedals!!!

REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA

USAm WARREN C. WOOD, Director of the Great All American Youth Circus, corresponded heavily with our founder BILL JENACK when the USA Inc. began and was anxious to have his group become associated with us once again, when he recently sent in a re-establishment of his membership. The Great Y Circus, the world's oldest community circus, has been mentioned quite frequently in older issues of this newsletter and some of the circus' cycles have been pictured in Jack Wiley's BICYCLE BUILDERS BIBLE. The circus has an extremely large and talented unicycle act, and we are proud to once again have them as a USA member!

THE UNI-BIKE

There are some who might say "Ick, there's a bicycle on the cover of the unicycling Newsletter!", so I put a unicycle there also, just to be safe. It is really still an unanswered question whether or not a cycle like the Uni-bike, or a cycle with two wheels on top of the other, is a bicycle or not. Sure, it has two wheels, but - - - and it goes like that. And so, avoiding this problem, we will move on.

That's USAm KEN KRACAT on the cover of this issue, and he's a hardcore juggler/unicyclist from Dearborn Heights, MI. He is doing a five ball bounce with laCrosse balls, and the puzzle for this issue is to spot the five balls! It is an impressive juggling trick, made even more so by the unusual cycle he is riding.

USAm TOM MILLER built the cycle, but the idea came from USA Secretary AL HEMMINGER, who originally attached two wheels, facing outward, to a Japanese Concord unicycle. The cycle on the cover is a really beautiful machine with a green frame & yellow tires, a change from the average blue or chrome uni.

The Uni-bike features a special pin in the axle between the two wheels, which can be pulled out to make the wheels turn independently. With the pin in, the wheels turn together, in the form of a regular uni., or a kangaroo uni. With the pin out, both pedals have a tendency to gravitate toward the bottom of the wheel, and it is almost impossible to ride normally. Al uses this feature when he first presents the cycle to someone. He will first ride it, and then just before letting the new person try, secretly pulls the pin out to make the other rider wonder how he can ride so good! This can also be used in a similar way in a clown act. It is an all-around good clown cycle just because of it's looks. It brings to mind an almost endless stream of ideas for funny lines and gags.

The Uni-bike can be used as a learning tool for unicyclists at various skill levels; when learning to ride, or learning to walk the wheel, it provides an extra measure of stability that can make things more safe & easy.

ANDY'S ODD SPORTS & THE PHILADELPHIA JUGGLERS CLUB

USAm ANDY D'ALLESANDO has a catalog of Juggling, Unicycling and Fun Equipment in which he offers for sale a number of quality unicycles, and various other "expensive toys". He has also been sending your Ed. copies of calendars & newsletters of the Philadelphia Jugglers Club. The club, which has many unicyclists in it, meets at the top of the steps at the Phila. Art Museum the 2nd & 4th Sundays of every month, and seems to be very well organized. An upcoming event, of interest to all jugglers and unicyclists in the PA area is this:

JUGGLING, UNICYCLING AND FUN JAMBOREE!

Sat. & Sun. October 1 & 2, 1983 at One Bowhouse Row & East River Drive, in Philadelphia. Beginners welcome! Features: free admission, workshops, open juggling, club passing, open unicycling, 9 mile unicycle ride (a monthly event at the club), buy, sell, swap props. Questions call Andy (215) 667-0146 (6-9 pm) or Dick (215) 874-2843, or write P.O. Box 1071 Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. Please register by calling or writing.



WEST HAVEN, CONNETICUT

CHUCK THE JUGGLING UNICYCLIST, alias USAM CHUCK MARQUETTE sent your Ed. a newspaper article about himself, showing pictures of him mounting and riding his beautifully chromed 16 footer built by USAm TOM MILLER. A very enthusiastic unicyclist, Chuck has been riding for 3 years, and has been working his way up the tall unicycles carefully (note his ground crew), and hopes to someday extend his giraffe up to 20 feet. He also rocks and rides backward on his 12 footer, as well as juggles on it, and does numerous tricks on his standard uni., which was built by HAMILTON'S BIKE SHOP in Wichita, Kansas. He is also able to juggle while riding his ultimate wheel. People tell Chuck that he's crazy, but he does it anyway because he likes "blowing minds" and he likes the challenge.

BOOK REVIEW:

HOW TO BUILD UNICYCLES AND ARTISTIC BICYCLES
by Jack Wiley.

This is the first complete how-to book devoted to the subject of building these cycles. Covers standard unicycles (including small wheel, midget, big wheel, ultimate wheel, handlebar, off-centered wheel and kangaroo models), handlebar units, giraffe unicycles (including small wheel, short, tall, multi-wheel and zigzag models), and a variety of artistic bicycles. The book is plastic ring bound to lie flat on the workbench, and though material covered is similar to that found in the BICYCLE BUILDERS BIBLE, also by USAm JACK WILEY, should prove exceptionally handy to the actual unicycle or artistic bike builder.

The price is \$7.95, plus \$2.00 postage and handling. CA residents add 6% sales tax, and Canadian and foreign orders add \$1.00 extra.

Send check or money order to Solipaz Publishing Company, P.O. Box 623, Stockton, CA 95201

You can also order THE BICYCLE BUILDERS BIBLE from this address. Don't send your orders to the USA, we don't have these two books!

MARDI GRAS UNICYCLISTS

Every day at 4 p.m. the corner of Melrose and Ellerslie streets in LaPlace, Louisiana turns into a three-ring circus. While its true that most neighborhoods become circuses during after-school hours, few are as real as this one. This started about a year and a half ago, when USAm JARED TROSCLAIR persuaded a skilled unicyclist to let him try the one wheeler.

