

Once Upon a Ride...

*Adventures with Jobst Brandt and friends
1980 - 2007*



Ray Hosler

Once Upon a Ride...

*Adventures with Jobst Brandt and friends
1980 - 2007*

Copyright 2016 by Ray Hosler

Photos by Ray Hosler unless otherwise noted.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Cover: Jobst Brandt checks out Langley Hill off Skyline Boulevard on a cold day, December 1985.

Back: Map of the Bay Area with important trails/dirt roads noted.

CONTENTS

6 - Foreword

9 - 1980

15 - 1981

58 - 1982

79 - 1983

92 - 1984

100 - 1985-86

137 - 1987

174 - 1988

188 - 1989-2007

Afterword - 205

Bay Area Map - 206

Dave McLaughlin rides to a second-place finish at the 1984 California cyclocross championship in Berkeley.



Once Upon a Ride...

Foreword

I've been meaning to compile all of my journal entries of Jobst rides and now it's done. What follows is a mostly complete account of my rides with Jobst Brandt and friends. I started riding with Jobst in 1980 while I was working at Palo Alto Bicycles. I enjoyed the rides so much that I began writing personal accounts, and brought along a pocket camera. It's what journalists do and that's how I started my professional career.

Jobst had been riding in the Bay Area since the 1950s, so when I arrived in 1980 he had already gone through a couple generations of riders who joined him on Sunday excursions. The pace was fast even in 1980, but the 1970s were even faster, when Jobst was in his prime. He was joined by local racers who were always pushing the pace as they prepared for races. Jobst, who was no stranger to racing, obliged them by also pushing the pace.

My apologies in advance for misspelling names or not knowing last names. I may also have facts wrong or I misidentify a location. Since this is a living document, corrections can be made. Not that it matters. I tried to capture the fun I had riding with Jobst and fellow cyclists as we explored the Santa Cruz Mountains. Hardly a ride went by where we didn't have some high adventure. Jobst liked to explore the trails and hidden roads, which made for some exciting rides.

This is not meant to be a biography of Jobst's life, yet to be written. And what you see here barely scratches the surface. Jobst rode most weekends for 50 years, and annually more than 50 years in the Alps for three weeks at a time. That's more than 3,000 rides (minus commuting). While Jobst is gone, his memory lives on. As he was always fond of saying, "Ride bike!"



One of my first rides with Jobst, April 1980 at the spring on Loma Prieta Road. To my right: Jim Westby, Tom Holmes, John Pina-
glia, Ted Mock sitting on Jobst's bike. That's my Motobecane LeChampion, stolen off Jobst's front porch. The wheels were recovered when the thief brought them into Palo Alto Bicycles, both sewups flat. The frame was not located. Jobst Brandt photo.



Ward Road Discovery Ride

NOVEMBER 16, 1980

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Tim Nicholson, Tom Ritchey, Bill Robertson, Keith Vierra, Mel, Matt, Bob

WEATHER: Cold, partly cloudy

ROUTE: Page Mill Road to Skyline, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9 to the Haul Road, to Loma Mar, to Stage Road, San Gregorio, up Hwy 84, down Hwy 84

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Tom - front flat; Matt - gear slip; Jobst - chain clunks



How cold was it? Jobst wore his new wool sweater and cotton knickers. But Keith braved the 40-degree start in nothing more than an Avocet short-sleeve jersey. The real headliner was the discovery of a new road. Tom and I decided early on to explore Ward Road, which goes steeply downhill from Skyline Boulevard to the Haul Road, crossing Pescadero Creek at a ford. Not even Jobst has ridden this dirt road. Before that though we had to reach Skyline on the always challenging Page Mill Road. We dutifully noted new homes being built along the road, and Jobst dutifully made his wise remarks. A debate over the Pope ensued, detailing all his connotations. I concluded one good thing religion has done is create beautiful cathedrals, and some great organ music.

Tim let Page Mill get the best of him, although he recovered to reach Loma Mar. A couple of new riders peeled off along the way. Matt didn't get much past Moody Road before turning back.

Tom and I headed off Skyline onto Ward Road at the sign that says, "Use other driveway," the Jikoji Zen Center. Once on the main dirt road, we saw several dome homes and came upon a "school." We spoke with several "students" sitting out front. One of them, who must have been a burned out professor, gave us directions for finding Ward Road. A "student" hovered about us playing the fife, while another "student," who looked like he had smoked one too many, sat on a log contemplating life.

We left, not really sure where the road would take us, but certain high adventure was in store. We came upon an oiled road in a



state of disrepair after about a mile ride. We headed down this steep road until we had a vantage point, which encompassed Portola State Park, Portola Road and the Pacific Ocean. We turned back, certain that this was not Ward Road, but knowing that yet another road was ready to be explored.

We were on the right track shortly. After a few wrong turns, or at least we surmised they were wrong, we were heading down the ridge into Portola State Park. To our left we looked down on Oil Creek in a gorge. The road proved to be highly rideable, quite steep in places. We had no trouble though. We passed by two gates across the road. We were soon in "State Park" land where we immediately noticed an old-growth redwood. Ronald Reagan must have missed this one. We crossed Pescadero Creek and almost got doused in the process. Certainly Jobst would have ridden through. Now he has something to look forward to. After crossing the creek, we rode up a short, steep hill to the Haul Road, where Tom noticed tracks from Jobst's cadre of riders. They went down Hwy 9 and picked up the Haul Road at the Hwy 236 junction. We pursued, not knowing how far ahead they were. Tom headed home at Portola Park entrance, while I continued alone, playing Tonto. It wasn't hard to follow the tracks. I noticed one rider missed a turn and later found out it was Keith.

I ran into Bill on Pescadero Road at the Baptist Camp. He said Jobst and riders were at Loma Mar store. We caught up and joined them for the ride to Pescadero and Stage Road over to Hwy 84. We headed up 84, seeing red-tailed hawks along the way. A good time was had by all.

