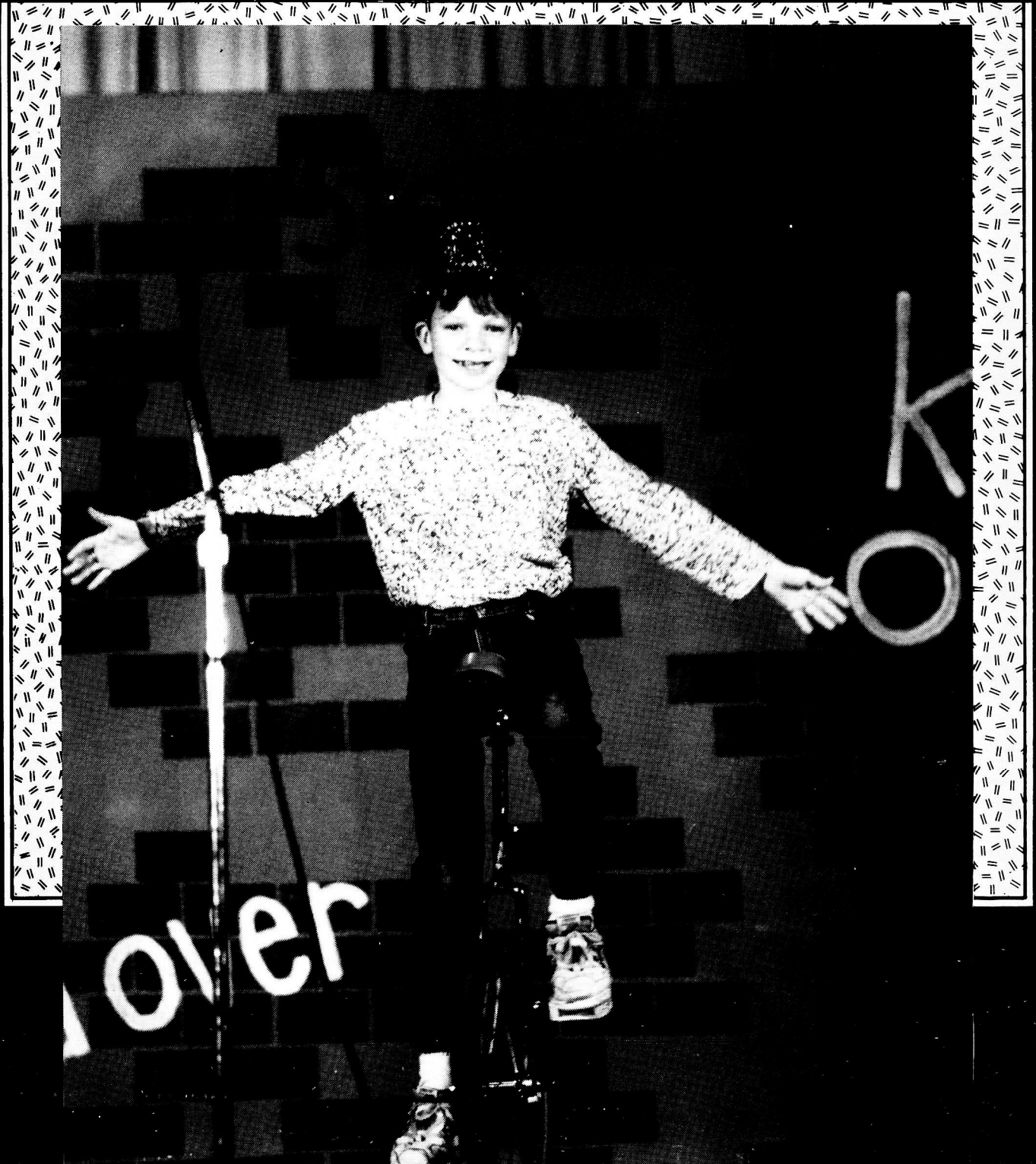




On One Wheel

Volume XVII Number 3 1990/91



Unicycling Society
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To foster social and athletic interest in and promote the healthy, wholesome sport of unicycling among youth and adults of the country by establishing voluntary standards of performance and sponsoring and overseeing local and national meets. To disseminate knowledge and information on all phases of the sport to all interested parties throughout the country via a newsletter and information service.

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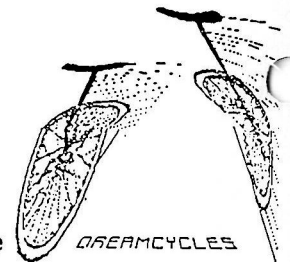
Volume XVII Number 2

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Cover

The young man who is pictured showing his classmates how to put it all together into a unicycle routine is **COREY CHANDLER**, son of **ARTHUR CHANDLER**. Arthur is the creator of the fanciful unicycles used in OOW recently as well as the author of the article that appears on pages 3 and 4 of this issue.



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CALENDAR:

WE CAN'T LET YOU RIDE A UNICYCLE IN HERE
BECAUSE . . .

How to Get Those Unicycles Rolling

1991 INTERNATIONAL JUGGLING ASS'N FESTIVAL
July 16 - 21 * Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri
For more information on IJA membership
or 1991 Festival, write: P.O. Box 3707
Akron, OH 44314

1991 NATIONAL UNICYCLE MEET
July 26 - 28 * Chariton, Iowa
Schedule of Events:
July 26: 9:00 a.m. Registration*
1:00 Special Events*
4:00 p.m. 800 m. & 1600 m.*
July 27: 9:00 a.m. Racing*
*at Reynolds Field
Parade Competition
around Chariton Square
Unicycling Extravaganza
on Chariton Square
July 28: Artistic Riding Competition
at High School Field House
July 29: possible unicycle marathon
For additional information including
Host Family Housing, contact:
Meet Director, **VICKY EDWARDS**
phone no. (515) 774-8171

INTERNATIONAL UNICYCLING EVENT (UNICON)
August 14 - 18 * Hull, Ontario CANADA
more in CYCOLOGIST (this issue) page 3

When I approached our local Park and Recreation people about offering a juggling and unicycling class, they were 50 per cent enthusiastic.

"Juggling? Hey, that's great! Kids need to learn better hand-eye coordination. We'll even supply a basket full of tennis balls to get them going."

I was pleased that Park and Rec was going to get me the time and space in the Middle School gym for the class on Monday and Friday afternoons. But they had left something out of their enthusiasm.

"My own kids both have unicycles and I have two extra ones with adjustable seats. I'm sure lots of people would like to learn to ride unicycles as well as juggle," I said.

Uncomfortable silence. Embarrassed smiles.

"Well, I don't think we could allow unicycles in the gym. Can't you just stick to juggling?"

I suppose I could have said yes. After all, there's enough to learn about juggling to keep 24 people - the number who would eventually sign up for the class - plenty busy for two months. But, as a USA member in good standing, I persisted.

"Why not unicycles? My kids' friends are always wanting to try them out," I countered.

Then out came the truth. What worried the Park and Rec people was something that I had heard before - to be specific, at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion last summer during the IJA juggling convention. I suspect these fears are widespread so here they are:

- 1) "Unicycles will scratch the floor."
- 2) "People will fall down, injure themselves, and sue us."

There was a further problem that emerged as the conversation continued. It seems as though few people have seen unicycles

SEMICYCLE

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20", 24", 26", 6" CHAIN DRIVEN

SQUEEZ-ITS

MANY COLORS, IN 60 MM (4 OZ) AND 72 MM (5 OZ) SIZES

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An all new line of affordable SEMICYCLE-designed unicycles featuring the best of conventional unicycle technology. Available in 16", 20" and 24" wheel sizes.

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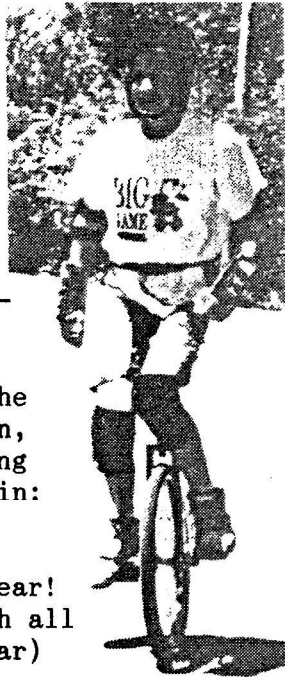
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outside of the circus where clowns careen around the stage and smash into each other. So our good Park and Rec people conjured up an image of a gaggle of junior high kids unleashed from a day in school, jumping on their dangerous unicycles and zooming around the gym in a kind of kamikaze fury, injuring themselves, others, and even the gym floor.

