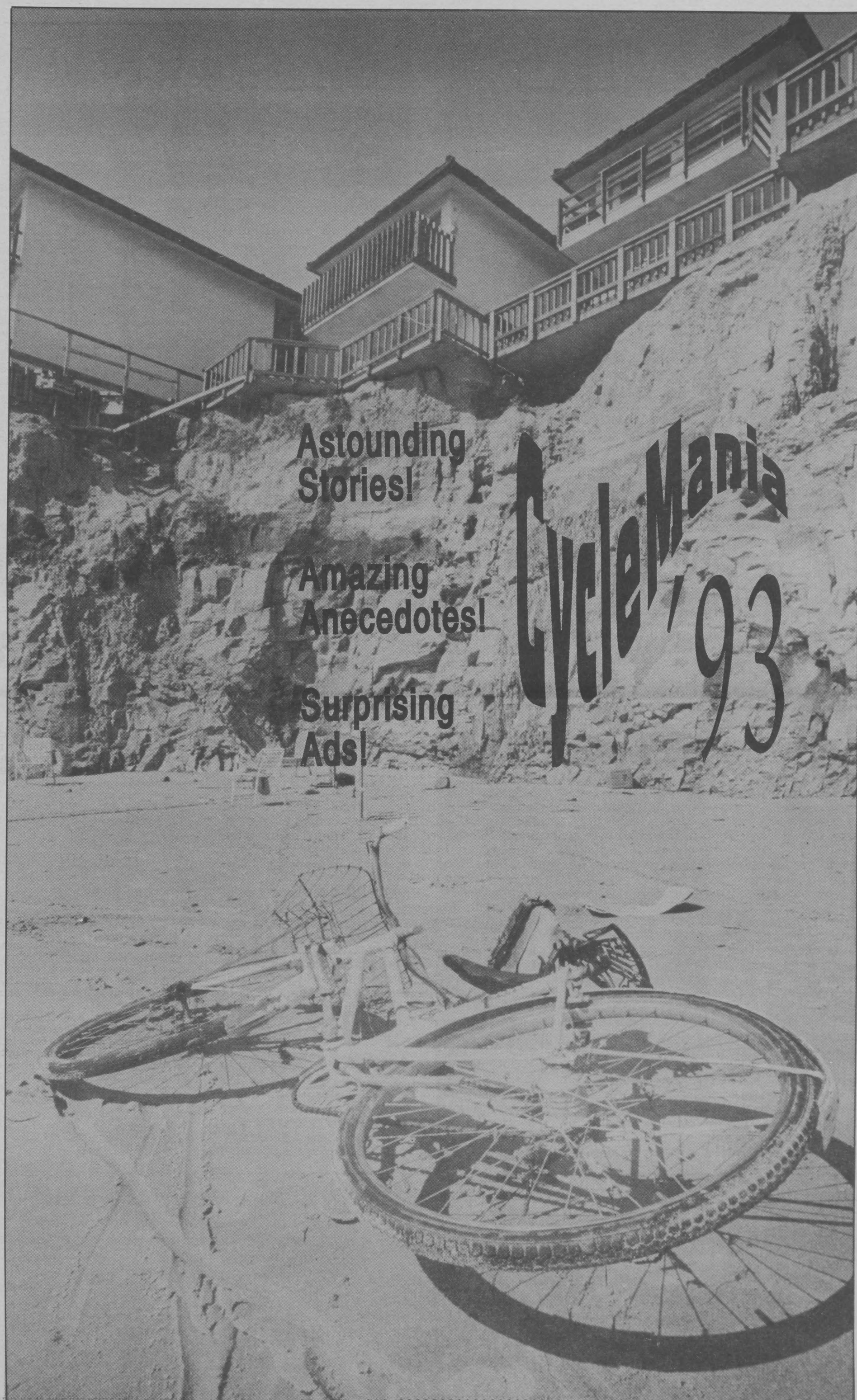


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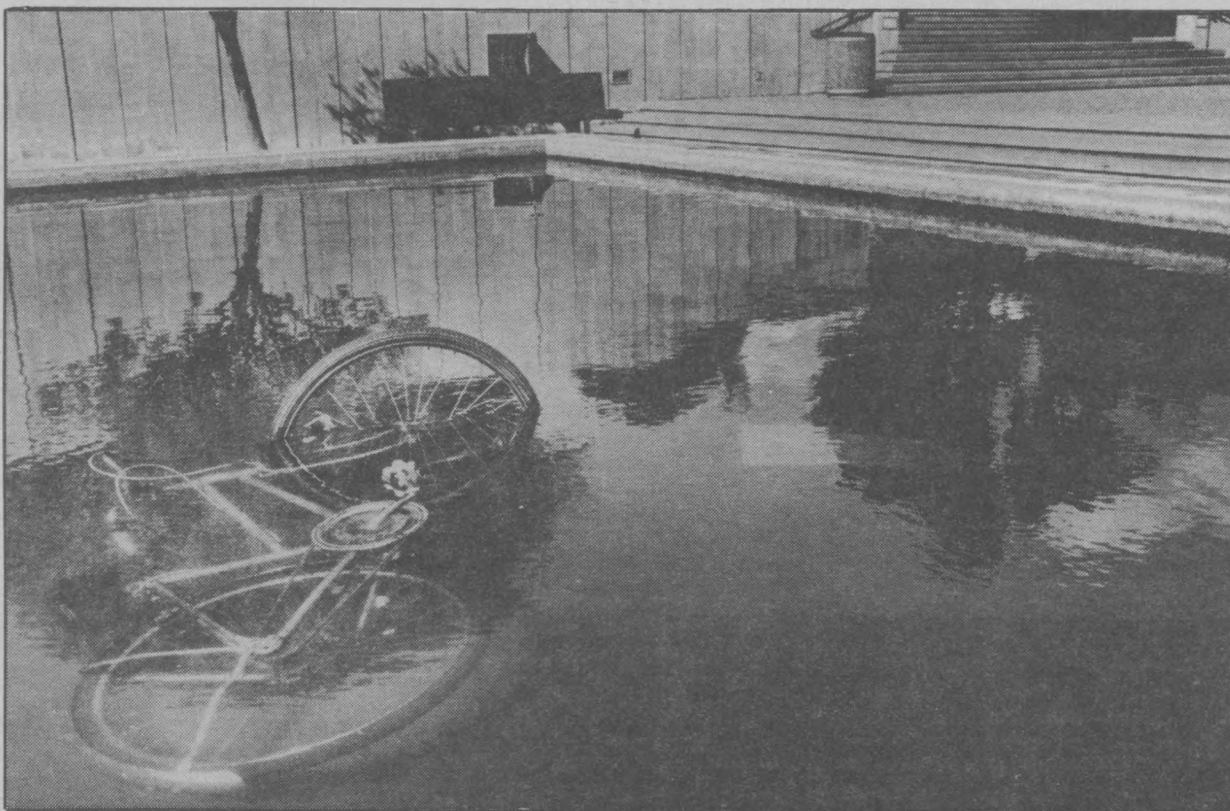
By Anselmo Watkins

The first bike accident I remember seeing was when I was six or so. I lived on a cul-de-sac at the bottom of a hill, which made a perfect little riding area. You could get up to some good speeds, then do a great power slide at the bottom of the hill. It was wonderful fun.

Greg and I spent hours on that hill, riding down it, laboring back up it, then riding down it again. But Billy, who was a year younger than me, didn't know how to ride a bike. So Greg and I tried to teach him. Really, just Greg did it, because he was the most mature of the group, being a whole year older than me.

The lessons went well and Billy picked up the concepts quickly. Soon, he was riding around the circular bottom of the street with no problems at all. Still, the hill was something that he wasn't quite ready to tackle. Instead, he just rode around the circle like a fish in a bowl. Meanwhile, Greg and I would fly down the hill doing crossing maneuvers and pretending that we were in the Blue Angels. Billy imitated the Goodyear Blimp.