STEVENS CREEK STYMIES KEITH VIERRA

NOVEMBER 23, 1980

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Bill Robertson, Keith Vierra, Bob, Matt

WEATHER: Cool, cloudy, rain

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Page Mill Road, down Stevens Canyon, Foothill Boulevard home

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Bill - flat; Keith - slow leak; Jobst - chain clunk; Ray - metal in brake pads



Heavy rain on Saturday caused Jobst to tailor this excursion so that we could ride without getting our bikes muddy, just dirty. That meant staying on the east side of the Coast Range. While riding on Sand Hill Road, Jobst's steely eyes, like those of a red-tailed hawk searching for prey, zeroed in on a dirt road alongside. "That's not too muddy to ride on," he boasted gleefully. So we headed up Old La Honda in search of the ultimate road (one of dirt that never gets muddy) not knowing what was in store, certain only that this was a Jobst Ride, an event with much fear and loathing.

Jobst dutifully pushed the pace on Old La Honda, but he and I were almost dropped on Dead Man's Curve when Rick put in a quick burst of speed. That just made Jobst ride harder. Matt turned home on Skyline with his friend Bob, a San Francisco hair stylist who had just returned from six weeks in London where he studied his trade. And then there were five.

We rode through a chill fog as clouds skirted over the Coast Range, obscuring our view. Jobst pointed to some dirt roads, paths to new adventures. Our contingent rode past a new landmark under construction on Skyline Boulevard. Tom Ritchey's home is nearing completion. We yelled to Katie, Tom's wife, thinking Tom might be there. Tom's log cabin will be a boon to Jobst Riders in the coming years, a waystation in the rugged Coast Range.

Predictably, Jobst pushed big gears going up one-mile hill, leaving the rest of us spinning for our lives, and Bill out of sight. But by this time we were nearing Page Mill and he soon caught us.

We exited onto a dirt road about a mile down Page Mill, which I had recently been told about by Tom. Jobst knew the way, having ridden up it this summer with Keith [Jobst had been riding it for decades]. Jobst was right. The road was in great condition, allowing us to see the beautiful fall colors as we rolled down the ridge into Stevens Can-



Stevens Canyon slide required some fancy footwork. Jobst Brandt photo.

yon. We passed the junction where the road winds up to Montebello Ridge shortly and Vierra said of that route, “It’s the steepest road I’ve ever been up.” Fortunately, we headed right and down the road. Rick studiously remarked on the geologic sights, such as hill creep and rock slides. You can add “tire erosion” to the list Rick.

Meanwhile, we were heading right into trouble. Jobst wheeled up to an impassible ditch. We were forced to walk our bikes around on a narrow, steep hiking trail, with a 100-foot drop on one side. We survived and continued without incident until Stevens Creek, where Keith was to meet his soggy fate. Jobst dismounted to ford the narrow, rock-filled stream, as did Rick and Bill, but not Keith. “Out of my way Jobst,” he yelled. “I’m riding through.” Keith was barely moving when he hit the stream, so he just bounced among the rocks in the creek. His front wheel

hung up on a rock and sent him flying! Keith will have to improve his creek-crossing technique before negotiating the

dreaded Forest of Obscene Remarks.

We headed farther into the canyon, uncertain what would be around the next bend in the road. We knew Jobst would give it a good thrashing, whatever it might be. We found out soon enough, stopping dead in our tracks at a huge landslide. Jobst dismounted and walked across. We followed, gingerly picking our way. Beyond the slide we reached rough pavement and then Stevens Canyon Road, an easy glide down to Stevens Creek Reservoir. At that point a heavy rain pelted us and Bill flatted. Despite the rain, a good time was had by all.

SHOUTOUT AT STANFORD CORRAL

NOVEMBER 30, 1980

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Olaf Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Tom Ritchey, Bill Robertson, Keith Vierra, Jim Westby

WEATHER: Cool, cloudy, rain

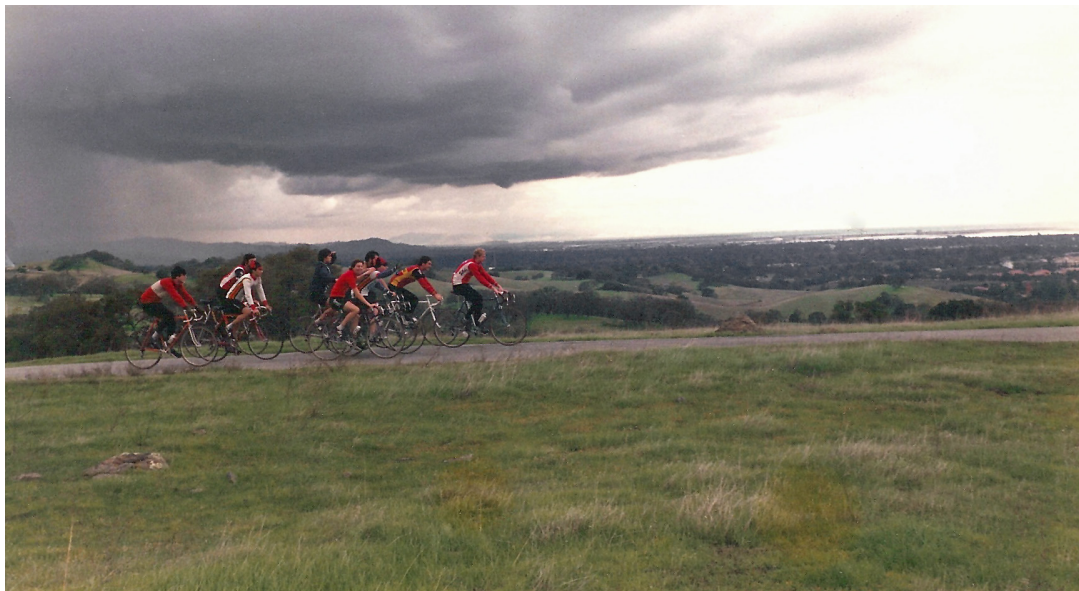
ROUTE: Alpine Road, Radar Tower, back to Alpine Road, to Portola Valley, home

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat; Olaf - flat; Keith - flat



At 8 a.m. the scent of rain in the air was about as strong as a skunk in heat. But the rain would not stop this intrepid band. We rolled off into a mist, and two hours later we rode home in a sappy rain. Tom's encouraging words spurred us on. "Oh this will clear up in less than an hour." And then even less convincing, "Come on you guys, it's clear up on Skyline." No one swallowed the last line.