"I just saw this guy riding a unicycle down the street, and I said, 'That looks hard.' I asked him if I could try, and in three days I was riding it." Jared recalls. Later, he passed his skills on to his 9 year old brother JOHNNY, and to now-USA members MARK & MIKE CANTRELL, 15 year old twins. The four boys then passed their skills on to nearly 25 neighborhood children.

"Everybody on Melrose knows how to ride," said one performer.

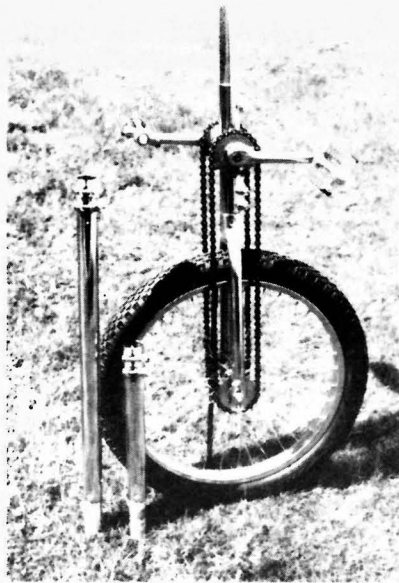
The two Cantrells and the two Trosclairs formed a group called the UNOS, and have been performing in small circuses in the New Orleans area. They hope to make it big someday.

"I just close the curtains," says MARY CANTRELL, mother, "I don't even look."

Jared is pictured on the cover of this issue with girlfriend SISSY WEBER. Your Ed. doesn't know if Jared takes her to the drive-in using that form of transportation, but the idea is right!

Even during all this, there is still plenty of time for the boys to participate in the festivities of the Mardi Gras Festival. For those who don't know what Mardi Gras is about, Jared has described it in this way:

Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) is a holiday in the New Orleans area. It is always 41 days before Easter. It means eat, drink & be merry because for the next 40 days you do penance and fast. Now Marid Gras is not just one day like you may think, the Mardi Gras Carnival season starts about 3 weeks before Mardi Gras day, and this means for about 3 weeks you can see any number of parades each day. You'd have to see it to believe it! Names of riders in the photo above are not known. Get them to subscribe!



DORSET, ENGLAND

USAm DAVID MARINER, proprietor of DM Engineering sent this photo of a custom made giraffe which he constructed for a performer on the London stage. It has two removeable sections with which its height can be adjusted to 4'6", 5'6" or 6'6". It comes apart and fits into a suitcase. Though it is a little heavier than DM's regular giraffe uni., it is certainly a beautiful cycle and does the job. DM makes several different unicycle models including double-chain 6' giraffes and 28" regular unicycles. For a catalog, you can write: DM Engineering, 7 Telford Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 7QW.

CHARITON, IOWA

USAm KAREN MESSAMER, a teacher at the elementary schools of Chariton, teaches unicycling and juggling to 4th, 5th and 6th grade students. As of February of this year, she had 35 accomplished unicyclists and 50 or more jugglers.

In April, Karen presented a workshop on circus arts at WM Penn College in Oskaloosk. The main objective was to promote the teaching of juggling and unicycling in other schools across the state as part of their physical education curriculums. Unicycling has been a part of the Chariton schools curriculum since 1976. She gave away packets at the workshop containing several articles of interest to the teachers attending, including the article on how to construct a unicycle charm out of two paper clips, reprinted with permission from a past issue of this newsletter. This article was found to be most interesting by the teachers.

Karen has found the back issues of the USA Newsletter to be the most informative and inspirational material she has found on the subject of unicycling.

UNICYCLISTS IN ALASKA!

USAm TODD DAVIS of Fairbanks, Alaska writes:

"In July there were several people that saw PIETRO BIONDO (see Spring '83 issue) on his giraffe riding up the Parks Highway into Fairbanks. Others reported seeing him riding out of town. I'm Sorry I missed talking with him.

"I just got turned on to your publication by USAm LESTER PURSELL. Les started riding in his mid-60's and is now somewhere in his mid-70's and going strong. I met Les in our Golden Days Parade and I have enjoyed riding with him the past few years."

Thanks, Todd. Wow, Pietro made it all the way to Alaska! Earlier this year when he passed through

Mobile, Alabama, USAm SETH GRANBERRY was able to make contact with him and get his address. He is now a USA member, and when he gets home to read his newsletter, it is hoped it will be the thing for him and he will continue his subscription in future years. Perhaps he would like to write us a story about his one-wheeled adventures in North America!

SOME SKILL LEVEL QUESTIONS

USAm DIXON R. MILLER, of Blakeslee, PA, has written in with a number of interesting and valid questions regarding the USA Achievement Levels. Here we will list the questions and answers.

Q: What size cones are used in the official obstacle course, and where can they be procured?

A: The Society owns a set of 10 traffic cones that are used at national meets, but these are expensive things to buy, and are not to be removed from your local road crews. The cones used at the unicycle meets are 18" high and have 11" square bases. They are made of a soft plastic material and though they look stable, they fall over quite easily if you hit them. A good substitute for these would be bleach bottles or 2-liter soda bottles. Fill the bottles with about 3" of water to keep them in place, and to simulate the "tip-piness" of the plastic cones. Using these bottles is as acceptable as using traffic cones.

Q: Is there a block placed on the starting line for mounting in the various levels, or is it a free mount? A: In Level I, when it says "Mount unicycle unassisted", this means any type of mount, but there must be no support, and no block. In the higher levels it is assumed that you can already do this, and a block is then not even needed. Using a block may make it a little easier to learn, but learning to mount without it actually teaches the rider more. As the wheel goes back beneath the rider's balance point, he automatically gets that chance to feel where it is. He is then leaning forward, and has no choice but to start pedaling forward to avoid falling. This also familiarizes the rider with the idea of pedaling backward, and is a step in the direction of learning to rock and ride backward.