Of course, our other favorite thing to do was to stage fake accidents, or to crash our bikes on nice soft surfaces and make sprawling dives like the guys on "CHiPs." It was great. We always talked about riding our bikes off the roof, but never got around to it. Probably a good thing, too.



This bicycle lies alone in an on-campus pond without its rider. Where is she? Hope she was wearing a helmet.

Still, there was that day. We were all out cruising around, and Billy had begun to get more adventurous, sometimes going up to the top of the hill. It was early evening, and Billy's and my parents were out watching as we trundled around. Billy and Greg went up to the top of the hill and came racing down. Then tragedy struck.

Somehow, Greg and Billy struck each other. There was the screech of metal as bikes slid along the ground, the gasps of parents as the children flew through the air and whimpers of children as faces headed towards pavement.

Billy's wreck was closest, and since he was the youngest, everybody went to him first. He got up, crying over his few cuts and bruises, but basically unharmed. Nobody noticed Greg lying face down on the pavement.

That changed when he got up screaming, his face looking like it had run through a meat grinder. My mom ran to get a washcloth and bandage, but by the time she

got back, Greg's mother had appeared and was already taking him back home.

I'm not sure of the significance that this has. Greg and I went to school together, but basically drew apart during junior high. He went on to architecture school and is now biking around Europe somewhere. Billy moved away shortly after the accident, and I lost contact with him until I discovered him quite by accident here on campus. He seems to have moved away from biking and is now into rowing. I think he coaches now. Anyway, he's really good. He also doesn't seem to have suffered any ill effects as he rides a bike quite well.

As for myself, I can ride around pretty well. I hop on my mountain bike and cruise over the trails every so often. Still, I remember when my trusty Schwinn and I were knocked down by a car in front of the Firestone,