With Olaf along, Jobst's offspring, the ride assumed more humane levels. Nobody was dropped and there was a great banter among the riders. This idle chatter soon ended, however, as we turned off to assault the Radar Tower Road. Jobst led the way up the steep, winding road behind Stanford University, with young Olaf spinning madly to keep with the pack. Despite his genetic endowment, Olaf was dropped, but wait until he matures.



Riders check out Radar Hill behind Stanford in 1982. Jobst Brandt photo

He has all the makings of his father; he will be a great Jobst rider. Things turned nasty on Radar Hill. Even the cattle didn't look like they were having much fun munching soggy grass. The road turned to dirt with a top layer of wet dust. We were covered with mud right away. When Keith flatted, the fun began.

As we were talking about the previous night's premiere of *Breaking Away*, Olaf discovered that he too had a flat. But his difficulties, which could have been severe, were solved by the amazing Jobst, who did some quick thinking. The wheel had no quick-release. Jobst had no tools for the bolts. He wisely pried off the tire where the flat was (lucky he

found it) and patched what tube he was able to expose.

Meanwhile, Keith was getting totally muddy from his tire change. When he caught the group, he aptly said, "I know this is a nightmare. I didn't wake up this morning." Well, our dreams were soon to take on frightening dimensions. After riding beneath Interstate 280 through a causeway for cattle and negotiating several difficult sections of dirt road that passed Felt Lake, we arrived at a gate. Behind the gate was a barnyard and corral.

In the corral was Farmer Brown, and he was not the character you read about in fairy tales. This guy was an SOB. He took one look at our motley crew and bellowed, "I don't want any bike riders on this property!" His arm pointed menacingly in the direction from which we had come, but we kept riding straight. Seeing there was no use stopping us, the farmer emphasized once again to keep off his land. Then Jobst let him have it. "That's right, bikes start fires." A battle of words ensued. But there was no reasoning with our nemesis. Strangely, a trio of runners passed our way at this very moment, but Farmer Brown didn't have a bad thing to say to them. Jobst had enough and headed home.

Freezing Away



DECEMBER 7, 1980

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Bill Fallis, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Tom Ritchey, Bill Robertson, Jim Westby, Mel, Kelly

WEATHER: We froze

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine Road, up Haskins Hill to Pescadero, Stage Roads, up Tunitas Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - flat

Numb ears and fingers were the rule this Sunday as we toured the well-known roads to the Pacific Ocean. Skies were so clear that you could reach out and touch Half Moon Bay from Skyline. The ocean was never more blue. Our rowdy group took on Alpine Road, which wasn't too muddy.

Jobst, who is recovering from a cold, turned back at Page Mill Road, while the rest of us headed down Alpine, noting that Jack Frost had been there before us.

I took photos of the gang as they descended Haskins Hill, my first image using an Olympus XA pocket camera on Jobst Rides. Without Jobst, the ride took a different complexion. There was a lot less talk and more drafting. Everybody took his pull into Pescadero. We kept going without a pit stop, not wanting to find ourselves dispirited by the cold weather this far from home. In San Gregorio we warmed ourselves by the wood-burning stove. Bill Robertson downed a huge chunk of pure milk chocolate, while the others helped themselves to fruit. The bar flies gave us the evil eye, but didn't seem to mind us after a few minutes. While resting outside, a conversation was struck up with an Australian who was stranded here with a busted van. He said he was heading to San Francisco and then on to Mexico. Not a bad bloke, I'd say. Rick asked him if he had a smoke, in half-jest. The Aussie volunteered his weed instead and everyone took several tokes, hoping to ease the pain of Tunitas Creek Road. Several riders wanted to head up Hwy 84, but the rest coaxed them to ride up Tunitas.



Once inside the redwoods of Tunitas Creek Road the wind died down and we did some serious riding. Rick went off the front with Jim while Kelly and I pursued. The rest of the crew lagged behind. Rick and Jim battled for a mile, but Rick began pulling ahead. Meanwhile, I had shaken Kelly and was quickly gaining on a tiring Jim. Once the grade slackened, I caught Jim and we rode together the rest of the way. Rick, meanwhile, had stopped to talk with a young female cyclist at the junction of Tunitas and Skyline. We sped down Kings Mountain Road to Woodside and home.

FOREST OF OBSCENE REMARKS



DECEMBER 14, 1980

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Dave Faust, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Keith Vierra, Rich, Kelly, Dave

WEATHER: Mild, then cold, then mild. Smoggy

ROUTE: Summit Store to Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, to Aptos, up San Jose-Soquel Road (41 miles)

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - broken rear derailleur; Keith - broken alloy toe clip; Kelly - cracked Silca pump handle

Into the Valley of the Forest of Obscene Remarks rode the half-dozen, half a mile, half a mile, half a mile downward. Redwoods to the left of us, redwoods to the right of us. A smooth dirt road carried us into Mother Nature's lair. Despite the valley's freezing temperatures, we fried on Summit Road, dressed as we were in many layers of wool. An inversion was our undoing.

Before reaching the solitude of dirt, we pedaled into a phalanx of cars, each bearing pointy Christmas trees. Our descent was a helter-skelter plunge into the unknown, vintage Jobst riding. Our leader pierced the forest like a berserk juggernaut. Frantically, we flailed our cranks to maintain the pace. But speed proved Jobst's undoing. Halfway down the mountain his new Sun Tour Cyclone derailleur came unsprung; he was stuck in a huge gear, like a beached whale. Not to worry. Necessity being the mother of invention, Jobst jury-rigged his own repair. As Rick carried on

**“Into the Valley of the Forest of Obscene Remarks
rode the half-dozen, half a mile, half a mile,
half a mile downward.”**

about knocking out chain links with a rock and a nail, Jobst used an ancient rubber band and rope to create tension on the jockey rollers so that the chain wouldn't rub the forest floor. This worked well until Jobst could effect more substantial repairs in Aptos (he got a new rubber band).

Meanwhile, we still faced negotiating the dreaded Aptos Creek to which the forest ride is given its obscene name. Jobst forded first so that he could take photos. Next, Rick and Rich tiptoed across, not risking the hazardous crossing. Dave Faust then took up the challenge, as did the rest of the band in succession. Keith's front wheel sunk into a hole, but he bounced out at the last moment and successfully forded. Finally, I tried. I got 10 feet before stopping dead in the water. Alas, my feet were soaked and ego bruised. At least it wasn't the other way.