Q: In level 3 riding backward, what is the mounting procedure? A: When not stated, any type of mount can be used. The idea here is merely to show the ability to ride backward, and the mount is not important. The best way to do it would be to ride forward, stop, and then continue backward for 50 yards or more, then stop and go forward again.

Q: In level 4, are stirrups used on the pedals in hopping over the 2 x 2"? A: Stirrups, or toe clips, are dangerous on a unicycle, but some riders use them anyway. If you can jump the obstacle with the toe clips, you can probably learn to do it without them in just a few minutes' practice. Since no unicycle limitations are listed, it is allowed, but the intention is for you to use the same unicycle for all for levels, with no changes from the way you normally ride. Most riders hold onto the front of the saddle and line up the pedals so that they are relatively level before jumping, and then it is similar to using a pogo stick.

Thank you for your questions, your Ed. hopes these answers are sufficient. Please send in any questions you have, readers, they can be of benefit to many other unicyclists when presented this way.



FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

A busy spring and summer of parades and shows was highlighted by an appearance by the OAK VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXHIBITIONAL ACTIVITIES CLUB at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. on July 9. The young performers in this group helped to recognize the Museum's Fantastic Festival of Flight; the club staged 3 shows before large audiences. Unicyclists from Oak View performed a variety of skill activities on their standard unis, then switched to 5, 6, 8 and 10 ft. giraffes to enthrall their audiences. In addition to unicycling, Oak View also demonstrated German gym wheels, balancing, tumbling, stilt walking, juggling, rope twirling, contortion and quartet adagio. The photo shows Mike Hinton performing on his 10 ft. giraffe with historic U.S. rockets in the background at the National Air and Space Museum.

This spring marked the first professional performance by an Oak View unicyclist; SCOTT DIN-EEN rode various sized unicycles and juggled while performing for the Royal Hanneford Circus in New York. Also, two second graders, JASON DEMPSEY and STANLEY HAWK, rode with the club for the first time this summer.

USA SECRETARY AL HEMMINGER VISITS CIRCUS

Since my initial involvement with unicycling activity which began with my daughter's desire to learn to ride the machine I've re-kindled interest in attending annual "Big Time" circus events when appearances are made in my general area. The 75th annual Shrine Circus in Detroit which was produced by Hanneford Circus, Inc. was the most recent of these events that my daughter and I attended. As usual it was a most marvelous production and contained many beautiful and talented acts. The Shrine Clowns were also on hand doing their thing.

Naturally when my daughter and I attend these events our eyes are open and we become somewhat "one sided" in our views and look for some of the circus arts which we have become involved with. These include not only the use of unicycles, but also bikes, juggling, rope spinning and others.

This year we came away a little disappointed because there were no unicycles in the show. And although our publication is geared mainly toward our "one wheel wonder", I feel it is fit to mention that there was also no rope spinning, and a very limited use of juggling and bicycling skills.

It was only on the way home and fumbling through the thick ad-laden program that I found the use of the unicycle in the 75th edition of the circus event. Naturally it portrayed a funny looking clown on a unicycle on a wire carrying an

umbrella, just waiting for some younger kid to color when he got home. I then remembered the "aims" of our Society and thought that somewhere we as a group could help in future years. I don't think that such arts should be eliminated from the circus completely. A recent viewing of the Ringling Bros. Annual TV Event confirms this in my mind, as they did use a number of unicycles in the show, including a two wheeled unicycle from the clown college. A great credit should be in store for the college, and our good friends from there, for this happening. I think perhaps future generations of Shrine Clowns will be people from our Society who may aid in increased use of the unicycle. This is something that could happen via the circus arts programs now run in various elementary schools where unicycling and other circus arts are taught.

I keep asking myself if a new market for good unicycles is beginning to open up in the U.S. as it has in Japan where schools are buying them for such programs. It would be interesting to hear from some of our members who are involved in school programs what their experiences have been in teaching these skills. Could it be possible that such an activity could complement and balance out the amount of contact sports in school systems in future years? Could this result in less serious injuries to school children? What are Your views?

Stay On Top--AL HEMMINGER



GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

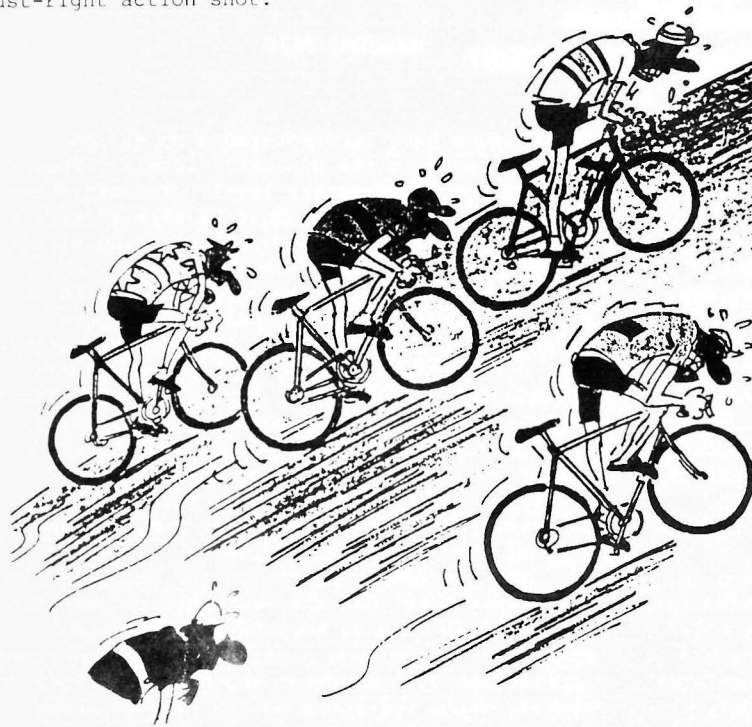
USAm ERNEST FUR-BLUR writes to tell us of his performers. He sent your Ed. this photo of "Aldebert et ses Potes" (Aldebert and his Buddies), the best amateur unicycle act in the French speaking part of Switzerland, possibly the entire country. They have been riding for