See INJURY, p.6A

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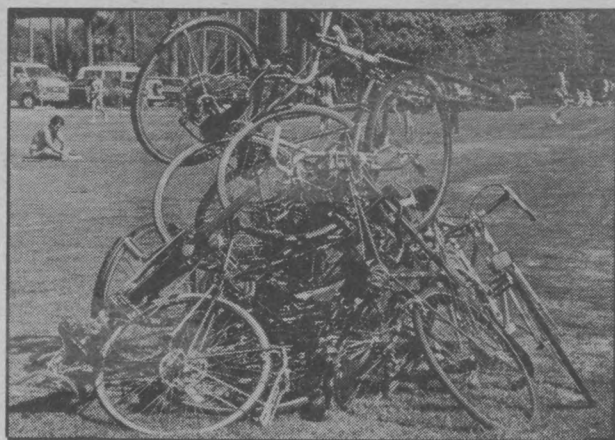
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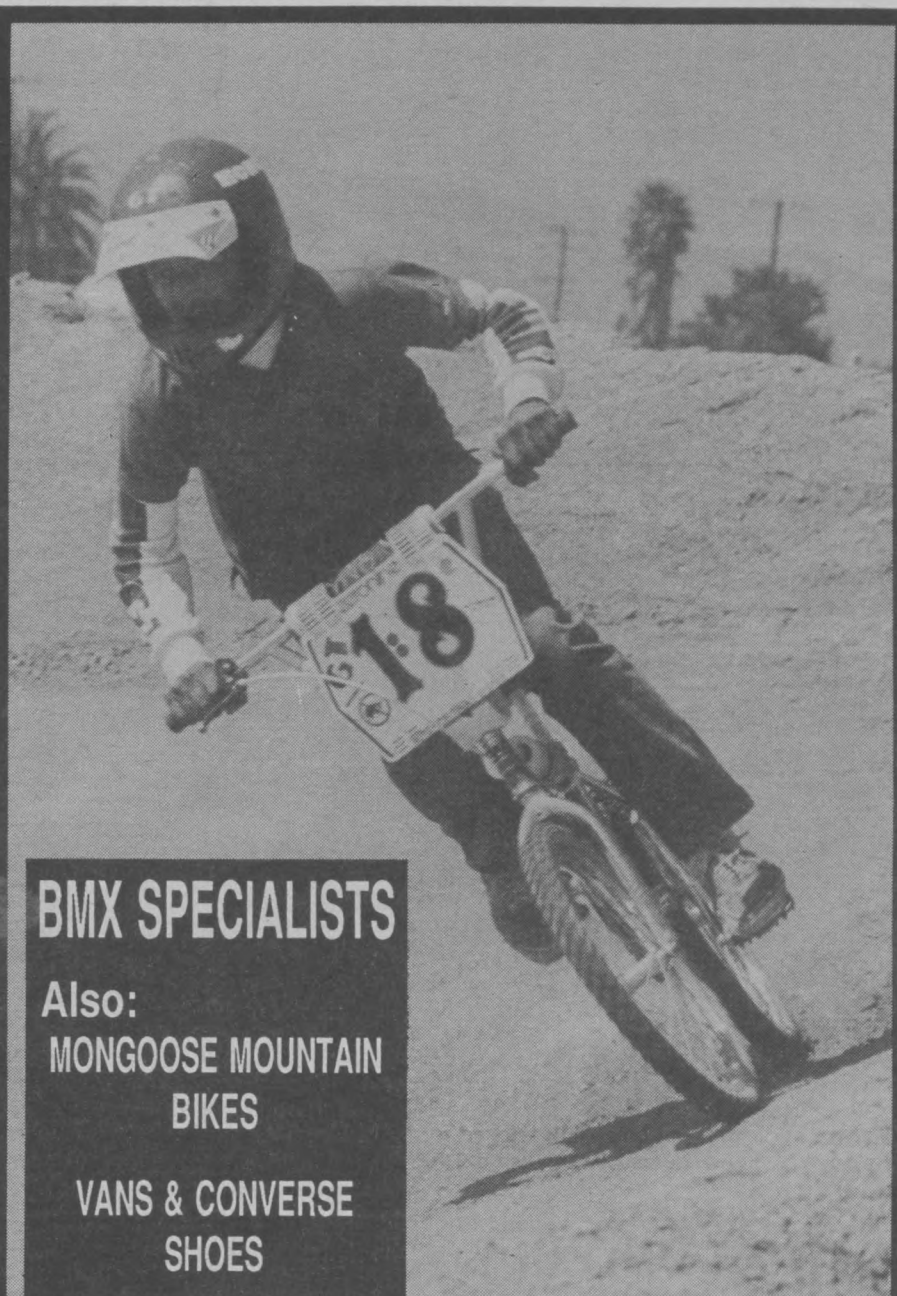
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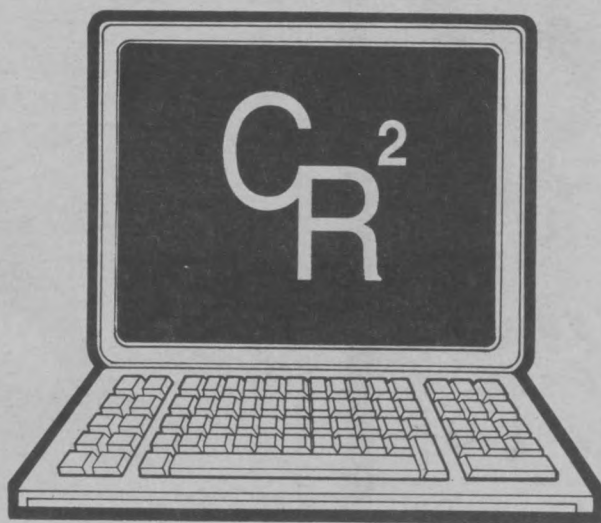
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The Sad But True Case of a
Stolen Cruiser and Ten-Speed

By Dino Wayne Thorne

At the start of this school year, I owned two bikes.