In Aptos, Dave made time with Safeway's delectable grocery girls, while the rest of us gorged ourselves on fruit and pies. Soon we were on our way, Jobst leading the hardy band up San Jose - Soquel Road at a leisurely pace. After Dave got his jersey untangled from his rear wheel, he and several other riders forged ahead. Dave, Rich, Kelly and I attacked the road as though it were our final reckoning. First, I towed the line, Dave breathing spasmodically down my neck. Rich and Kelly lurked. In the next miles we got sorted out, Rich and Kelly surging ahead, me shadowing, while

Faust's out-of-shape body writhed in agony behind us.

We four got lost at the San Jose-Soquel-Summit Road intersection. "Here I was at this intersection where two cars were parked," Dave said. "Both drivers were looking at maps and trying to figure out where they were." We will call this place Confusion Point. Once everyone gathered at the Summit Store, Rick boldly announced he was pushing on to Los Gatos and then home. Nobody would follow. His fate remained unknown at this writing.

Butano Ridge Trail



DECEMBER 21, 1980

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ken Heckinger, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, John Porcella, Bill Robertson, Keith Vierra, Jim Westby, Kelly

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Portola Park Road, up Gate 10 logging road to Butano Ridge Trail, down trail to Wurr Road, up Haskins Hill, home.

WEATHER: Cool and cloudy, then cloudy, cool and wet.

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - 2 broken spokes; John - broken freewheel; Keith: flat; Ken - flat, bent bars; Kelly - flat, broken spoke.

Even before reaching dirt Alpine, things went wrong, foreshadowing the next gut-wrenching hours on Butano Ridge Trail. Jobst broke a spoke. Then we had to remove tree limbs felled on Alpine by hikers trying to dissuade motorcyclists. At the top of Alpine Jim turned back. He has missed some recent action because of a cold. It was a good thing he didn't continue. Things turned ugly after descending into Portola State Park. The Haul Road along Pescadero Creek became a muddy, sticky quagmire of slimy goo that clung obstinately to our wheels, jamming them so that we couldn't ride. Somehow, Jobst, Keith and Rick managed to get through this muck, while the rest of us wallowed along until reaching the traditional watering hole, just past the old logging bridge.

Soon we were climbing up the three-mile long Gate 10 hill, which, fortunately, wasn't muddy. This path linked us to Butano Ridge Trail at the top. Only Jobst made the steep turn without walking. We fell to the wayside one by one, but there was



Jim Westby rides the Butano Ridge Trail.

Jobst straining at the cranks.

We spread out on the trail, Jobst and Rick blazing a path. Proceeding along the roller coaster challenged our abilities; there are hills you have to walk up and some you'd just as soon walk down. Porcella broke his freewheel midway and was forced to walk up every hill, but he still managed to stay with me for a good distance by running up the rises and barreling down slopes like some demented automaton.

Two-thirds of the way through the trail, Jobst constructed a crude sign pointing to a side path, which he had learned about many years ago from Bud Hoffacker, who used to ride his motorcycle down it. It is here that Jim became lost on one ride.

By now the threat of rain was real; you could see it marching over the ridges straight for us. Jobst marshaled his remaining forces, Rick, me and Keith, for the final plunge. The trail rapidly turned into a path; then there was no sign anyone had been here for years. We hacked through the undergrowth, desperately trying to reach Wurr Road before the rain's army of droplets could inundate our dwindled army. Porcella and Heckinger reinforced us halfway down at a huge fallen redwood. Shortly, Porcella and I did endos on logs in the trail, but were unhurt. Eventually, we found Wurr Road and with great relief wheeled into Loma Mar for food.

But what of Bill and Kelly? Would they too be lost like Jim? No. Bill and Kelly followed the fire trail to Pescadero and hitched a ride home from there. Porcella in turn called home, asking for a truck to pick up him and his broken bike. Jobst and the rest of us headed up Haskins Hill on Pescadero Road, battling a hail of rain all the way home. Later that evening some of the members of this ride attended the movie *Breaking Away*, showing in downtown Palo Alto. It was suggested that we bring the star of the movie on a Jobst Ride. This would have been a good indoctrination.



On our way to Butano Ridge Trail we usually took a steep logging road up from the Haul Road, stopping at Gate 10 for a breather. From left: Paul Mittlestadt, Jobst Brandt, Mike Higgins, Tom Ritchey, Sterling McBride, Keith Vierra, Eric Heiden, March 4, 1984.



Wool Jersey Gang Terrorizes Portola Valley



JANUARY 1, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Jan Causey, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Peter Johnson, John Porcella

WEATHER: Cold, then cool

ROUTE: Sand Hill Road, up Hoffacker property to Old La Honda Road, down Windy Hill to Alpine Road, home

TIRE/MECHANICAL: John - flat

A New Year's ride brings out the best, or at least the most sober, rider. How many times did you hear from fellow riders New Year's eve, "I'll see you tomorrow morning," only to discover they had not made it to Jobst's doorstep? Probably they had a hard time making it to their own doorsteps after consuming all that wine and champagne.

We set off through the quiet Santa Clara Valley, riding around the many barflies who lined the roadside. One fellow looked up bleary-eyed and said, "I think I'm still drunk," and went back to sleep. But things turned serious on Hoffacker's property off Portola Road. We passed a couple of mongrels and their owner while climbing slowly up the hillside through a walnut orchard. The woman pleaded, "Watch out for my dogs." We made a few wise remarks and went on our way.

A minute or so later, a white truck came our way. "He's cutting us off at the pass," Rick said. Soon the noisy truck blocked our path and forced us to stop on the steep incline. The driver, a burly man wearing his bath robe, stepped out. He had a mean look on his face. Jobst, the biggest of our crowd, wheeled up to his feet.

"What are you doing on private property?" he asked Jobst, fists clenched.

"We're just riding through. Look, we're not throwing beer cans, we're not making noise, we're not tearing up lawns."

"You got permission to be here?"

"Yes," Jobst said, "We know Neal Hoffacker. He lives up here."

"Well, do you have written permission?"

"No, what da ya mean? We don't need written permission."



Celebrating the New Year on Windy Hill in our wool jerseys, Jan Causey, Rick Humphreys, Jobst Brandt, Peter Johnson. Notice we're still riding sewups. That wouldn't last much longer. Once Jobst switched to clinchers, we all switched.