over 5 years and have a terrific act combined with juggling, tumbling and clowning. There are 4 members in the group, CHRISTIAN GMUNDER, PASCAL CRAUSAZ, PHILIPPE DUCOMMUN and MICHAEL FURBLUR, the son of Ernest, who is also Geneva Gymnastics Champion. They perform in parades, for gym shows, church groups, etc. They all got their start in Ernest's school club which offers; Gymnastics, acrobatics, unicycling, juggling, trampoline and more. The cyclists in the club also play unicycle hockey!

HAUTE-VILLE, QUEBEC

New USAm PIERRE BERNIER Sent in his membership application recently with a copy of a 1977 newspaper article about himself. The article tells about the then 19 year old who rode his standard unicycle from Ste. Foy to Trois-Rivieres in May of that year. He completed the 85 mile distance in 14 hours, 52 minutes. The article told of motorists shouting various stupid remarks at him, and of a policeman who stopped him and tried to convince him that what he was doing was too weird. Having not enough time to convert the policeman to the virtues of riding a unicycle, he asked the policeman if any rule existed forbidding travel on an acrobatic object on their Quebec roads. With no reply he continued on. His objective was to beat the time of 21 hours for a distance ride of 81 miles, which was the record in the current GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS, and he did it. Even at an average speed of six miles per hour, 85 miles is quite a long distance to travel on a regular unicycle in one day. The unicycle pictured with the newspaper article was an average, tubular frame, chromed Japanese 24" unicycle.

Pierre also included a copy of a cartoon drawn by a French cartoonist. Your Ed. thinks it is an accurate representation of the things cameramen sometimes have been known to do to get that just-right action shot.



A BACKWARD UNICYCLIST

Now that we have found PIETRO BIONDO, we can start to look for BILL LODEN of Booneville, Miss. Bill, a student at the University of Miss., rode a unicycle which was apparently identical to the one used in the article above, backward for 14.8 miles in 40 minutes. To accomplish this feat he turned his saddle around backward to keep his pedals from unscrewing. An article about his ride was published in many papers around the country by one of the news services, and told how Bill is looking to establish his record with Guinness. Good luck Bill, we hope you get to read this someday, too. All members in the Mississippi area, if you see any unicyclists going backward (or any other direction), please ask them if they would like to be associated with the Unicycling Society of America!

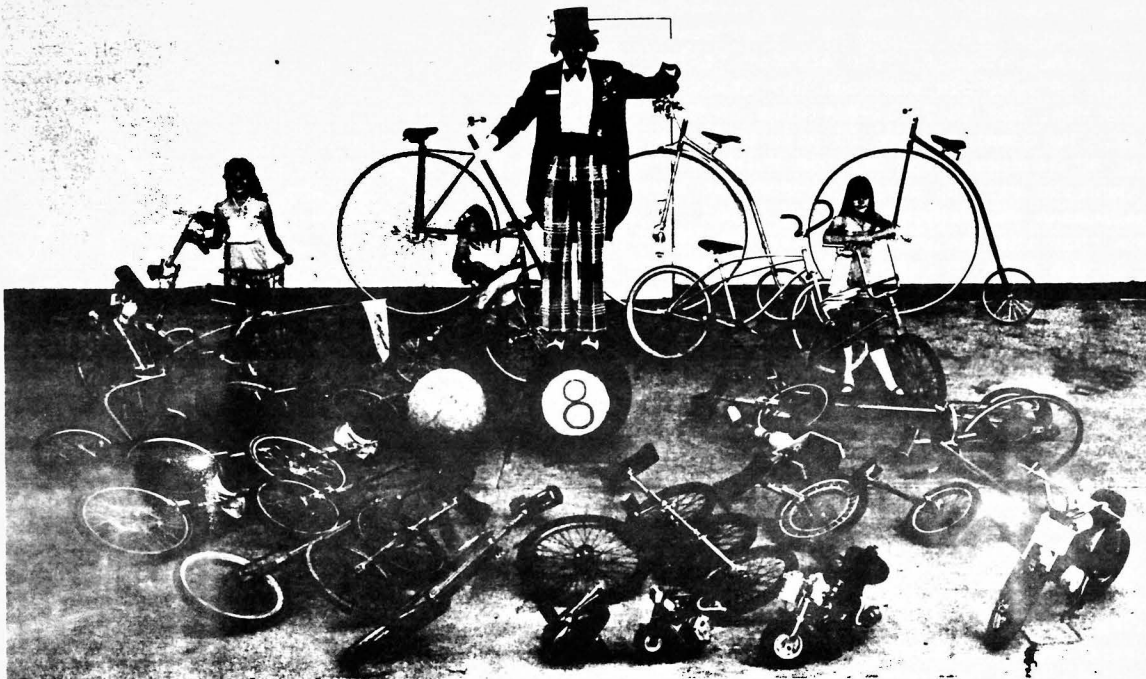


FAMOUS UNICYCLE CHASE SCENE!