As of today, both have been stolen.

This is their story.

My favorite of the two was a nifty brown cruiser the size of a large moped. It was a great bike, if only because everyone who saw it said the same thing, "Wow, now that's a cruiser." This bike was big. But since I'm no small fry myself, it suited me fine.

The cruiser and I had our share of tough times. There was the matter of a un-

tidy bike accident I had my sophomore year in which I was waving to some friends in another direction when I rammed into the back of a parked car and flew headfirst into the back window, but I couldn't blame that all on the bike. Sure, I was tempted on a few occasions to leave the bike in favor of a slender new Schwinn model I had seen in a store window, but my faithfulness always won out.

This cruiser was first stolen last year from an on-campus site which shall remain undisclosed. I had it locked with my trusty U-Lock, but the strong protection of a piece of curved metal clamped

See **STOLEN**, p.7A

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Cyclemania '93

What to

Bike

By Arnulfo Schmid

My bike isn't much to speak of. I bought it almost two years ago brand-new, but with the harsh environment Isla Vista wreaks on bicycles coupled with my absolute refusal to do any sort of maintenance work, it has withered away quite nicely.

It's one of those dark, awful secrets that I don't like to share with many people, and often when people ask how long I've had the bike, I'll smile sheepishly and just say, "A while." It's something I don't like to do, especially in front of my friends Greg and Mike.

Greg and Mike have a common condition that is prevalent in biking towns like Isla Vista, even though neither of them live here. They are what I affectionately call "Bike Freaks."

As an anthropological note, a Bike Freak is someone whose standard list of priorities consists of food, Gatorade and his or her bike — but not necessarily in that order. The Bike Freak converses freely with others although sometimes the dialogue sounds something like this, "How much does yours weigh?" "About 22." "Yeah, mine weighed that much until I got a new cohesive aluminum alloy frame. Now it's only 21 1/2."

Greg and Mike fall into some of the classic Bike Freak categories. Greg's parents owned a bike shop (in fact, they sold me my bike) and Greg goes to UC Davis, which has the largest number of bicycles per capita on the planet next to Beijing, China. That's a fact. Look it up.

Mike goes to UC Berkeley and owns a cool bike helmet and bike shorts and gloves. He also spends about half his monthly income buying new accessories for his



bike. They both have top-of-the-line bike racks on their cars and they never, ever let anyone else ride their bikes. Especially me.

That's because both of them are ashamed of the way I treat my 12-speed mountain bike. But I don't hold it against them because they are great people to have around for two reasons. The first is that if anything goes wrong with my bike, they can help me.

Both of them carry their survival kits. These include bike pumps, water bottles, a patch kit, tire wrenches and adjustable bolt wrenches. I've seen these men remove a tire, find a leak, repair it and replace the tire inside of six minutes. Try that next Sunday afternoon.

The second reason is because of the great bike stories they can tell. That's not just talking about click shifts and tire beads and soft-gel seats. I'm talking about serious tales of derringdo and misadventure on two wheels. Nothing between you and the open road but a pair of knee pads and a fantasy of wearing that yellow jersey in the Tour de France.

If you've never heard a Bike Freak tell a great bike story, you haven't lived.

Do About

Freaks?

Mike, Greg and I were in Yosemite National Park last summer biking — which is what they do best, of course. Yosemite has a number of natural and unnatural bike trails that any good mountain biker would love to tackle.

As we biked around the valley, Mike entertained us with the story of the Great Race. Every nonbike racer who rides bikes should have a good racing story, Mike tells me. Mike himself chose not to go into racing since it would mean he would have to shave his legs. Mike values his leg hair, let me tell you.

The Great Race was a 60-mile trek from San Jose to San Francisco that Mike took part in. I have heard the story many times, and on this occasion, it was purely for Greg's benefit.

The funny thing is, Mike doesn't talk about himself very much when he tells this story. Instead, he talks about my other friend Mike, a.k.a. Other Mike (by virtue of the fact that 60% of the people I know are named Mike).