“Well, you do now. Next time you come on this property, you have a note from Hoffacker.”

“Look, I've been up here since I was a little kid, this high.” Jobst put his hand down to his knee. “I used to swim in that lake there.”

Eventually the man let us by. Jobst said, “I should have told him I swam in that lake 40 years ago!”

Soon we reached Old La Honda, Jan and Peter bringing up the rear. We headed to Windy Hill along Skyline Boulevard, noticing the smoggy valley below. Jobst took our picture and said that soon the developers would be here on Windy Hill, tearing into the earth, putting in a paved road, building homes; more homes, more roads, more people, more yelping dogs, more greedy landowners for us to face on our Jobst Rides. When the hills are gone, there won't be anywhere else to ride. Nevertheless, we went bouncing down the cattle tracks [Spring Ridge Trail now] across the steep slopes of Windy Hill, straining to maintain control, like someone trapped in a vibrating bed gone berserk. A good time was had by all, even by the cows that chased us.

Butano Fire Road Runway Fun



JANUARY 11, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Peter Johnson, Bill Robertson, Kelly

ROUTE: Up Page Mill Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, up Hwy 236, up China Grade, down Butano Fire Road, up Stage Roads, up Purisima Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road

WEATHER: Cold, then cool, then warm, then hot, then cool

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - broken rear spoke; Rick - flat

We rode up Page Mill Road at a leisurely pace, Jobst wanting to give a couple new riders a chance to keep up. We met Peter on Skyline. Kelly spurred ahead and waited. Our pace was joyful down to Highway 9, where Bill and Peter peeled off. Then the real riding began. We plunged down Hwy 9 like kamikazes until reaching Hwy 236, where Jobst stopped to inspect his cranks. He thought he had broken one. We proceeded up China Grade and saw no cars until Pescadero. Butano Fire Road was in great shape, Jobst spearheading our drive into the wilderness. Quickly, things went awry here. First, Jobst broke a rear spoke. Bending over to push the rim back into shape, he said, "You know, these clincher rims aren't as strong laterally as tubulars." Soon, Rick flatted; it was a vampire pinch, caused by his tire bottoming on a rock.

Quickly we were on our way and crossing the airport runway. We stopped for a strawberry daiquiri, and to watch the flight attendants unload passengers — mostly deer, porcupine and banana slugs.

From there, it was more downhill along dirt roads with crushed shale. Several times, the traction became so bad that we fishtailed across the road, narrowly missing the steep embankments and certain death. On the lower reaches Jobst almost ran into a cow in the road. The next rider, Kelly, saw the cow run away, dropping cow pies in its path. Later, Jobst said, "I bet I scared the crap out of him!" Kelly nodded in agreement. We ate at Pescadero, while a dog watched us the entire time, hoping for a handout. He didn't get any.



Emergency landing strip on Butano Fire Road.

We noticed a general store is under new management, its exterior refurbished, but it was closed. A mile from Pescadero, Kelly remembered he had forgotten his Bell helmet, so everyone turned around, except me. I was tired and went on ahead up Stage Road. By now it was hot along the coast. They're still working on the bridge at San Gregorio. I finally met up with the group on Purisima Creek Road. We drank spring water on the trail, muddy in the lower reaches. Soon, our bikes were covered with mud. After some picture taking we headed up the steep trail. The descent of Kings Mountain Road went smoothly, as we met Kelly on Sand Hill Road, riding with a young lady.

Super Bowl Sunday



JANUARY 25, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Dave Faust, Ray Hosler, John Porcella, Tom Ritchey, Jim Westby

WEATHER: Cold, then cool, but clear

ROUTE: Up Page Mill Road, Skyline to Summit Store, down San Jose-Soquel Road, down Redwood Lodge Road, up Schulties Road, down Old Santa Cruz Highway, through Novitiate, along Hwy 9, home.

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jim - gear shift cable loose; Dave - rear brake cable frayed; Ray - new wheels improperly dished. John - Broken seat post bolt

This was not just any Sunday. It was Super Bowl Sunday. You could feel it in the air. Saturday's rain cleared out the valley smog, revealing once again what has made this area so appealing. Additionally, the Iran hostages would finally set foot on U.S. soil, and the Oakland Raiders would win the Super Bowl.

But before we could sit down to enjoy the game, there was a ride to be finished. We headed up Page Mill Road at a leisurely pace until just past the Modern House, where Dave, John and Tom blasted off the front. Jim languished behind, lugging his 19 and damning his non-functioning derailleur cable. Strangely, the ride turned quiet along Skyline. Nary a word was to be heard from the group. Everyone seemed to be concentrating on the other's wheel, perhaps anticipating another breakaway [we sprinted at city limits signs], which, by the way, Dave won going away the first time. Indeed, the pace did quicken with several Jobst-like bursts up the many hills leading to Summit Road. At Summit Store, we downed the usual fruits and sweets. I took photos.



Jobst Brandt, Jim Westby and Dave Faust take a break at the Summit Store on our Super Bowl Sunday ride.

Earlier in the ride, we had talked about clinchers vs. sewups (on this ride four had clinchers). Jobst had switched to clinchers earlier in the month and now we were all abandoning our expensive silk tires. During our lunch break, we observed various customers and commented on how poorly their autos functioned. Jobst harangued about how so many of them act like country folk, when really they probably commute 50 miles a day to work in the Silicon Valley computer mills. We headed down San Jose-Soquel Road, turning right soon after onto a narrow, twisting road called Redwood Lodge, recently reopened after a bridge was finally repaired. Soon after crossing the bridge we came

upon a lovely blonde unpacking her car. Jobst made a comment about the new bridge. She said in reply, "I didn't know about the bridge. I'm just moving in here." Dave shot back, "Need a roommate?"

We headed up Schulties, stopping to see the Laurel railway tunnel, imagined what it would be like to ride our bikes through this tunnel. If only they hadn't blasted them shut. Quickly, we were on our way home, with a swift descent on Old Santa Cruz Hwy. Once over the Novitiate trail, and having blessed Mary several times, we were home-ward bound.