If you want to convince authorities that unicycles are OK, you'll have to answer the first two objections and correct the third impression. Here's how I did it:

1) The first worry can be taken care of by assuring them that only unicycles with rubber or plastic pedal ends and seat caps will be allowed. No bumper bar seats, no metal-tipped end caps. Show them a Semcycle, Miyata, Tom Miller, etc., and say "Like this, yes." Then show them a picture of a Cycle-Pro bumper bar or a Schwinn pedal and shake your head. This point of the argument I found easiest to win. If you do win, honor your word! Don't allow unicycles in the gym that might harm the floor. If someone shows up with one, suggest to the owner (with a smile) that that particular model must be ridden outside.

2) Tell the Park and Rec folk that you insist that beginning unicycle riders wear protective gear: wrist guards, knee pads, elbow pads, and helmets. Don't just describe these things, bring the equipment and show it to the decision-makers. Your arguments are even more persuasive if you demonstrate that you have the equipment in your possession, and they can feel the bracing in the wrist pads. And again: if you're persuasive, honor your commitment by making beginners wear protective gear! (pic. at right-CA rider with all four items of protective gear)



3) The image problem is a tough one but the best solution I've found is the IUF rules book for artistic unicycle riding. Show the Park and Rec people the achievement levels and patches. If possible, let them see a bit of the skills level videotape.

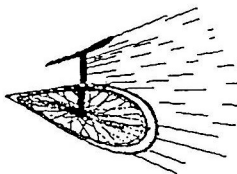
When I explained the skills levels to our people, lights when on in their eyes. Certificates! Achievement level patches! No clowns banging into innocent bystanders. **ORDERLY BEHAVIOR!!**

Once you've started your class or club, I strongly recommend having at least one 20" and one 24" uni with easily adjustable seats and two sets of safety equipment for loaners. If kids or adults wanted to borrow my lending unicycles, they had to sign an agreement agreeing to pay for any major damage (minor scratches were OK), and they had to agree to practice at least 1/2 hour per day for every day they had the uni checked out. People less than 16 years old had to have their parents sign for the unicycle and had to promise me in their parents' presence that they would abide by these rules. I had excellent results with this procedure and I think you will, too. The inherent excitement of riding the unicycle, coupled with a promise made to their teacher in front of a parent - all combine practically to guarantee success.

One more suggestion: Make up certificates. Everyone, including adults, works harder and has a brighter glow of satisfaction when success is crowned with a tangible recognition for the effort expended and the goal reached. I made up one each for ten levels in juggling. Fortunately, our unicycling society has an extremely thoughtful and fine-tuned set of achievement levels, so all you have to do is borrow them. I also suggest using the rider level certificate and making a couple of preliminary levels to encourage rank beginners. [ed. note: Level patches include cards identifying the skills for each level with a place for the rider's name.]

And not all levels require certificates. I resorted to the basest trick of all for the first award: **APPETITE!** All students who could ride unassisted from one end of the gym to the other were treated to a hot fudge sundae at my expense.

And naturally, I couldn't let them eat alone . . .



Watch for Arthur Chandler's next article, "The San Francisco Bay Area Unicycle Scene," coming soon in OOW.



C N
L E
U W
B S

MARY SEDER—who created the OOW Club News logo which debuts here—is a talented mother of two unicyclists. Being a working mom leaves no time for sketching so Mary takes advantage

of any free minute to indulge her artistic talent. This figure was sketched as she rode in the Redford Township Unicycle Club van during a parade.

DAVE SNOW of Moberly, MO ordered the videotape for his troop of 20 beginning riders. While the group has both 6- and 8-foot giraffes, he was looking for additional challenges for his young riders. Good luck, Dave! and keep in touch.

Another member who teaches through the local Parks and Rec Department (see Arthur Chandler's article in this issue) is **JAMES COLWELL** of Whittier, CA. Working in both Whittier and Brea, CA, he has formed the Whittier Unicycle Team which performs in the area.

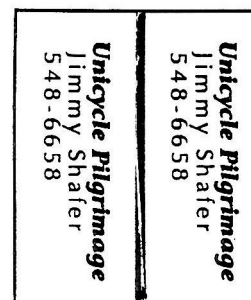
The answer to the question: What state has the greatest number of USA members? is . . . **MINNESOTA**. The three large, active clubs in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area all require USA membership. The newest club, **ST. ANTHONY VILLAGE UNICYCLE CLUB**, is directed by **JIM BERNARD** as part of community education in a school system that has 1000 students in K-12. All prospective members are asked to fill out a 3-page membership application which includes a page for USA membership. Does your club require its members to join the USA? Are your members even aware that membership in a National Unicycling Society is available to them?

Foundation Grants for Unicycle Clubs? Yes! **FREDERICK JOHNSON**, 468 Riverside Dr., NY, NY 10027 has applied for such a grant to help support his girls' unicycle club. He is looking for any unicycling events that are planned in the greater New York City area. If you are planning something to which his riders could be invited, call him at (212) 468-3210.

No unicycle events in your area? Read on: When **CHARLOTTE FOX ROGERS**, USA Historian, and her husband, USA Pres. **Dr. MILES ROGERS**, moved to PA, they found no organized unicycle groups in the state. But there were 20 USA members. So Charlotte wrote to each PA member inviting them to the 1991 NUM, telling how much they could benefit by watching and sharing with other riders. She also invited them to a PA festival near the site where a British circus unicyclist, Joe Aaron, had bought a barn in 1928, turning it into a restaurant and ice cream parlor. Mr. Aaron and his wire-walking wife entertained their customers for over 12 years at The Cat 'n Fiddle in Point Pleasant, PA. Charlotte included details of the Festival and a contact person, hoping that unicyclists would converge on the site and create their own spontaneous "event." If you live in the area, the festival date is: **October 5, '91**. [And if you want a list of members in your state, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the request to USA P.O. Box.]

When **JIMMY SHAFER** (Berkeley, CA) wanted to advertise the **4U Club Unicycle Pilgrimage**, he contacted area residents listed in the IJA roster and placed an eye-catching poster on bulletin boards. The poster was designed with pull-off tabs:

Jimmy's goal was to "spread the joy of unicycling" by organizing a "ride." Simple? Yes! Effective? You bet!



WELCOME: G.U.T.S. Remember the recent article in OOW entitled "HOW TO: "A Uni Clinic" by the two Bobs (Kuhns and Graham)? A result of the clinic is a new club named **GENESE0 (IL) UNICYCLE TEAM SPINNERS**. The Club started with 12 members but dropped to 8 when members moved or left for school. "The future is definitely with the young. If we can get a good group of 4th, 5th and 6th graders started and add a few more each year, eventually it should start to snowball. Kids are disgusting. They learn so much quicker than we middle-agers!" The Bobs got permission from **TOM MILLER** to use his Ron Plath-drawn "mad unicyclist" logo and had one of the member's dads silk-

screen hot pink "t" shirts. "We wear them in parades, get-togethers and at demo's to promote Club spirit and unity and to arouse interest from the public."

"Our organization is rather loose," Bob writes. "We elected a President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer. We try to have at least one Club practice/meeting per month and ride informally on Sunday afternoons - weather permitting - at one of the elementary school playgrounds. In the summer we ride in 4 or 5 parades and try to get parents involved as chaperons, water "boys," etc. We are gaining experience and learning as we go, but it has been fun and rewarding! We are looking forward to the NUM in Chariton, IA in July . . . "

[Bob's letter ends with kudo's to the Editors of CYCOLOGIST and OOW. Both Editors appreciate a kind word!]

Need help?



- > A cold winter parade
- > A narrow side street with many units lining up
- > The normal waiting, waiting for parade to begin
- > The Redford Twp. Unicycle Club's empty van locked in the middle of the road . . . and . . . THE PARADE BEGINS . . .

Fantasy? No way! This actually happened when the van driver (OOW Editor), bored from sitting and waiting for things to move, hopped out of the van, hitting the electric door lock in the process. "Wonder what that noise was," she thought as she slammed the door closed. Oh no! What now? All those units behind - and our van locked in the middle of the road!

The parade (and your OOW Ed's life) was saved by RICH HUND, who located a metal hanger and - with great dexterity - managed to unlock the doors as the preceding unit began its slow move up the street. Phew!

Welcome!! **CALGARY JUGGLERS ANONYMOUS**
Though members consider themselves jugglers **TOM MCKAY** writes, ". . . we have an ever increasing number of unicyclists. I strongly urge our unicyclists to join USA and regularly hand out photo copies of USA membership forms. The Club's address is: "Ahead of the Game" #4, 201 - 10 St. NW, Calgary, Alberta CANADA T2N 1V5. Club Director is **ALAN FERGUSON**.

SUPERCYCLES celebrates 21st birthday!! Headquartered at Talent Unique Performing Arts Center in Chantilly, VA, this unicycle group is directed by **TRICIA HANDS DEERING**, granddaughter of the founder. The Club participates in many charitable functions and its proximity to Washington D.C. permits excellent media exposure. Featured on **Capitol Edition** (T.V. Ch 9) last year, riders, who range in age from 6 to 44, were shown in dazzling costumes riding intricate formations, different cycles and performing unusual tricks. USA Director, **WAYNE BRESSLER**, is associated with this outstanding unicycle club. Happy Birthday!