Did you know that in the Marx Bros. 1941 film THE BIG STORE there is a climactic unicycle chase scene? Chases by bad guys out to "do him in", Groucho runs through the sporting goods department of "the big store", grabs a bicycle, and starts riding frantically up and down the aisles. Harpo grabs a pair of roller skates and starts skating on top of the aisles. On a sharp turn Groucho fails to negotiate a curve, runs into a wall, and the bicycle becomes a break-apart bike -- one unicycle and one handlebar unit! Dumping the handlebar unit, Groucho rides the unicycle around one end of an aisle, when Harpo comes skating off the end and lands on his shoulders! They ride around the aisle once more, and then Groucho rides through a doorway, knocking Harpo off of his shoulders.

All of the unicycle riding in THE BIG STORE was done by the late USAm JOE MOLE, profiled in the January, 1975 USA Newsletter. Joe Mole was and remains one of the all time greats of unicycling. (Editor's note: Back issues of the January, '75 Newsletter still available, \$2.00 per copy.)

In 1975 USA Director JEANPAUL JENACK visited Joe at his home in California, and of the chase scene Mole said, "the most difficult part of the scene was getting Harpo's double to land on my shoulders. During one of the attempts, my tooth got chipped by one of his roller skates! The final scene in the movie used trick photography, since it never did come out right in the filming!"



Arnold Wheels

1310 E. 8th Street, Tempe, Arizona 85281 (602)967-7676

ARNOLD WHEELS

USAm LARRY CHEBOWSKI, known to his fans and students as ARNOLD WHEELS, has been riding unicycles since 1947 and has ridden in over 1500 parades since 1955, including all the major parades in Ariz., as well as many others throughout the country. Some of these parades were at our earlier National Unicycle Meets which he attended, dating all the way back to 1973. He is the only unicyclist known that bowls on a unicycle, with an average of 165 and a top game of 269! He can play an accordion while riding and can do a very entertaining unicycle act from 10 to 30 minutes, usually as a clown character. He has performed for a wide variety of events since 1950, doing both civic, public and private affairs from small parties to large company shows of 15,000 people.

Arnold carts his large cycle collection around in a 23 foot step van which doubles as a billboard for himself. From the photo we can see that his collection includes quite a variety of unicycles and bicycles, including 2 and 3 wheeled unis, some sort of accessory uni, a car or motorcycle tire uni, cycles that can be ridden when he is wearing stilts, and even a bowling ball wheeled uni with a bowling pin built into the frame.

Arnold Wheels has taught classes in clowning to "kids" young and adult, and is also a custom cycle builder, who will build any type of cycle you want to your specifications.

THE UNIQUES, OF LYNNWOOD, WASHINGTON

USAm CARL VARNER is currently directing a group of active unicyclists in the Seattle, WA area. THE UNIQUE UNICYCLE CLUB started out with four members who learned to ride in their elementary school phys. ed. class. They have now grown rapidly to a 40 member team with ages ranging from 9 yrs. to 70 yrs.

Many members of the Uniques have reached level 4 of the USA skill levels. So, for a special incentive to try new things and to raise their level of riding ability higher,

the Uniques have incorporated a so called "fifth" level to the USA skill levels. They call it the Wheelmasters level. To obtain the Wheelmasters level they must be able to ride a number of different unicycles including giraffes, ultimates, B.C. wheels, and minis.

This year the Uniques plan to ride in over a dozen parades and performances that have already been lined up. For their night parades they attach glo-sticks to the spokes and ride illuminated. GOOD IDEA! During the off season they perform at school assemblies and special events in malls. Recently they were taped to appear on a local television show called How Come?, which is a question and answer type program. Also they appeared on P.M. Northwest, a local T.V. magazine program.

The philosophy of the Unique Unicycle Club has always been that whoever wants to join them can do so as long as they have a unicycle. Those that don't have a unicycle are encouraged to practice with a member who has one. They don't require dues, but those who do ride in shows must have a Uniques T-shirt, etc.

Any input from other members of the USA would be greatly appreciated by Carl. Ideas on practice sessions and how to work with the variety of skills would be beneficial. For those who wish to write Carl or the club their address is:

The Uniques
P.O. Box 2594
Lynnwood, WA 98036
phone: (206) 334-6208

Carl also invites anyone who may be in the Seattle area to visit a practice session which are held on Monday evenings. Just call for directions!

FEATURE ARTICLE:

THE SKILLS OF UNICYCLE RACING

by John Foss, Editor, Livonia, MI

This is intended to be the definitive story of unicycle racing to date. See also article in Fall, 1980 NEWSLETTER, page 17.

Racing. It seems to be a basic instinct of humans. As soon as people find something that moves, like frogs or boats or airplanes, they try to find another one so they can race it. Unicycles are no exception. And since racing is a big part of a national unicycle meet, I would like to give a few tips as one who is an avid uni. racer. First, your unicycle must be adjusted to fit you. The saddle height must be set so that your knee is straightened all the way out with your heel on the pedal. When your foot is then properly placed on the pedal, there will be a small bend in the leg which is correct for all riding conditions except UMX (unicycle moto-cross) or otherwise rough terrain riding. For this type of riding the saddle should be lowered about 2 inches to prevent you from bouncing off your seat when you hit a bump with your leg extended.

For maximum pedaling efficiency, the balls of your feet should be centered over the spindles in the pedals. This makes the pedal an extension of your ankle and toe joints and is also the correct position for bicycling. Your feet should be on the pedals this way for all races (walk the wheel excepted).

Before starting off in a race make sure you are comfortably positioned on the saddle, and that your feet are correctly positioned on the pedals. Trying to adjust yourself while moving down the track will result in a loss of speed and concentration, and perhaps a dismount.

Almost all of the faster riders at the meets hold the front of their saddles from the beginning to the end of a race. It may look strange, but the hand holding the saddle steady helps to better hold the body to the unicycle, so you and it can better work together. It also releases your legs from the extra work of steering the unicycle and holding you onto it, so they can concentrate on just pedaling.