Fire Road Frolic



FEBRUARY 15, 1981

RIDERS: Steve Cady, Smitty Harwood, Ray Hosler, Don McBride, Sterling McBride, Dave McLaughlin, Ted Mock, Bell rider

WEATHER: Cool, then nice, partly cloudy

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain Road, north on Skyline Boulevard, down fire road to Higgins-Purissima Road, Lobitos Creek Road, up Tunitas Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Steve - flat and trashed rear wheel; Sterling - flat

I peered at the topographic map as I stood alongside Skyline, declaring, "This is it. Here's where we descend to the Pacific Ocean!" Sterling wheeled to my side, took one look at the map and yelled, "No way! We've got to ride another half mile, around the first wide turn!" Everyone took off after Sterling, including me. Within a half mile we stopped.

Sterling spotted a narrow dirt road. "This is it, I'm telling you, this is it!" So we all threw our bikes over the barbed-wire fence and headed off on the muddy trail, passing two houses, which we went by in silence, fearing a land-owner would come out and pelt us with rock salt from his shotgun.

As it turned out, no one was home. Then we headed down a hill, which soon turned up a hill, which we negotiated easily. We rode down a steeper hill, Sterling and Donny blazing ahead like berserk Lewis and Clarks.

After a quick climb, we barreled down a steep hill again, with many rain ruts and rocks; the road looked like a streambed after winter rains. Once down this precipice, we faced a hill so steep we had to walk up it, flanked by Christmas trees. At the top we were greeted by a spectacular view of Half Moon Bay and the Pacific. Sterling pointed to a road below us that twisted around a hill. "There it is!"

We started off once again, down another breathtaking hill, Donny and Sterling plunging down ahead of the rest of the crew. Steve followed tenuously; Smitty rode carefully; Ted came boldly, spilling his Cinelli in a rain rut. He has recovered quickly from his collision with a car several months ago,



Ready to take the plunge. Ted Mock, Smitty Harwood, Steve Cady, Don McBride, Sterling McBride, Dave McLaughlin.

which left him near death. “This is my first dirt ride in months,” he said, his legs scraped and bleeding. At the bottom of the hill, we faced a cliff. It was so steep we had to carry our bikes over our shoulders. Then came another kamikaze downhill. Indeed, this was prime Jobst country! Fire roads are unlike regular roads; they have complete disregard for slope and terrain; they are only concerned with the quickest way from point A to point B.

Then came another downhill, and at the bottom of the rollercoaster, a bump. Sterling and Donny went speeding up it, but both came to a stop midway, Donny falling down with his feet strapped tightly in the pedals. Dave, Mac and I wisely took the road around the mountain. About this time, Steve trashed his wheel going downhill, but with Sterling’s help, he bent it back into rideable shape. We headed off, wondering what adventure was in store around the next bend. I kept reassuring the group, “It’s going to get easier now.”

This time we rode into a farmer’s field and passed his cattle, which must have thought us crazy. We rode past them yelling and screaming. After that, we passed a pack of vicious dogs, who didn’t exactly act like a Welcome Wagon. They tugged at their chains, no doubt anxious to greet us with a big chomp into our juicy calves. They looked as though they hadn’t eaten in a week.

We passed them and continued on our merry way down the dirt road. But then the road ended and we faced the rancher’s modern house, and another pack of killer dogs. Sterling and Donny began bouncing down the rancher’s green pasture toward a road that bypassed the house, a la Windy Hill, through cow pies and the like. Everyone followed, walking their machines.

We assembled at the road and dug the mud from our cleats. About this time, Sterling noticed his Vuarnet® sunglasses were missing, obviously dropped on the Fire Road. He raised a great to do about that and suggested we return on the fire road to look for them, but nobody was game.

After a quick downhill on the paved road we ran into Higgins-Purissima Road, which we climbed up and headed over to Tunitas Creek Road, via Lobitos Road. On Tunitas, my fried legs finally gave out. After meeting the rest of the riders up on Skyline, we rode down Kings Mountain Road. In Woodside, we met Marc Brandt, who was riding his fixed gear. He joined us the rest of the way to Palo Alto.

Spring on a Mountaintop



MARCH 22, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, John McDonnell, Ted Mock, Jim Westby

WEATHER: Cloudy, warm, then cool, then warm

ROUTE: From Milpitas Safeway up Mt. Hamilton Road, down backside two miles from top, then back same way we came

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Spring made its debut only a couple days ago, but this Sunday’s Jobst Ride was the first in a long while after the winter’s heavy rains. We were in sorry condition and there was a distinct mood among the group that this proposed route Jobst planned was biting off more than we could chew. Also, there was a threat of rain. Ted took up the call, “I’m turning back at the top of Mt. Hamilton you guys. No way I’m going around [Livermore to Calaveras Reservoir].”

Jim tried offering encouragement, “Come on Ted, you can do it.” Conversation drifted from comments about the scenery, to the new low-income housing that has gone in about five miles up the road from the bottom, to rats and hormones, to making El Salvador the 51st state. We noticed a large number of hawks out this morning, and they were enjoying unusually good luck. “The field critters are at a disadvantage in early spring,” Jobst said. “There isn’t enough grass to conceal them from a hawk’s view.” Midway up, Jobst also spotted a coyote giving us the evil eye. Alas, we did



not spot the hairy giant tarantulas that lurk on this mountain. Oftentimes, we see their squashed bodies on the road. Near the top of the mountain, Rick put on a strong surge, edging past me and a fast-closing Ted. About this time, Jobst wheeled in front of a sign indicating Livermore was another 50 miles and said, “Did you see that sign? I’m not going all the way today.”

Instead, we sped down the other side of the mountain, with its tricky switchbacks and corners with loose gravel. About two miles down, we stopped at a curve where there’s a concrete trough filled with runoff from

the recent rains. Jobst peered inside to see if the two goldfish that had been planted there a year ago were still swimming around. But they had left their icy abode, and were last seen working their way up the Columbia River with a school of salmon. You see, these goldfish were demented, schizoid.

Rick declared that he was striking out toward Livermore, whether we were coming along or not. But the rest of us, Jobst included, didn’t feel up to the grinding ride across this wilderness, so we headed back the way we came. That was the last any of us saw of Rick. Obsessed as he is with the desire to ride mega-miles, Rick has become something of an enigma on Jobst Rides. He will press on alone without the reassurance of a group. Few riders are like that, even Jobst Riders. Indeed, Rick lives and stands by his Spartan affirmation, “We are Iron Men on Alloy Bikes!”