THE MOBILE UNICYCLE CLUB

Organized in 1980 by **SETH W. GRANBERRY, Jr.** with 12 members, the Mobile Unicycle Club now boasts an active membership of 40. Over the past 10 years more than 130 "young" people in Mobile (between the ages of 4 and 64) have learned to master the skill of unicycle riding. The Club is often seen in local parades and performs in festivals and half-time shows. One of the Club's highlights was hosting the 18th Annual National Unicycle Meet in 1989, and they are justly proud of their riders who return from both National and International Meets with top honors. They recently performed as part of a bike-safety seminar for which they received excellent newspaper publicity.

Second to none in quantity and quality of newspaper coverage is the **CHARITON UNICYCLE CLUB**. And for good reason! Their members have broken many unicycle records and are constantly "promoting the healthy, wholesome sport of unicycling" throughout Iowa by demonstrating, teaching and competing in fairs and talent shows. The Club is sponsoring the 1991 NUM and the entire town is "rolling out the red carpet!"

SUMMER '91

PSYCHOLOGIST

NEWSLETTER OF THE I.U.F.



IS IT?

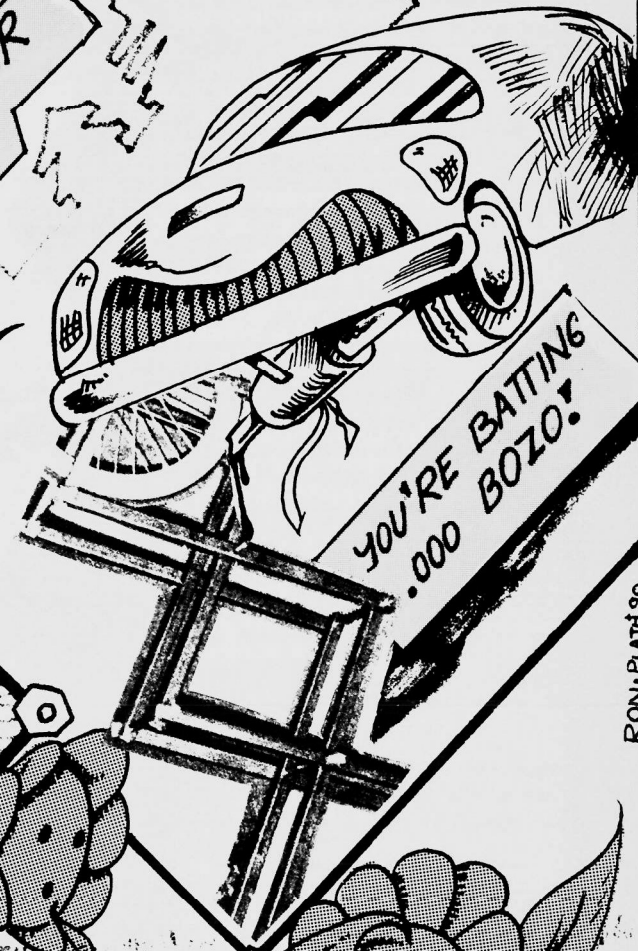
NO!

...AN ACCORDIAN?

...THE JACK TO YOUR JAP CAR?



DON'T GIVE THE BIG GUY IDEAS!



YOU'RE BATTING .000 BOZO!

...FROM SADDAM'S TORTURE CHAMBER?

....A PICKET FENCE?
GO PICKET YOUR NOSEGAY!

WELL, WUTZIT?

DON'T JUST SQUAT THERE, TURN THE PAGE!!

RON PLATT '90

...And the Answer to the Quiz is...

Is the world's only uni which the rider can adjust the height while in motion a "pop-cycle?" Sounds like another bad pun from The Cycologist to me. Actually, I call it a 'skissor-cycle.' (I once lisped when I tried to say that word, and now it's a family joke.)

Sem Abrahams and his Dad-in-Law, Al Hemminger, showed up with an old hydraulic jack last year here in Kokomo. Sem got it off an old car in Suriname about ten years ago, and has jacked around with it in Holland and later here in North America.

Getting the Right Angle

He knew what he wanted to do with it, just didn't know how. First, we sat down and worked out a design strategy, then built a prototype out of angle iron.

Then, we whiled away the hours at the lathe, turning out sprockets and such. I scraped up the 14 bearings it required - that's \$140 in parts right there! - and ordered a few things air-freight.

It has four individual chain systems, the source of our stickiest problem. Each sprocket rotates off the same pivot point as the jack. What this means is, there was no easy way of adjusting the chains, none at all. We ended up using some old, well-worn chains I had lying around the Factory, something with a lot of 'play' in them. I also threw in a 'half-link' to get the fit just so.

Haines Aborts, Stains Shorts

We put in 100 hours into the project. I test-rode it but once...and it scared me to death! First, it's hard to begin cranking the jack upwards. As one rides and manually elevates the jack, the balance point continually changes. Also, it weights 65 pounds - heavy!

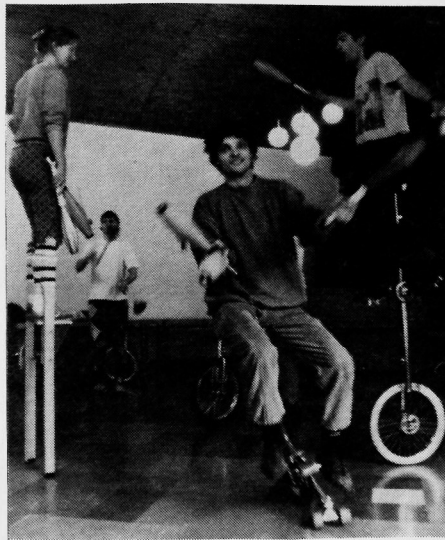
But, the higher you go, the easier it is to ride. I think Sem has a real treasure. It took me a full minute to go from the lowest position to the highest - about eight feet - but only five seconds to reverse and descend. Coming down is a real thrill. Wayne Haines tried to descend just a little too rapidly, and bent two cross-pieces.

Seems that first, there was "Top Gun" school. Now, with the pop-cycle, there's "Top-and-Bottom" school. Wayne better watch it or he's gonna 'wash out' for sure!



Wayne Haines found the "Pop-Cycle" had some unexpected ups and downs (see story).

Seeking shelter from the leaky German skies on May Day 1991: Claudia (on stilts), Knut Prinsen, Werner Schreiner, Nele, Konrad Kramer, Marcus, Jürgen Schauss, Vinzenz and daughter Marie, and Günter Plewa. Werner and Günter teach circus skills to children; more about them in the Fall Cyclogist.



May Day Unicycling: The 'Hole' Story

by Curt Morgan
Editor, The Cyclogist

A hole in the sky and a hole in a performer's tongue: in short, that's the story of Claudia Henschel's Wiesbaden Unicycling Tour of 1991.

The downpour through the sky hole - accompanied by an oh-so-rare German thunderbolt - drenched the unicyclist's forest paths the day before Erst Mai (in German, *May Day*). Organizers Claudia and Knut expected upwards of 50 unicyclists, after 30+ rolled 'round this central German city May 1, 1990. Braving the damp was but one einrader (*unicyclist*), a Yank at that.

"Come, we have a place indoors," was the Teutonic promise. We convoyed to suburban Bierstadt, to the gym - and gymnasium (*school*) of Werner Schreiner and Konrad Kramer, "personliches" behind "Rolls-Toys," a school for the teaching of circus arts to kindern (*children*).

The foreigner's "big wheel" unicycle attracted quick notice. It was not Knut's forte, but Claudia and

Werner quickly picked up on the unique syncopated riding style it requires, Werner even venturing out into Bierstadt's BMW-infested strasse to awe Herr Ratay, the local radfahren (bicycle) mechanic.

Back inside, 15 or 20 performers and wannabes tilted with walking ladders, stilts, implements jugglers fling and swing, and, of course, a wide range of one-wheeled vehicles, from the miniaturistic to the ajustable giraffe.

Mittagstisch (lunch): the table sagged under the weight of assorted salads, lentil cakes, whole-wheat breads and mineralwasser. Circus stories were exchanged, the most lurid of which involved an acrobat with a perforation in his tongue. He placed a hook through this hole and suspended a fellow performer therefrom. Was he born with the hole, acquire it from an accident, or did he have to placed there surgically? Alas, the answer was lost in the rapid exchange of German.

IUF Announces Upcoming Unicycle Meets

On May 3rd, IUF President Jack Halpern released details for two forthcoming unicycling meets.

Event: World Unicycling Convention.

Place: Hull, Province of Québec (P.Q.), Canada.

Dates: August 14-18, 1991.