MARK SCHAEFER set the outdoor record for the one mile race like this: note foot placement, saddle height and grip on saddle. His time: 4:33.02

Now you are ready to go. Consider the race you are about to try. Each of the traditional races at the unicycle meets has its own necessary skills and strategies required to best complete it, and this is one of the things that makes unicycle racing more interesting than a mere mindless sprint down the track. Of course skill and articulation are needed; you are riding a unicycle, a vehicle which has a natural tendency to fall down! Acceleration must be carefully controlled to keep you "on top". Each race has its own additional qualities, listed below.

100 YARD SPRINT. Acceleration is crucial. You must have as much forward lean as possible at the beginning, and really mash down on those pedals, without falling forward! This, of course applies to all the races. Once you fall you are out of the race, and have no chance at any placing. Therefore you must be careful in this as well as all races to stay up! Practicing the acceleration without falling will make you faster. Practicing with more than one person is especially helpful, because the rider that has practiced all alone may fall when trying to keep up with riders that may just be faster than he. For this reason it is helpful to try to remember to not look at, or think about the other riders in a race, because you have your own balance to maintain, not theirs.

The next place to be careful in the 100 is at the point where you reach your top speed. This will probably come before you reach the halfway point, and can be a crisis spot. If you continue to speed up until you reach your top possible speed, you will fall forward as soon as you reach it because you will not be able to pedal that tiny amount faster that is needed to cancel your forward body lean. In other words, in the 100 you actually aren't pedaling as fast as you possibly can. If you did, as soon as you started to lean slightly forward, you would fall and be out of the race. You can develop a pedal rhythm, similar in a way to a drummer's drumroll, that can make you more stable at full speed.

Though you can usually land on your feet and running in a dismount, safety equipment is still a must for anyone who is a serious unicycle racer. 220 YARD SPRINT. The main difference between this race and the 100 is that where you gave it all you had for the 100, you must give it for more than twice the distance for the 220. Fatigue is a factor near the end of a unicycle race, and in frequent cases, one of a pair of side-by-side riders will fall before the finish line because the other rider has made that rider lean too far forward. Always keep your head and concentrate on your own balance point, until you are all the way across the finish line. Riders often fall right at or near the line because they seem to think that they can coast across?

880 AND ONE MILE RACE. This is the killer. The hard part is to pace yourself so that you don't run out of energy before the race is over, but to go fast enough. The fatigue-falls are most common in this race. When I race the mile, I use psychology, similar to that used in bicycle road races. I get in place behind the first place rider and follow him for the first 3/4 of the race or so, and then pass him and try to make a big space between me and anybody else. This can work for you too. Following the lead rider wears him out both physically and mentally. He has to determine what the speed is to be, and then he has to worry whether or not it is right.

This mental strain makes the lead rider slower, while you merely follow along. Maybe you can breathe hard to make him think you are tiring, just before you pass him. Remember to leave a space for him to fall down, just in case he does, you don't want him taking you with him!

The lead rider may look behind himself, and this may cause him to fall. You should never look back yourself, this is a unicycling no-no! Turning your head around effects your balance, and this is not needed. Remember to keep your mind on your own balance alone. Don't talk, and try to breathe rhythmically, just like a runner does (unicycle racing seems to borrow equally from running and bicycle racing).

Once you have passed the lead rider you are vulnerable yourself. This is where the fatigue-falls take place, and if you remember this, you can purposely avoid them. Don't pay any attention to the other riders, and beware of them using psychology on you!

50 YARDS BACKWARD. Helmets recommended! Riding backward is scary, and can be dangerous. Though head falls are quite rare, a helmet will make you (or at least Mom) feel better. Practice some backward dismounts to be familiar with what to do when you have to. Forget the unicycle. Rolling over backward can bring you right back up to your feet! Make sure your lane is clear before starting. Once I have started in a backward race, I don't look around, I just go. Rules are the same as the other sprints, only backward. If you drop your unicycle, try to keep it out of the lanes of other riders. Practice staying in your lane, and don't stop! Too many riders slow down because they think they have crossed the line, and this wrecks their times. Keep going fast until you see the line well "in front" of you.

50 YARDS ONE FOOTED. This is one of my favorites because it involves a high level of skill all the way down the track, but just about any one foot rider can do it. In the first 5 yards you must push as hard as you can to get going, but be careful in the transition to one foot. Work out a system whereby you don't have to look for the line, because you know just how many pedal turns you can make before crossing it. I start with my pedals level, right foot back for all races, and for this race, rather than looking, I just count three turns of the wheel and lift my right foot. As my right foot goes around the bottom of the stroke for the third time, this is just about where the line is; just under three revolutions. Once you are riding one foot, accelerate as hard as you can, but remember that this is a delicate process.

10 YARDS WALK THE WHEEL. Rule one, of course, is to stay up. When you are first walking the wheel this is all the strategy you need. Some walk the wheel races are won by the rider who goes slow & steady, because everybody else falls. Don't fall! Lots of practice will make you a fast wheel walker. At that point, one of the tough spots of the race is where you go from a leaning forward, accelerating position, to a leveled-off position. This is where your fall may occur if you are going fast, and it only takes more practice to learn to avoid it. Don't let the other riders' falls distract you, just keep on walking!

10 YARDS SLOW. This is a super-skill race, and takes more practice than the others to do well. Use your arms for balance, and concentrate on that balance. A problem with this race is the difficulty in judging whether or not a rider has momentarily stopped, and some riders may be disqualified for smaller stops than a finishing rider may

make. The best way to avoid this is to be sure not to stop at all, through practice, practicing. THE OBSTACLE COURSE. The official USA Obstacle Course will be detailed in the next issue of ON ONE WHEEL, because it is an article in itself, and a great learning tool.