The descent went without incident; we detoured through Alum Rock Park, where Jobst and Ted tried some foul-tasting mineral water, loaded with lead, zinc and iron. [Rick needed a ride home from Livermore.]

Roberts Road Endo



MARCH 30, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, John McDonnell, Ted Mock, Jim Westby

WEATHER: Cloudy and dry, then cloudy and wet, then cloudy and rainy, finally, cloudy and dry.

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain, down through Huddart Park on Roberts Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - minor tire casing failure on front clincher; McDonnell - chain fell off.

Midway in the Jobst Ride on this last Sunday in March, each of us seriously questioned our *raison d'être*. The latest Pacific storm moved through here like a speeding freight train, dumping a load of water on our group and the surrounding hills, already spongy from early spring rains. We were getting soaked, and I couldn’t help but remember Jobst’s hallowed words, “I never ride in the rain.” While he can be emphatic about what he says, he is NOT always Nietzschean in this regard! As we made our way along Manzanita Road, where it was already quite wet, Ted quipped, “I know it’s getting wet; my wool jersey is shrinking.” But this was a Jobst Ride, and in terms of life, of finding some meaning for these riders, this was a time when the absolute would not surrender to the relative. We were



Ted Mock recovers from his endo on Roberts Road.

going out here in the godforsaken rain to get miles away from civilization, and to find another dirt road. We were committed, and nothing could stop us, not even the rain.

Often, the Jobst Rider must find within himself that deeply seated life force in order to continue when the going gets rough. This was, again, a day in which our inner strengths faced trial by fire. Before beginning the Kings Mountain Road climb, John asked me if I was sure I could see without the glasses I had just removed. I replied, "Sure I can see without them...Jim." Levity soon gave way to heavy breathing, however, as we pushed up Kings at race pace. We stayed together for nearly two-thirds of the climb, passing four or five bold tourists along the way. But I cracked, followed by Holmes and McDonnell. Jobst, Ted and Jim surged ahead as though their lives depended on finishing before some as yet undetermined time. Or perhaps they believed it was dry on top. At Skyline, we consulted briefly about where we'd go. Nobody wanted to head to the coast, although Jobst did mention that it might be clear down there. None of us were buying that line, however. So Jobst recommended that we forge a path down through Huddart Park.

We headed north on Skyline for about a half mile before turning off at a chain barrier. It wasn't until later that Jobst told us he had never been on this road [uncertain about this]. He was pioneering. This modern-day Davy Crockett charged blindly into the forest, and it was all we could do to stay with him on the muddy road that led inevitably downward. At one point, we headed off on a side path that, it turned out, didn't go through, so we turned back and

took the other fork. It was Plato who said, "Man is declared to be that creature who is constantly in search for himself, a creature who at every moment must examine and scrutinize the conditions of his existence. He is a being in search of meaning."

Plato would have been hard-pressed to find any rational meaning for this event, as we plunged down the muddy spoor. We struggled with our bikes against goopy yellow mud that clung to the tires and clogged the brakes. We were not searching for a meaning to life; rather, our purpose was to avoid mud puddles and to find a smooth, paved road. On one difficult stretch the mud was so thick that we thought we were going to encounter quicksand. That's where Ted met his soiled fate. He did an endo and fell into the ooze. I stopped to take his picture, which will go in the Jobst Ride photo file. Once into the lower reaches of the park, the trail assumed more humane proportions and we picked up a quicker pace. Jobst said, "Now if only Ritchey could have ridden down that on his mountain bike; he'd be going a lot faster than this." Indeed, this would have been a fine day for the mountain bike rider. The road was certainly too steep to ride up, but not so steep that you couldn't negotiate it going down.

We finally reached Greer Road and with great relief found our way back to civilization, though perhaps we should have more fear of man's creations than from the dangers that nature has to offer. Bike riders don't die in forests, they get aced out by cars on roads and highways. While on roads we fear for our tires from glass and nails. In the forest

we merely watch out for the lowly banana slug. Nobody wants banana slug all over his tires.

We headed back over Sand Hill Road, where two small foreign cars were still parked, looking like victims of some bizarre UFO attack, their windows smashed out. We blitzed home, Jobst, Ted, and Tom forging the way. To our left, we saw a grim reminder of what nature has to offer man and his monuments to civilization. Hill creep worked inexorably to destroy part of Sharon Heights, where Linus Pauling's office is located. The man who made Vitamin C famous was having the crumbling concrete foundation replaced. "They never should have put buildings there," Jobst declared. "When I was a boy, that hill was just a marsh. There was a horse stable right where that building sits now."

Horses and Jobst Riders had something in common this day, by the way. Put a Jobst Rider against a good mud-der and you've got a great race on your hands. I can vouch for that! And so ends another Jobst Ride.

Breaking Through the Pain Barrier



APRIL 5, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Bill Fallis, Ray Hosler, John McDonnell, Tom Ritchey

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline Boulevard to Summit Store, Highland Way, Buzzard Lagoon Road, Aptos Creek Fire Road down through Forest of Nisene Marks State Park to Aptos, north on Soquel Drive, up San Jose-Soquel Road and home via various routes

WEATHER: Perfect

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - broken rear spoke

*“Few are the times I’ve half-desired a
painful ride as this.”*

— *Francis Bacon, variation on a quote*

Among the world's best milers, it is acknowledged that all the training in the world won't do you a bit of good if you don't break through the pain barrier. For the runner, the object is to plan one workout that towers over all others in volume and intensity. You flail yourself to the point of exhaustion, so that all other workouts pale in comparison. That way you will emerge from the old pain barrier to a new and higher level. The same holds true to Jobst Riders.

This spring tour was our Pain Barrier Breakthrough Ride; its purpose was to cover as many miles as possible until exhaustion or darkness set in, whichever came first. Jobst had just the ride in mind, the tour of Forest of Nisene

Marks, a gut-wrenching 100 miles through some of the most rugged redwood country around.

We headed out at 8:05 a.m., and picked up John a few blocks away. Tom waited on Alpine Road. Traffic was already heavy this early in the morning as the Valley people headed out toward the Pacific Ocean to greet the fair weather. Tom has firmly established himself as a Mountain Man with his new home on Skyline Boulevard. He says he will soon have a house-warming party, which will surely be a good time for all of us down here in the Valley.