Organizer: Fédération Outaouaise d'Unicycle, Inc. (F.O.U.).

Chairman: Gilles Poirier.
Address: 136 Mutchmore Street, Hull, P.Q. J8Y 3T7, Canada (Tel: 1-819-777-4089; FAX: 1-819-595-7425).

Event: Fifth International Unicycle Championships (UNICON V).

Place: Québec, P.Q., Canada.

Dates: August 4-10, 1992.

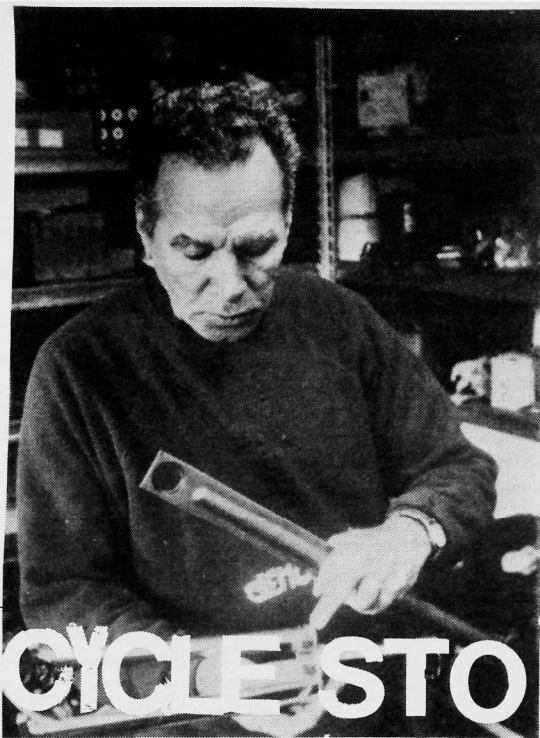
Organizer: Sport Internationaux de Québec, 785

Côte Salaberry, Bureau 10, Québec, P.Q., G1R 2T8, Canada (Tel: 1-418-525-8466; FAX: 1-418-656-5749).
Chairman: Normand Beaumont, 1428 St-Luc, Ancienne Lorette, P.Q. G2E 173, Canada (Tel: 1-418-872-1960).

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The Pedalboy Interview

Curt Morgan conducted the Pedalboy Interview recently with Carlhos and Yuri Abrahams at the Semcycle factory in Maarssen, Holland (about 30 miles south of Amsterdam). Yuri met Curt at the Maarssen train station, helping to pry open the train doors (which had closed around his bag as he tried to get off). The two pedaled a half-mile to the Semcycle factory on - need you ask? - two Semcycles Yuri brought for transportation.



TC: I'll bite! What's the other essential?

CA: (Taking a Semcycle and resting it on its seat): A flexible fork! If I hit the wheel here (striking the tire where it would meet the ground), our design transmits the stress straight through the unicycle to the rider. Nothing in the unicycle breaks, at least, *should* break.

Yuri Abrahams: If anything does break, it will be a spoke. If this happens during a show, you can complete your performance. But if a crank or axle breaks, you are much more likely to be hurt, and, in any event, your time in the spotlight is history.

The SemCYCLE STORY: How a New Unicycle Blossomed Midst Holland's Tulip Fields

The Cycologist: How did you and Sem come to design and build one of the world's finest unicycles?

Carlhos Abrahams: After Sem learned to ride in the late '70s, he began to develop uni tricks no one else had ever performed before, such as walking the wheel, leaping off automobiles, and various spinning stunts. These new tricks demanded much more from a uni than *anyone* had asked of it previously.

TC: What was wrong with existing unicycles?

CA: Practically *everything!* By and large, they were built from existing bicycle parts. The spokes and axles broke, the seat was uncomfortable, the frame couldn't be adjusted, the pedals scratched the floor, among other things.

TC: So you set about designing your own wheel?

CA: Not just yet! We went to Chicago, to Schwinn, and to Japan, to the Miyata factory. Sem told them, "Your unicycles pain me here and pain me there." They said, in effect, "Unicycles for us are *chicken feed!* We sell

two million bikes and 1,000 unicycles. Besides, most people don't jump off VW's like Sem does!"

TC: So, you knew the problems with existing unicycles. Whose engineering services did you use to implement your design solutions?

CA: We used *our own!* Sem was attending a technical school, studying mechanical engineering. He got permission to design an improved axle, using the equipment at his school. It is manufactured in one piece, from chromium molybdenum, and is heat-treated to resist breakage.

TC: What about the spokes? On my Semcycle, they *squeak!*

CA: We tried many spoking variations. A bike commonly has 24 spokes. We found stronger spokes, made of molybdenum and zinc, from a manufacturer in Belgium. We tried putting up to 72 spokes on a wheel, but eventually settled for 36 as being enough. Also, please note the rim. It is *much heavier* than bike rims. When spokes are tightened, the concave inner surface of the rim allows for extra tightness. These features make the wheel very stiff, one of the two design essentials in a good unicycle.



Photos: C. Abrahams points out the differences in forks between the original Semcycle and his new economy 'cycle (upper left); Yuri on the aptly-shaped Semcycle "test track" on the factory grounds in Holland (lower left); are Carlhos and Yuri working on...a Surinamese comedy routine?...hula hoops for African Pygmies?...or chrome holes for Dutch dikes?

CA: (Resuming his demonstration): However, if I strike the wheel on the sidewall, half-way between the top and bottom of the wheel, the flexible fork permits the wheel to "give" somewhat. And this is what permits "spinning" tricks and the like.

TC: How did you design a "flexible" fork? It appears to me that the Semcycle fork is stamped out cheaply. Surely this minimizes manufacturing costs, but does this make for the best design?

CA: (Rising from his chair): This is the third time someone has said something like that! Our forks are *not* "cheap!" Several factors go into making them the best. One, note the fluting on the forks - transmits force from the wheel through to the seat, but twists with the rider's spins. Also, the stamping requires large machines (which we rent), special dies (which we designed and built), and is done under special pressure and heat. It's true that stamping simplifies manufacture...but, it certainly isn't "cheap!"

YA: Also, please note how the bearings are fixed to the frame. They are held rigid by our one-piece design. This means stresses of riding are transmitted through the 'cycle, instead of leaking the bearings.

TC: Well, then, what about my squeaky spokes?

CA: For performers, we spoke unicycles radially, for extra stiffness. However, these must be tuned about every three months. Less demanding riders should ask for "cross one over spoking." This spoking isn't as stiff, but there's less maintenance required.

TC: Isn't your seat the standard Schwinn design?

YA: Yes, but, after much searching, we found improved padding from a Dutch chemical company. Most padding goes flat and *stays* that way - but not ours! Also, note the fork bolt. It's manufactured for us here in Holland and doesn't stick out and scratch the rider's legs. We also specified a longer stem for the seat, to fit taller riders.

TC: Why do you use cotterless cranks?

YA: When you have a cotter, stress of riding causes friction between the crank and the cotter. Also, without cotters, you can position the cranks however you like, for "kangaroo" pedalling and such.

TC: Why do my (two-year-old) Semcycle's tires have whitewalls, while current tires are blackwalls? Are blackwalls a recent improvement?

CA: Actually, the whitewall tires were "rounder." When you went around a corner, you had more contact with the ground. But the company (Metzeler) went belly up, so we had to find an alternate tire.

TC: I see you use rubber-end pedals. Have you considered BMX-type metal pedals? I find my feet slip on rubber pedals.



YA: Metal pedals might be OK for outdoors when riding by yourself. But as soon as you begin riding with others - playing uni-basketball for example - and another's metal pedal comes stomping down on your foot, your pain centers will tell you that rubber is better! Also, when a Semcycle is dropped on a wooden indoor floor, only rubber

- tires, seat or pedals - can hit the floor. With metal, you hit the floor, and you are out the door!

TC: If money were no object, how would you improve the Semcycle?

CA: We could improve nothing! Oh, well, *perhaps* the seat cover. Drop it often enough on rough surfaces, and it will begin to show some wear. But, it's easily replaced.

TC: I understand you made some special improvements recently to a Semcycle as a special order.

CA: Yes, a rider wanted to pedal across Australia. We gave him our 26" wheel and fatter spokes. Also, a layer of plastic on the inner tube, for special protection. For all we know, even as we speak he's somewhere in the Outback, riding kangaroo style (*of course!*) round Crocodile Dundee!

My Question is: How Did Ken Live So Long, Anyway?

In a unicycle race, it's common to see a contestant take a nasty spill, yet get back on top, redouble his efforts, and ride on. World-class unicyclist (ustabe) and Yesteryear columnist Ken Woods cheerfully recalls a similar spill and valiant remounting from his own experience. OK, already, so he fell off a two- and not a one-wheeler...the story still left me belly-laughing one day at mail call recently. In Ken's own words...