TRAINING. I can describe the type of training session that has worked for myself and USAm MARK SCHAEFER, holder of the one mile and backward records. First, if your local track is within a mile or two, ride there. This will warm you up. If you get there by other means, you should ride a few times around the track before starting. Do some stretching exercises. The first race we practice is the mile, to get it out of the way. We have found that we still have energy afterward to practice the other races. For starting you can use a hurdle, garbage can or handy shoulder. Ride the mile at the speed you think is best for you, and time yourself so you know what you have done. After you have finished your mile, keep riding. Don't stop! Take a slow lap or two around the track and allow your breathing to slow down and your body to recover while your legs are still following the familiar motion. This is better than stopping because your legs stay loose, and will make you a better unicyclist.

After doing our rest laps, Mark and I do some special training laps. One lap of pedaling left footed, one lap of right footed, and one lap of backward. The one foot with both feet keeps our bodies even, and all three are helpful, not only in the races, but in all forms of riding.

After this we run through each of the other races one or more times. Using a stopwatch can give an idea of how fast you are. In the next issue there will be a list of the fastest NUM times for each of the traditional racing events listed above. Compare your times with these.

EQUIPMENT. There are two kinds, the first of which is SAFETY EQUIPMENT:

"Attention, all hands -- and other body parts. This is the brain. We're now going to ride down this track as fast as we can on a unicycle."

"Hey, brain. This is the stomach. How about sending some food down here?"

"Oh, quiet your rumblings."

"Hey, brain. This is the knees. I don't have any protection on. What if Mr. Uni-Freak here takes a face-flop? That would hurt us."

"That's right. Hey, Uni-Freak. Go get your knee pads, gloves and elbow pads."

No sport is perfectly safe. I like to think that unicycling is safe because a 24" unicycle can usually never go faster than its rider can run, not even downhill (this is the problem with roller skates & skate boards). But a rider can still fall down, and the main spots of ground friction are the palms of the hands and the knees. Elbows are the next most vulnerable area, in a rolling dismount, and a helmet is a good idea too. Any-one riding fast on a unicycle should have, at the bare minimum, a pair of heavy gloves and knee pads. I for one think they should be required at unicycle meets. Though at the last 3 national meets the tracks have been rubber, injuries still occur. At the annual regional/Mini Meet of the Redford Club, the infamous Wonderland asphalt has taken its toll of riders over the years, at least one a year getting some really nasty scrapes. Also remember. Once you have your safety equipment, the only times you will fall will be the times when you forget to wear it!

UNICYCLE EQUIPMENT. In a long race, you lift those pedals up & down endless times. Light pedals are what you want. You also want a good grip to keep your feet on. Mark Schaefer and I use turf shoes with very sharp rat-traps, made by Skyway Recreation of California. However we don't recommend these pedals to other riders because they are extremely sharp, and have scratched anything from a blue-jean clothed leg to bare metal. Shop around for a good pedal that is right for you. Toe clips are not recommended by me, but some riders use them and seem quite confident with them.

A light unicycle is best for sprinting down the track, and the alloy-rimmed MIYATA is the best thing in this department. However for the mile, Mark prefers his triple-spoked SCHWINN, saying that the heavier wheel acts as a flywheel, steadying him.

In case you were wondering how fast 24" unicycle wheels turn in the various races, I have figured some of them out. To ride 100 meters in 16 seconds, the riders average rpm is 196. For 15.5 sec., 202. And for 15 sec. (the record is 14.89), 209! Now to compare with the pedaling speed of mark Schaefer when he rode the mile as pictured at the beginning of this article, riding the mile in just over 4½ minutes gives him an rpm of 184.75, not much slower than above! For a 5 min. mile the speed is 168, and for 5½ min, 153.

Last but not least in unicycle racing or any other type of sporting event, remember sportsmanship! It is not so important who wins, even at a National Meet, as long as everyone rides to the very best of his or her ability. Have fun, and stay on top!

UNICYCLING IN ENGLAND



USAm CHRISTOPHER MAYES sends along this photo of his circus group in Kent, England. The riders, from left to right are, DAVID, CHRIS, LIZA and REBECCA. Your Ed. is not sure if these are members of his immediate family or not, but either way, this is where the unicyclists come from in his area. Chris is a policeman (bobby?), and is hoping to send us a photo of him, in uniform, riding his uni.

Chris has also sent in a copy of a newspaper article featuring a picture of Prince Charles having a go at a unicycle. We weren't able to get the necessary permission to reproduce the photo, but think you members might think it interesting to know some of the people that are actually trying the one wheeled machines. Charles is not looking too steady in the photo, being supported on both sides, but who knows. . . maybe he will want to try it again some time! If not, the photo may still serve as the inspiration to thousands of other would-be unicyclists to try it, saying, "If Prince Charles can be silly enough to try one, so can I!".

UNI-VERSE

Here is a teeny-weeny-uni-rhyme from PIERRE UNI-GONZALES, a member who would like to remain anonymous:

By the cycle I lived; unicycled I died,
They said it was murder,
It was Cycle(cide) Celled Aphilia!

ULTIMATE WHEEL INSERT INSTRUCTIONS

These ultimate wheel inserts are made by USAm TOM MILLER, and made available to our members. Now you can make one, too! See illustration on back cover of this issue.

YOU WILL NEED: ultimate wheel kit (if you are not making it yourself), 3/4" plywood, bicycle rim, 1/2" pedals (rat traps suggested), rim strip, tube & tire (smooth sidewall recommended).

Quality of the finished product will depend upon the construction of wheel. Caution is advised when riding the Ultimate Wheel as on all unis.