Other Mike, who accompanied Mike on this monumental race, has about the same unintentional contempt for bicycles that I have. He's rather unathletic and has the stamina of a windup toy. Compared to Mike and Greg, his cycling skills are laughable. Mike rarely laughs, though.

"Sixty miles," Mike would say, his voice getting louder every word. "I'm riding along, getting my second and third wind. I never thought he'd make it. I'm in San Francisco after sweating for hours. I thought my muscles were going to explode. ... And there he is 10 minutes later. On his junky 10-speed, wearing jeans and the cheap helmet I loaned him. No gloves."

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Cyclemania '93



Riding down Diablo Mountain is like dangling from a wire in a staircase. It's an obscure analogy, sure, but one that conjures up a host of motifs.

Devil's Canyon

Mount Diablo. Up and Down.
A Teen's Journey. What a Trip.

By Bunyan Valentine

Strange as it may seem, I was, at one time, in the far but not yet forgotten past, in shape.

Yes, I know that my now-chalky pallor has taken a turn for the worse, that my once at least semimuscular physique has turned into a pointy mess of elbows and knees, that these five sedentary years have slackened my reflexes. But once, I tell you, once ...

See, we used to ride up Mt. Diablo, whose craggy peaks rose nearly a mile out of the rolling foothills around my town, at least a couple times a week. It was a steep 13-mile ride, all uphill, and we could do it in under an hour sometimes.

But to tell the truth, it wasn't the ride up, the anaerobic fatigue, the oxygen depletion and anything like it that kept us going back up to the top. It was always the ride back down.

The fact is, careening down a mountain side at 40 mph (often without a helmet) gives you this absolutely ridiculous feeling. It's not "exhilarating" or "life-affirming" or even "exciting." It's just damn, plain ridiculous. It may be a little like Russian roulette, but I must admit that seems a bit tame by comparison.

With Russian roulette, for instance, there's really no chance that you'll survive if you crash. But on a shivering, shimmying 10-speed that really wasn't meant to do anything but gyp ninth-graders out of a couple hundred

bucks, there's a fairly decent chance that not only will you live through the fall, you'll *experience* it. That fear doesn't "really let you know you're alive"; it lets you know you're ridiculous.

The road up Mt. Diablo wasn't that well kept up, after all, and the crisscross lacings of tar patchings and new, uncovered cracks in the asphalt made for an uncertain plunge. My bike used to rattle so hard that I really couldn't keep a strong grip on the handle bars. The wind whipped around every pair of sunglasses I tried wearing, blurring my vision with tears and the occasional speck of dust, which at 40 mph often felt like a mid-sized meteorite.

And even better were the switchbacks. Up near the peak, where the mountain got so steep that the roads had to zig and zag across an increasingly narrow mountain top, the downhill run led to not a few potentially unhealthy situations.

Before we got to know the mountain, turns were a string of extreme surprises as the road cut anywhere from 90 to 180 degrees and the mountain sides dropped away below. My usual riding partner once took a spill on one of these, ditching his bike as it zoomed toward the cliff edge and skidding — primarily on one unfortunate buttock — through a gravel shoulder. I myself had an unpleasant little encounter with a Volvo, which, although it didn't end up with any flesh-on-steel contact, did leave me with a tremendous case of road rash.

In fact, cars were the primary predator on those roads, since their drivers displayed the singularly inconsiderate characteristic of cutting corners and driving right up the lane you were heading down.

During the Volvo Episode, I found myself staring into the gaping, fake-chrome maw of a station wagon driven by two suddenly concerned picnickers up my side of the road. I had been attempting to keep up with a more experienced rider (actually, he might as well have been blessed — I've never seen anyone go flying down that mountain like that). Coming through a hairpin curve, there were these two mustachioed, well-combed men — I can still tell you what shirts they were wearing — staring up at from the inside lane that was, by all rights, mine. Since I was leaning over hard, I actually had to throw all my weight to the outside, flip my bike over its axis and head screaming toward the other edge of the road.