We had learned early on that in the event of a crash, to immediately get to the top of the (banked bicycle velodrome) track to avoid those sliding down. Unfortunately, I had more speed than control, and blew through the guard rails of 2 X 4's like they were so many matchsticks, hurling down to the floor below.

On being brought back into the infield, battered and bleeding, with shredded jersey and shorts, the M. C. made the startling announcement that I was going to rejoin the contest.

I certainly had not considered it! The full-throated responding roar of the crowd was a wondrous, innervating thing to experience. At that moment, I was ten feet tall and my strength knew no bounds. I insisted on getting on a bike.

One of the old trainers, standing by, said, "Hell, let him get on, he ain't goin' any place." He caught me as I made the first half-stroke of the crank, the floor became the ceiling, and I faded into oblivion.

Hey, ya know what would be *great*?" a friend of mine asked me a short time ago. "You, juggling a bowling ball, a torch and a knife...while riding a unicycle!"

"That's *exactly* what I plan to do!" I lied.

Such was the inspiration of this sometime-juggler to take up unicycling. With a little bit of ingenuity, I turned my friend's barbed suggestion into the ultimate contact sport: me and the



Brown Trucks and Red Balls: A 'Tail' of Unicycling Woe

asphalt, me and the fence, me and garbage cans, ya get the picture? It's the Madonna School of Unicycling: Strike the Pose, strike the wall, strike the....

Brown Truck Blues

After hurriedly signing for delivery of my 20" Semicycle a few months back, I immediately assembled it and began rearranging my living room furniture. My dog and cat eyeballed me and my wheel in mortal fear; ever since the "fire devil stick episode," it seems, they have been leery of packages arriving at my door with the UPS sticker.

A cursory glance at the instructions revealed, *quite obviously*, that they were written for little children, probably mental retards. It said something about "holding onto the wall" while learning. That bit of useless literature went straight into my compost pit.

Three Dog Night

Three seconds later, the uni had, like an unguided missile, abruptly flown out from under me, sending the dog yelping into alley (not to worry; we have posted a large reward for his return).

Back to the trash to retrieve the now-appreciated instructions. Maybe, *just possibly*, I could pick up a

pointer or two here after all. Hours later, my apartment walls were decorated with hundreds of handprints. Also with fingernail scratch marks where I had desperately clutched in fear of my life. But, *I was on my way*. There was no stopping me now!

"If you feel you are falling forward," advised the instructions, "pedal faster." OK! Makes sense! But, the faster I felt I was falling, the faster I pedaled, and soon I couldn't pedal fast enough to prevent myself from falling. In short order, my hands grasped thin air, my nose ricocheted off the fridge, and my face flattened gracelessly against the floor. My uni landed on my cat, subtracting one from my feline's quota of nine lives.

Red Ball Express

But with her safely out of harm's way (hiding under her litter box), I eventually smoothed off the rough edges of my riding style in the weeks ahead.

While I pedaled up the unicycling learning curve, I noticed in a prominent unicycling book that "men should wear boxer shorts while riding." This advice was *not* the very best idea I got from its pages. Sometimes my brain does my best

thinking, sometimes another part of my body does the thinking for me. So do yourself a favor, fellas. An athletic supporter or tight undergarment is an investment in present comfort and in future fecundity.

Sacrificing My Body

As my riding continued improving, free-mounting became my next goal. At 6'5", I need more room to maneuver than my abode provided. Besides, without any pets present, I needed someone (or something) to

when McEnroe is serving to Connors.

Presently, I could free-mount regularly - oohs and aahs here! I was getting *gooooood*! Riding in reverse became the next hurdle.

However, if God had intended that man should ride a uni in reverse, he'd have given him eyes in the back of his head and double-jointed his elbows and knees.

Does D-o-g Live?

But, since he didn't, it was up to Ted to compensate for God's shortcomings. (Besides, "God" is "dog" spelled backwards, maintaining the animal-continuity of my tail, *uh, tale*). I found that learning to ride backwards was like learning to ride a uni all over again. I had to hold something and pedal one revolution at a time. *Eventually*, I mastered rearwards progression.

Today, many months after getting my UPS uni, I fancy myself as quite the accomplished unicyclist. Some say I took *too long* to master what "any kid can do." Well, *maybe* what took me so long was keeping the bowling ball, torch and knife aloft *while learning to ride a uni*. But, I sure showed my friend - didn't I?

by Ted Alspach
Middletown, Penna.

show off for. Out to the parking lot. No go! Seems they don't make auto bodies thick enough for ole T.A. any more, and car glass cracks badly when struck hard, even with Ted's soft head. *No*, the tennis courts proved to be the best place for trying out free-mounts. Just remember to duck

RTU Lets UBU

during my first viewing of "Rough Terrain Unicycling," I brushed off my kissy-faced wife's clutches to watch this slack-jaw-inspiring video *sans* interruption. Gives you a *clue* about the level of enjoyment George Peck packs into 22 minutes.

In *RTU*, the Alaskan physicist-turned-unicycling magistrate demonstrates how he rides his uni... over picnic tables... boulders...

can give you improved off-the-road control;

- lucid explanations on how to jump, leap and hurdle your wheel, Air Alaska style (namely, by getting off the saddle, "putting your butt right down on the wheel");

- and a list of new-to-me sources for unicycling parts.

Postage Due 'Cycling

To a unicyclist, watching this product may well be a very humbling experience. All the more so since George has the confidence to - *live! on-camera!* - actually take a tumble or two off his uni.

In at least one instance, in fact, a trip "outside the balance envelope" hides this half-a-centurian completely behind a boulder with an attitude. For most of us Earthlings, that's *all* we have in common with George: we can both let gravity have its way with us now and then.

George does his best to reassure us, however, intoning "what we're seeing here is not what *I* can do on a unicycle, but what *you* can do!" Oh, *George!*

3 Barks! (Seals of Approval)

The audio-video quality of this tape is probably not why you'll send fifteen dead Presidents to Seward, AK...but, in fact, the camera-work here will pleasantly surprise you. The tape's selection of video effects - slow-and-stop-motion, good continuity and camera angles - reflects the skills of professional photography and editing...most of the time, anyway. No way does it stoop to the level of, say, "America's Funniest Home Videos"!

Also, I actually enjoyed the unobtrusive guitar sound track. Which laid-back musician gets the credit here, anyway, George?

Where *wuz* I, anyway?

Yo, Jeanne! I'm through watching George just now! Even managed to reinge my jaw! Darn...where has that woman gone off to now?

- Curt Morgan



George intones: "To get the blood flowing...get your butt right down on the wheel." We're not going to *touch* that one!

.....
Video Review: Rough Terrain Unicycling. Produced by The Videoplex, Anchorage, AK. Available for \$15 (\$22.50 foreign) from George Peck, Box 1342, Seward, AK 99664.
.....

stacked telephone poles... up mountain trails too steep for mountain bikes...fording raging creeks... plowing through snowdrifts...and across pebble-infested shorelines. Hey! This guy can wheel-walk his *wheel* where mere fools fear to *walk!*

Air Alaska

If sheer spectacular unicycling wasn't enough, George himself provides a sonorous voice-over from a carefully-prepared script. He synchronizes a full-range of RTU subjects with the cycling action at hand, including:

- how to buy - or make from kitty litter pans (!) - the protective clothing and padding you'll need;

- beefing up your unicycle to withstand big-time wilderness abuse from the land of the Grizzly;

- how to balance in place (*not* just idling), a skill essential for Peck-cycling;

- how walking the wheel

Spokes Slyears

I noticed two "historical" errors in {the Fall 1990}...Cycologist. On page two...the unicycle in question is a Loyd, not Lloyd, and Loyd Smith manufactured it in Albuquerque, NM, not in Britain. On...page four...(The Cycologist)...means Walter Nilsson {not Nealson}, the very distinguished and accomplished unicyclist whom Mel Hall appears to be "putting down."

Charlotte Fox Rogers
West Chester, PA

Thanks for the corrections, Charlotte. Uh, by the way, have you seen what OOW has done to your name on their masthead for the past several issues? - Ed.

The Deutschland 'Aromatic' Strasse!

Bart Simpson might call it a "unicycle for retards."

It has a single 12" wheel, no handlebars, and a uni-like frame, seat and rubber wheels. Approaching it from the rear, it surely appears that the rider of this China import on your local bike path is balanced atop a unicycle.

Only as you (yes, you on the usually eye-popping single cycle) draw up close and inspect this intruding vehicle, do you spot the chain drive (with "coaster" brakes) and the protruding single pair of wheels, seemingly pinched off a skateboard. Rad, Bart!

back on its pneumatic wheel...and quickly implode on the pavement. You

blame your mishap on the design of the "sitz;" surely, a standard Schwinn-like uni-

cycle seat would improve the ride here.