1. Select rim size (24" or larger recommended).
2. Carefully measure the inside diameter of rim at several different points as the rim may not be perfectly round.
3. Draw circle on the plywood the same size as the largest diameter measurement.
4. Cutout circle with saw and shape to fit inside the rim. A snug fit is better than loose. Mark position of valve hole on wood.
5. Remove circle from rim and place ultimate wheel insert in the center of plywood. Measure carefully!
6. Trace the outline of the main body of insert.
7. Drill hole in center of outline for sawblade and cut out for insert.
8. Place insert through hole and trace outline of the crosspieces, one per side.
9. Remove insert and with wood chisel cut cross-piece outline to a depth of 1/8". Remove wood to the same depth so cross piece sits flush with side of plywood.
10. Re-install insert and drill mounting holes using crosspiece holes as guides.
11. Cut notch for valve stem.
12. Remove insert and sand both sides of plywood.
13. Bolt insert in place. Place wheel on solid surface and pound the heads of carriage bolts to seat shoulders into crosspiece. Now tighten nuts until wood begins to creak.
14. Remove excess bolt by cutting or break off excess by using short back and forth strokes. Peen end of bolt to smooth sharp ends and to prevent nuts from backing off.
15. Place plywood in rim (line up valve hole with notch) and hammer a nail through each spoke hole. Use nail set to drive nails in.
16. Install rim strip, tube and tire.
17. Install pedals. Careful to put right pedal in right-hand threaded hole.

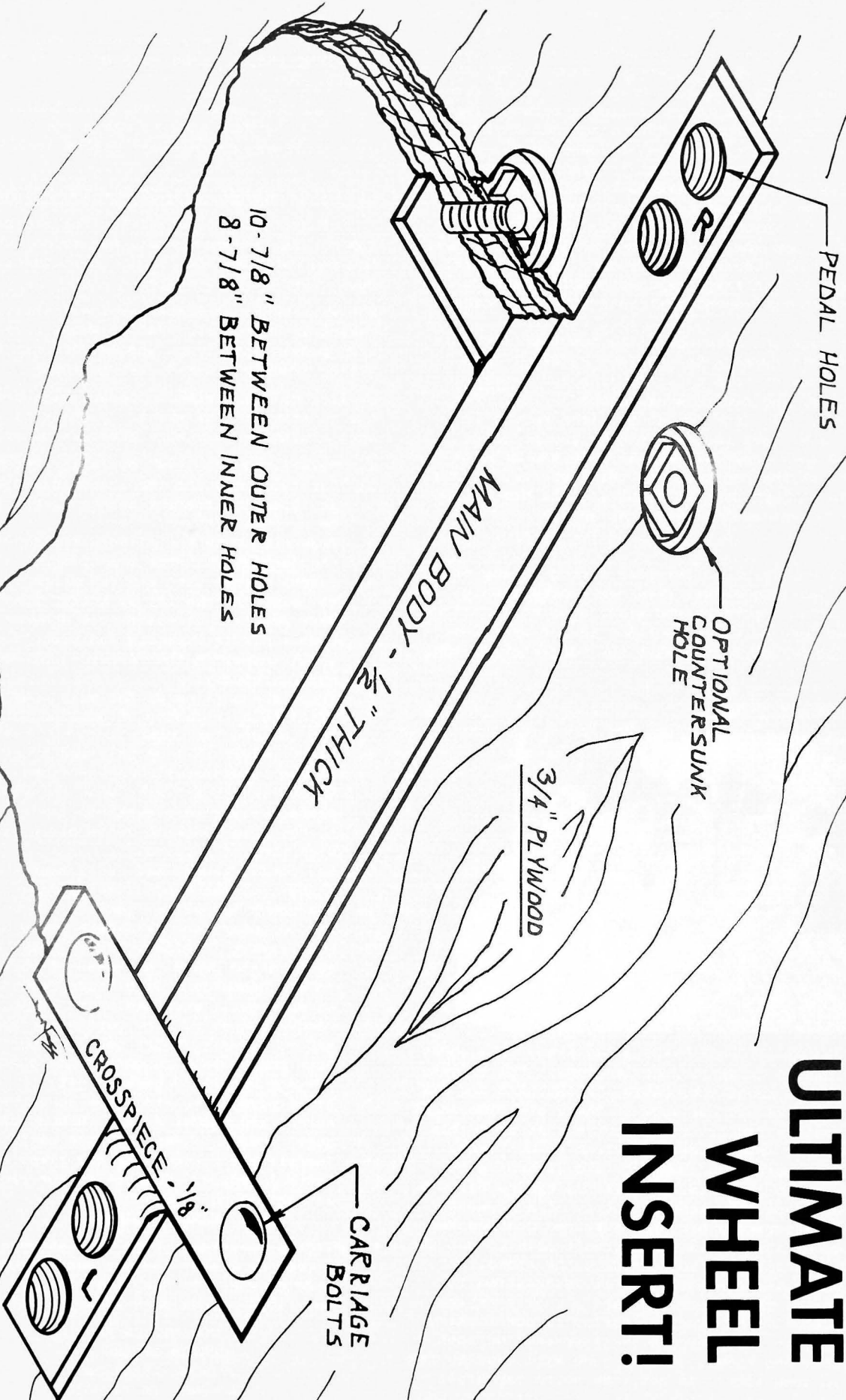
HAPPY RIDING!

* OPTIONAL- countersink bolt holes opposite cross-pieces so washer and nut won't protrude from side of wheel to snag leg.

Questions? Need more information? Write or call:

TOM MILLER ☺
CUSTOM CYCLES
2711 N. APPERSON
KOKOMO, IN 46901
(317) 452-2692

ULTIMATE WHEEL INSERT!



See page 11.