This was, needless to say, the appropriate time to slam on the rear brakes and grit my teeth while preparing to gain *real* intimacy with the asphalt and gravel. So I did it, felt the bike slip out from under me and started grinding my way across the road. Somehow, I ended up bleeding only minimally (I think the slide may have actually cauterized the wounds stretching up my right leg) and managed to ride, shaken and infinitely terrified, the rest of the way down. The two fine men stopped only to make sure I was "OK." Since the pain hadn't set in yet, I agreed that I was. But it was months before I headed up again.

And oddly enough, it never really struck me until now that Mt. Diablo is rather appropriately named.

INJURY

Continued from p.2A
and when my front tire was glanced by a white LTD speeding along a street near my house, leaving a black streak down its side. I even recall when my bike chain snapped and locked up the back wheel, causing

me to fall, crack a bone in my wrist and due to complications, wear a leather and plastic foam cast through the hottest summer in years.

But none of those memories compare with the sight of Greg's face looking like raw, dead cow. None of them.

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Buckle Up!

Cyclemania '93

STOLEN: Seen My Cruiser?

Continued from p.4A through the back tire did nothing to dissuade a band of thieves from taking the bike. Imagine my dissatisfaction when I saw that it had been stolen. Imagine my anger when I realized this meant I would be walking back to my I.V. apartment that night.

To replace the cruiser, I brought up an old 10-speed from home. It was the kind of bike that looked like it had come from the recesses of a garage where it had languished in rusted misery for 10 years. Of course, that is exactly what happened to this bike. Before the rust gave the bike a dull red color, it had apparently been some sort of green color. Some sort of vomit green color. I was happy it was rusted.

This bike served me well, but it was no cruiser. Nobody said, "Wow, now that's a cruiser," when they saw the rusted 10-speed. I didn't even know how to use each of the 10 speeds apparently on the bike. I just rode at my own pace. It was just one speed. What a waste of nine other speeds, I thought.

It is understandable, then, that I returned the 10-speed to its hibernation once the CSO office called

and said they had found my cruiser. I ran down to the office and identified my cruiser from a pack of identical bikes. A crack security organization at its finest.

This presented me with the unique problem of having two bikes and only one butt to put on them. I chose the cruiser as my ride of choice, but the luxury of riding my favorite bike again would soon vanish as swiftly as it had returned. On Halloween night, as my faithful cruiser — the bike which had found its way back to me before — was stolen again.

I had locked it, sure, but even the toughest of deterrents do not drive away the crazed mind of a bicycle thief. This time, I knew there was no hope. Oh sure, I would wander the streets of I.V. and the sidewalks on campus looking for it, but I knew it was gone. Probably on the back of a truck headed for Canada. Even if it was still in this town, the cruiser was probably painted a bright orange and green color and decorated with streamers and flags so as not to attract any attention. The cruiser was gone.

Fortunately, the 10-speed was still in my possession, and didn't

seem to have any problems being the #2 choice. I rode the 10-speed at its one speed for about a week, until it, too, was stolen. It happened on the weekend I went away to Las Vegas and left the bike locked outside my apartment. I should have known better, but how can lightning strike the same place twice? Quite easily, apparently, because when I returned, the bike was gone. I looked in the bushes, under the trash bin, in the trash bin, but it wasn't there. It looked like it had been an easy steal — no violence, no signs of struggle, no ransom note.

I wasn't as sorry to see this one go. I still looked for it from time to time, but anybody who would actually steal a rusted 10-speed with one speed must want it a whole lot more than I, so I pretty much let it go. But I had run my bike collection dry, and had only my car and my feet as alternative modes of transportation. I decided that walking to and from school wouldn't be so bad. In fact, it has provided some exercise and gives me a chance to still keep an eye out for my cruiser. I'm hoping against hope, I know, but there's nothing like the ride of a big cruiser.



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