Taking a belated tip from the cycle's owner, you shift your weight forward, onto the skateboard half of this bastardized bike, and find that you can manage - sorta - a decidedly wobbly charge down the concrete.

The Smell of Excess

Alexander Wiegand is the German printer, computer novice and skateboard rider out for his daily constitutional on the farmers' fertilizer-perfumed "fussweg" (footpaths) between Erbenheim and Igstad, in the central German state of Hesse. He makes a few more observations, while you continue - unsuccessfully - to wipe a silly grin off your face.

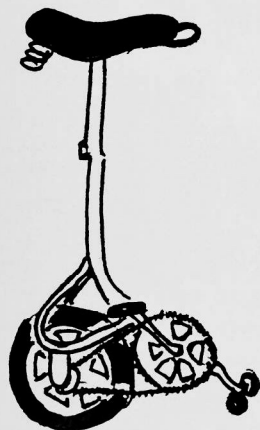
"You can lift the front wheels up momentarily to hop a curb, and with the chain drive you can perhaps go 10 kilometers an hour, top speed," sprach Alex, in passable English. "However, a stiff cross-wind, or rough pavement, and you'll find yourself walking alongside the skateboard, not riding it."

Giddyup on Poh Giap

The two of you examining Alex's cycle, up close and personal. The brand name is "Poh Giap," the pedals are stamped "Taiwan," and a customs "passed" sticker all suggest Oriental origins.

"Most bike shops in Germany carry these, or can order them," Alex continues. "They're not cheap - DM 250 (\$175) - a copy. Fortunately, I got mine as a birthday present."

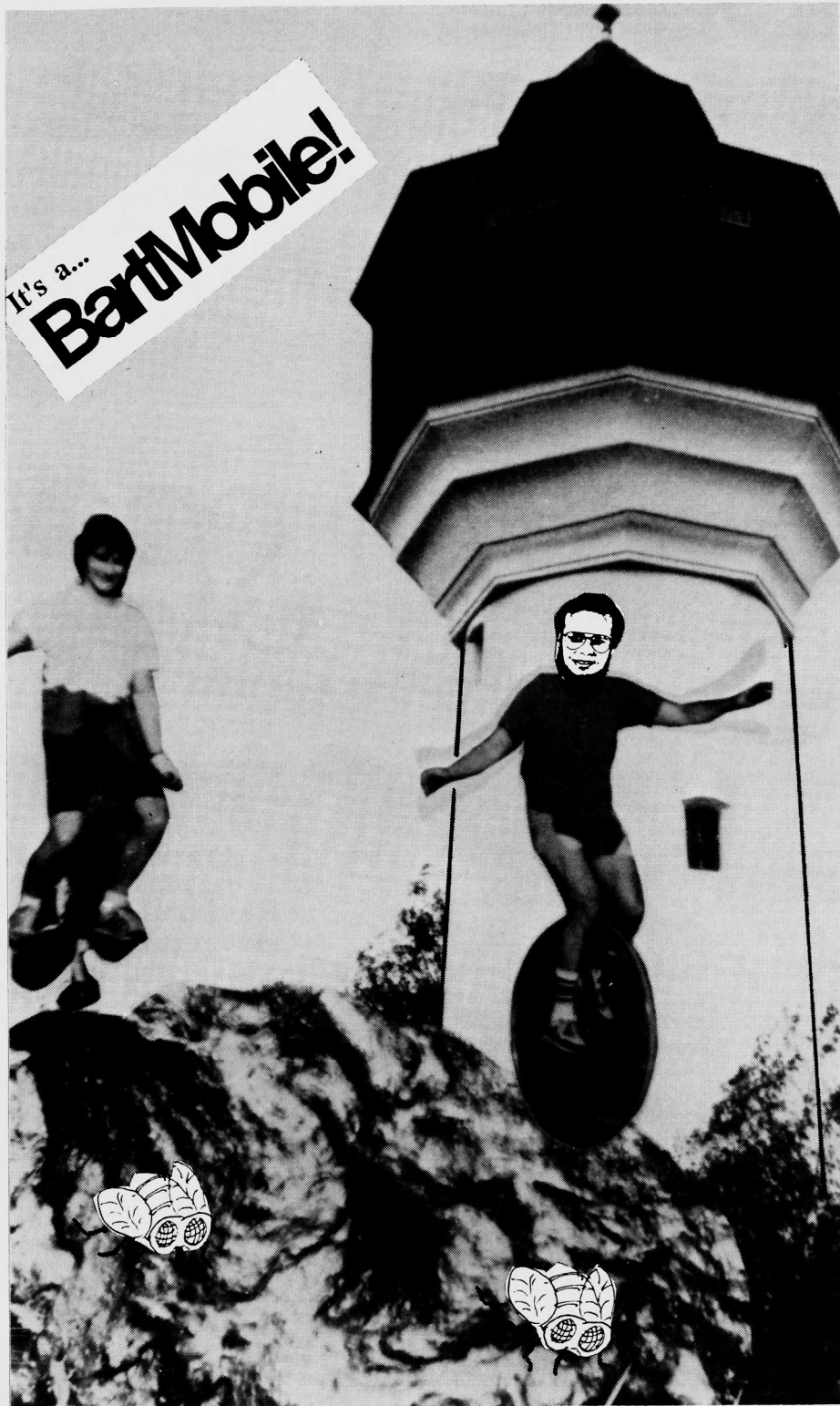
Did we change the IUF newsletter moniker from "Unicycling" to "The Cycologist," just so we could stray from the uni straight and narrow, and include stories such as this one, without undue editorial embarrassment? No. But, itsureh...!



Sitz and Blitz

Dismounting from your Tom Miller "big wheel," you accost the "skate-cycle's" rider, and quickly invite yourself aboard.

Its riding characteristics are certainly *not* bike-like. Nor does this future-cycle ride like your uni, either, and you quickly discover when you attempt to tilt it



With the Igstadt (Germany) 'wasserturm' towering in the background, Alexander Wiegand and a visitor from Dallas 'manure' through farmers' perfumed fields, pausing only to confront...can it be?...surely not!...oh, Lord! (Hope you weren't eating breakfast!)

STEVE LARSEN WANTS TO KNOW . . .

(As a member who recently rejoined USA after a brief absence, **STEVE LARSEN** of Orem, UT is a Level 5 rider who . . .

- > Recently rejoined USA after a brief absence. (Welcome back!)
- > Has been riding for 15 years.
- > Rides to work 3 days a week - often on his giraffe
- > Is anxiously awaiting the arrival of a 40" big wheel from **TOM MILLER** (The Unicycle Factory).
- > Founded a unicycle club at BYU in Provo, UT.
- > Is teaching his wife Sherry to ride.
- > Often takes his 2-year-old daughter as a passenger when he unicycles around town.
- > Has written the following:

"In the past, **ON ONE WHEEL** has mentioned that we could write with skills questions and I have some:

- * Please define a sharp turn.
- * What is a frontspin? backspin? Contrast with a pirouette.
- * What is the third dimension of the 10 x 10 cm obstacle?
- * Please describe ten types of mounts.
- * Is there an instructional video available?
- * Can I send a video somewhere to certify?
- * Are you looking for pictures and articles for **ON ONE WHEEL**?"

SEM ABRAHAMS was contacted to reply to Steve's questions. Here goes:

SEM SEZ: SHARP TURN - Ideally it is executed on one spot. For qualifying in the Skill Levels the turn must be made within a one meter circle.



FRONTSPIN - riding backward, rotating 180 degrees around a vertical axis and continuing forward in the same direction

BACKSPIN - riding forward, rotating 180 degrees around a vertical axis and continuing riding backward in same direction

SPIN - riding in a small circle so that the upper body is rotating around a vertical axis

PIROUETTE - spinning around a vertical axis

10 x 10 cm obstacle may be any length as

long as the obstacle is wide enough to ride over

MOUNTS - the IUF lists and describes 21 mounts. [Anyone wishing this may send a self-addressed stamped envelope to USA Post Office Box in Redford, MI.]

VIDEO - The USA is selling a video demonstrating the Skill Levels. It is not primarily an instructional video although there are several tips given on the skills demonstrated. This is a **MUST HAVE!** [See order form on page 19 of this issue.]

CERTIFYING BY VIDEO - This may be a question to be decided at the next USA meeting. I imagine some conditions would have to be set; for instance, the camera would have to be running uninterruptedly.

ON ONE WHEEL is always looking for pictures and articles. [You bet! ed.]

DO YOU KNOW . . .

- * The current address for **DAVID GOLDMAN**?
- * A source for the ever-popular pins and charms formerly sold by USA? (Write USA with info on either of the above)
- * What state has the most USA members? (see Club News, this issue)
- * What happens to the information you fill out on the membership application form when joining USA, Inc.?

The information is used by:

- * the **Editors** for possible stories
- * the **Vice-President** to keep the membership list current
- * the **Treasurer** to keep a record of our members and their riding progress on a card that looks like:

Name: # _____

Address: Year Joined, 19____

City/State: Expires: Vol.____#____

Phone: Vol.____#____

Birth: Vol.____#____

Family Members Membership # Birth Vol.____#____

Club Affiliation: Vol.____#____

Status: Amateur Professional Skill Level: 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10

by Steve Gordon
6458 Creighton Circle
Moorpark, CA 93021

While talking to AL HEMMINGER recently, the conversation turned to my most recent obsession: collecting old photo's with bicycles in the picture. I mentioned that in my searches I had found a collection of personal photographs of WALTER NILSSON, who was the first person to ride a unicycle across the United States (New York to San Francisco, 1933). Al wanted to see these photo's so I figured other unicyclists might be interested also. Unfortunately the pictures are all water damaged, some so badly they are barely recognizable. Others look like they will disintegrate if handled. However, a few did clean up and the best of these are included here.

In the collection there is also a small booklet (also water damaged), copyrighted 1932 by Nilsson, titled A STRANGE WAGER. On the first page is the following text:

HOW IT HAPPENED

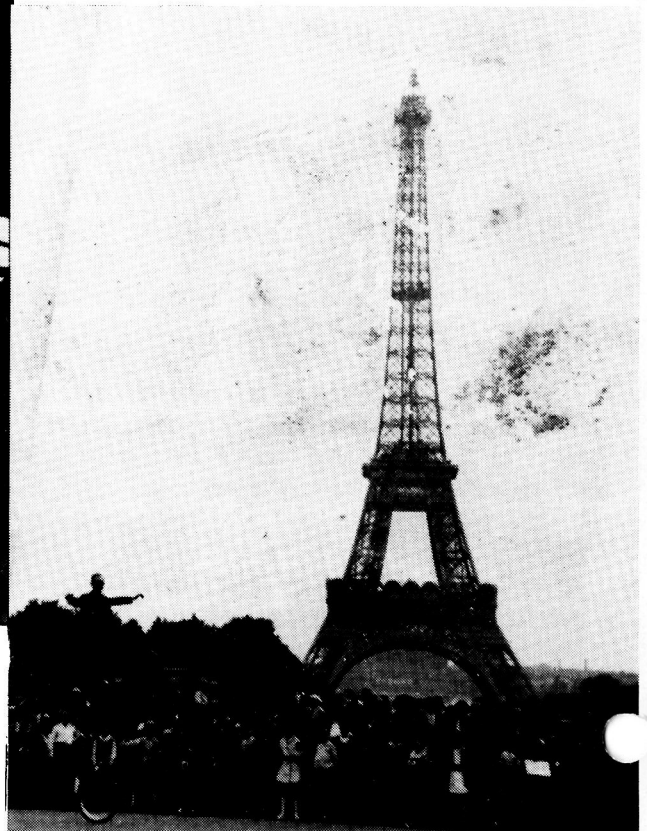
On a delightfully refreshing afternoon last May, an American of Swedish descent strolled into an old, quaint cafe of Pisa, Italy, the historic citadel of medieval culture. At a table he eyed another tourist, an old pal, Charles Johnson, Canadian sportsman and retired realty broker. New world called to new (illegible word) and in a few minutes a friendly conversation had been initiated.



Cairo, Egypt
top of Cheops Pyramid
482 feet



Malmo, Sweden



Paris, France

Walter Nilsson is riding his 8' in lower left ----->

Our Swedish-American tourist was Walter Nilsson, the world's champion Unicyclist, and the talk naturally revolved on sports and record breaking. The conversation led to the unicycle and of his narrow escapes riding on the edges of skyscraper roofs. "If I wanted to," he finally said, "I could ride from New York to San Francisco."

The Canadian sportsman was somewhat incredulous. The venture seemed will nigh impossible. So he bet.

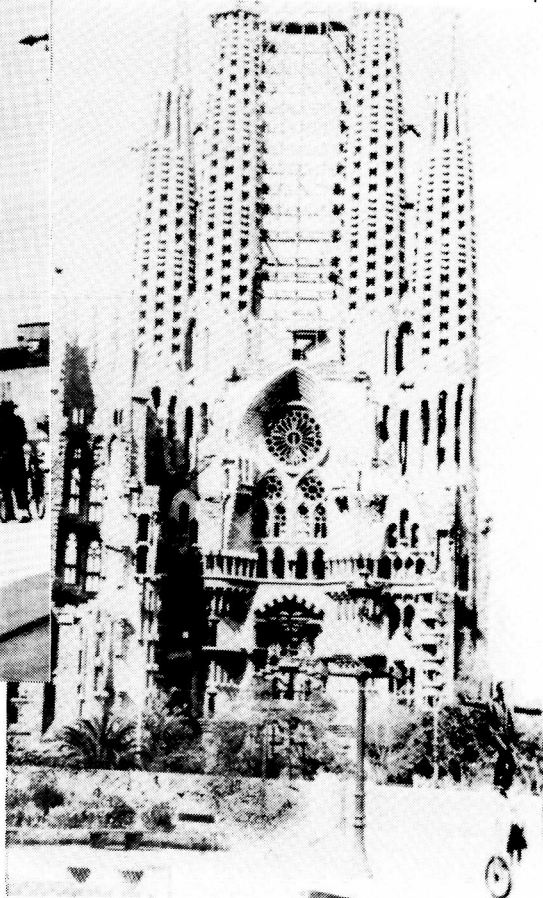
Thus Walter Nilsson is engaged in crossing the continent on an 8 1/2 foot unicycle. It's a long, arduous trip, but he is determined to do it.

And, as you know, he did complete his journey, taking 117 days. The rest of the pamphlet shows photo's of Nilsson riding or standing with his 8 1/2 foot unicycle (actually, the 1st photo shows him as a child riding a mule, with the caption "He started to ride 35 years ago"). This map ----> is included in the booklet but there is no mention of the conditions of the wager.

If anybody has any old photographs (the older the better) with bicycles in them that they are willing to sell, please get in touch with me.

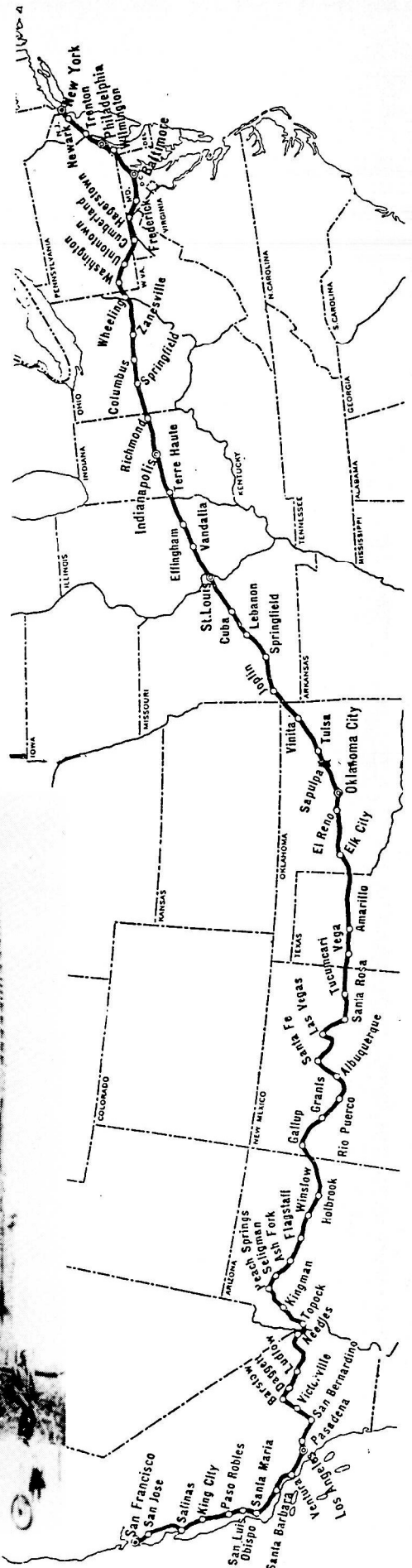


Pisa, Italy



Barcelona, Spain

Find Nilsson (lower right) ---->



WOW!!!!

by: Lisa "Pinky" Aiello
14237 Victory Blvd.
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Venice Beach, California is a "great place," says LISA "PINKY" AIELLO. It is known as a skateboarder's paradise but I have been using a different kind of wheel: a Giraffe Unicycle.

Someone perched on a regular unicycle gets smiles and second glances, but AIELLO attracts plenty of attention. My Giraffe Unicycle is 5 1/2 feet high! When I ride it, a lot of people open their mouths and look shocked. WOW! It's tall! I'm deaf! I feel bad that most people want to say something or applaud or WOW! me, but I can't hear. I guess most people don't like me because I ignore them and act snobby. I don't mean to!

I wonder: Should I wear a T-shirt that says, "Hey, I don't mean to ignore you. I'm deaf." Is it silly? Might be worth a try.

I will be featured in a tiny part on an ABC-TV show, MOE'S WORLD, in May.

If you're in Venice Beach, keep your eyes open. If you see a cheerful young woman zooming around on a Giraffe Unicycle, flash me a sign or just wave. I'll get the message.



Lisa "Pinky" Aiello



. . . AND ANOTHER THING . . .



JENNIFER SAVAGE & WAYNE HAINES, (OOW cover, Vol. XVII, no. 1) will be married in Peru, IN on Aug. 3 . . . while riding unicycles across a 10' wire. Interviewed by CIRCUS REPORT-6/17/91 Miss Savage said their decision was made because the high wire and unicycling are important to both of them. (Thanks to USAm AL HEMMINGER)



While school boards, legislators and sponsoring groups are concerned about unicycle safety, the experience of those who have taught the sport is that they have seen few if any injuries. STEVE ARNOLD, a teacher at Westridge Elementary School in Lake Oswego, Oregon, wrote that their state is considering a bill requiring certified helmets to be worn by all bicyclists, unicyclists, skateboarders, etc. Steve has taught unicycling for almost 10 years to elementary students and has had no injuries to any of the several hundred students exposed to the sport. He writes, "We certainly want to do what is right for kids. However, if helmets are required for unicycle riders, it may mean the termination of unicycle instruction in the school setting. Expense, hygiene and logistics problems would be a tremendous hurdle." If anyone has verifiable statistics on trauma injuries for unicyclists, please let Steve and others know by writing to ON ONE WHEEL.



Do you enjoy doodling, drawing and being generally creative? Send your original uni drawings to OOW. (Previously published material may not be used without written permission.)

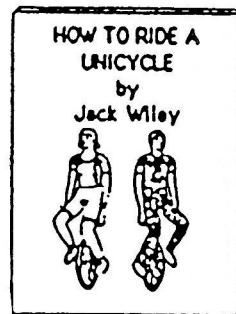
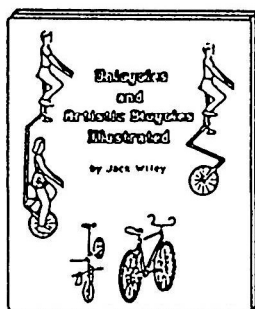
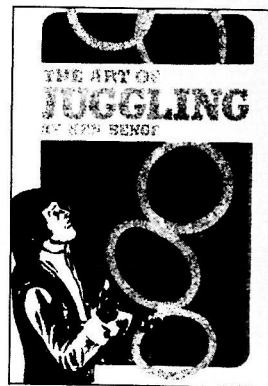
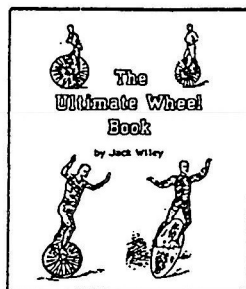
You can't please all of the people all of the time . . .

KEN WOODS was recently quoted in CYC, "It is readily apparent that the addition of CYC raises a rather mundane publication to one that is extremely enervating."

While DEBORAH HERICH (nee JONES) took exception to CYC by writing, "It really has no place in OOW. It is not very family oriented, which I believe USA should be."

ORDER FORM

Qty.		Total
_____	THE ART OF JUGGLING -	
_____	Ken Benge.....\$ 4.95	_____
_____	THE COMPLETE BOOK OF	
_____	UNICYCLING - Jack Wiley.\$27.95	_____
_____	HOW TO BUILD UNICYCLES &	
_____	ARTISTIC BICYCLES -	
_____	Jack Wiley.....\$15.95	_____
_____	BASIC CIRCUS SKILLS -	
_____	Jack Wiley.....\$12.95	_____
_____	HOW TO RIDE A UNICYCLE -	
_____	Jack Wiley.....\$ 6.95	_____
_____	THE WHOLE UNICYCLE	
_____	CATALOGUE - Jack Wiley..\$ 6.95	_____
_____	NOVELTY UNICYCLING -	
_____	Jack Wiley.....\$ 6.95	_____
_____	THE ULTIMATE WHEEL	
_____	BOOK - Jack Wiley.....\$ 6.95	_____
_____	THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO	
_____	MONOCYCLES - Jack Wiley.\$ 6.95	_____
_____	UNICYCLES AND ARTISTIC	
_____	BICYCLES ILLUSTRATED -	
_____	Jack Wiley.....\$26.95	_____
_____	ACROBATICS BOOK -	
_____	Jack Wiley.....\$ 5.95	_____
_____		_____
_____	\$	_____



_____	THE I.U.F. ACHIEVEMENT	
_____	SKILL LEVELS DEMONSTRATED	
_____	Video Tape (VHS).....\$22.50*	_____
_____	*Inc. postage in U.S.A.	
_____	*Overseas Air Mail.....\$30.00*	_____
_____	4" embroidered USA	
_____	patch.....\$ 2.50	_____
_____	Achievement level patch(es):	
_____	rider ___ 1st ___ 2nd ___	
_____	3rd ___ 4th ___ 5th ___	
_____	6th ___ 7th ___ 8th ___	
_____	9th ___ 10th ___ (each).\$ 1.50	_____
_____	Complete set of newsletters	
_____	(Vol. 1 - present).....\$70.00*	_____
_____	Single Back Issue	
_____	Vol. ___ No.\$ 2.50*	_____

*Includes postage

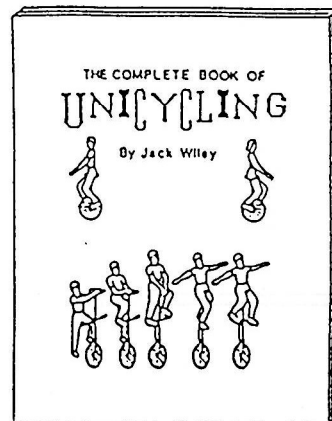
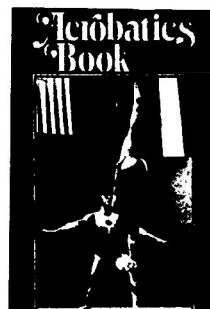
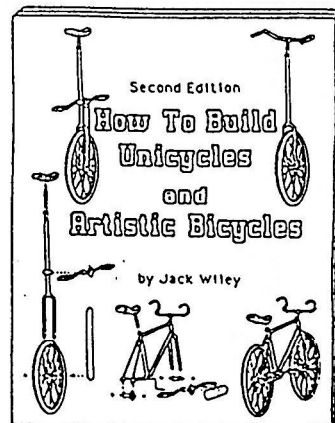
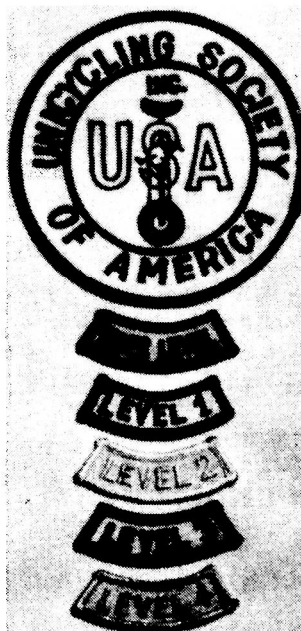
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U.S.A., Inc. Membership - see form
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Membership: \$10.00 annual dues - includes subscription to quarterly newsletter, membership card, voting privileges, and National Unicycle Meet participation

Foreign Membership: \$15.00 (U.S. funds only) - newsletter mailed Air Mail

PRINT ALL INFORMATION

DATE _____

NAME _____ BIRTHDATE _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____ PHONE () _____

Additional Family Members - \$1.00 each (For members of the immediate family of a member residing at the same address)
Same benefits as members - except no newsletter

NAME _____ BIRTHDATE _____

NAME _____ BIRTHDATE _____

NAME _____ BIRTHDATE _____

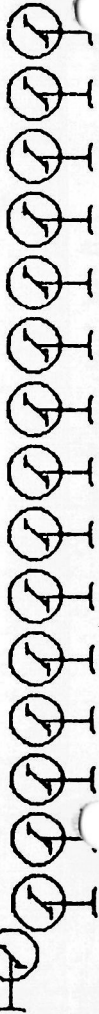
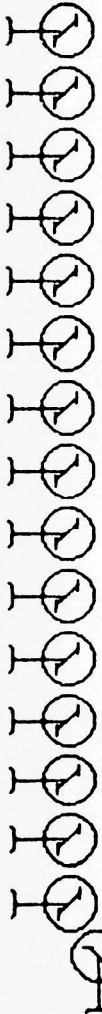
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Please check here only if you do NOT want to be listed in the roster (no phone numbers)

I learned about the U.S.A., Inc. through _____

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