But I'm avoiding the whole point of this story. And rightly so. It was an experience filled mostly with pain, the pain of being out of shape for the miles that we had planned to ride. Jobst talked of catching a ride in Capitola after watching the race. But at the bottom of Aptos Creek Fire Road, we met up with George Mount and a cohort, who informed us that the race was over an hour ago. That meant we would have to ride home.

Jobst mapped out the easiest route, up San Jose-Soquel Road and then down through Los Gatos. We stopped at



Casalegno Store on San Jose-Soquel Road for our last food purchase. It was at this time that six racers, including Sterling McBride, Keith Vierra, Sheldon, Marc Brandt, Dave Zanotti and Otto Jacome met us. They were riding home after the race. We had a good talk. Jobst noted that a wheel-chair-bound fellow inside the store had been there "forever." "I remember seeing him here when I rode by in 1958," Jobst opined.

About that time, a wealthy computer executive arrived in his Maserati. It was suggested that we offer him a deal — his car for our bikes. But he would not go for the proposal. Everyone headed up San Jose-Soquel Road at a leisurely pace, but even that proved too fast for me. We who did this ride know that next Sunday will seem like a frolic. We have gone beyond the Pain

Barrier into a new dimension.

PITY THE GOLDFISH ON THIS MT. HAMILTON RIDE



APRIL 12, 1981

RIDERS: Kent Bostick, Jobst Brandt, Steve Cady, Dave Faust, Smitty Harwood, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Sterling McBride, John McDonnell, Dave Mulkey, Bill Robertson, Mark Sisson, Hal Tozer, Keith Vierra, Jim Westby, Dave Yamamoto, Dave Zanotti, Berkeley Wheelmen rider, Unknown rider

ROUTE: From Milpitas at Calaveras Boulevard, Piedmont Road, Penitencia Creek Road, Toyon Avenue, McKee Road, Alum Rock Avenue, up Hwy 130/Mt. Hamilton Road, Mines Road to Livermore, 84 to Calaveras Road and back to Milpitas

WEATHER: Warm, clear, refreshing breeze
TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat; Steve - 2 flats

The whole purpose of this ride—to put four goldfish in a concrete spring-fed trough on the backside of Mt. Hamilton—was lost to the unofficial “Mt. Hamilton Race” tune-up. With so many racers joining Jobst, the pace had a lot of us red-lining on the ride up. Racers had to wait for what seemed an eternity for the slower riders, so the group immediately fractured into an incoherent rabble.

The day got off to a strange start, foreshadowing what would be a series of unusual events throughout the day, but par for the course when riding with Jobst and friends. Dave Mulkey lit up, forcing me to roll down the window as we drove from Palo Alto to the ride start in Milpitas.

We boiled out of our cars and mounted up for the ride to Mt. Hamilton. It would be a hard ride from the start. We hustled to the 4,200-foot summit, and in our haste we didn't have a chance to hear Jobst call out birds. Over the years, we've seen everything from Golden eagles to Western bluebirds, Phainopepla, Lewis' woodpeckers, and Roadrunners. At the observatory parking lot, Jobst gathered everyone for a photo. That was quite a feat with 20 riders anxious to get back on the road. Dave Mulkey, however, rested in the shade of the observatory, in a haze.



Our largest turnout ever for a Mt. Hamilton ride. Riders prepare for the twisty descent of the eastern side of Mt. Hamilton. Jobst Brandt photo

We swiftly descended the steep, tricky backside, stopping a couple miles down so Jobst could plant the hapless goldfish in a trough. It's a ritual to stop here and drink from the pipe that taps into the spring higher up. The cold water tastes delicious. Back in the early days of the automobile, motorists used the spring's water to cool overheated radiators. Over the years, the spring has been maintained by Don Axtell, who annually comes here to fix the pipe and clean out the trough.

After depositing the goldfish [two were alive and well a couple weeks later when we checked], we continued down the steepest part of the descent. There's one straightaway followed by a sharp left turn and a cattle guard where riders can blow by 40 mph with ease. On this occasion, with so many riders going so fast, disaster struck, as Smitty and Dave tangled and went down at the cattle guard. Blood was spilled, but it was not life threatening. [Jobst crashed badly near the same place in 2009, hitting his head and suffering other injuries. He blew a tire. Brian Cox also crashed hard near here in 2004, while riding with Jobst; He got a helicopter ride to a hospital. Note that most health insurance does not cover the ride, which costs at least \$5,000.]

We continued to the next—and only—stop on the backside of Mt. Hamilton, the San Antonio Junction store.

This modest cinder-block building looks every bit the Wild West stage stop, with a hog's head mounted above the bar and a library comprising *National Geographic* magazines from the 1950s. Outside, we were greeted by "Car Man," a stick-man made from cast-off car parts. We shared the picnic tables with motorcyclists, who hang out here and talk shop. Hummingbirds helped themselves to the feeders. Higher up, acorn woodpeckers yakked away in the oak trees. Not the place for gourmet dining, the Junction Cafe serves up the usual burger and fries, as well as an assortment of candy bars and soda [they have Clif Bars now].

Mulkey, living off the fumes of his racing days, slumped down for a bowl of chili and three beers. He hoped this would see him through the ride—another 55 miles or so. Making matters worse, Jobst left without us. Mulkey and I caught up, as the ride became more fractured on the long, gradual descent of Mines Road, where the really fast racers blasted off the front. Jobst kept a steady pace into Livermore, where we stopped at a Safeway for food and drink. By this time Dave Yamamoto had disappeared (lost) and the fast racers were gone, never to be seen again.

Taking stock of his situation, Mulkey decided he had enough and crashed on a homeowner's lawn near the Safeway. Curious children circled his body, and asked if he was dying. The children's parents kept shooing the kids away, fearing that Dave might be diseased, or rabid. Since Dave rode in my car, he was my responsibility. He said to go ahead and drive back to pick him up. I continued on with Jobst and the slower riders to Milpitas, and then returned by car to retrieve Dave.

On the way back in my beat up Datsun B210, we stopped at Dave's request to pick up two hitchhikers rolling a tire down the freeway. The North Carolina natives, in the finest Southern drawl, said they were headed to Hawaii, as soon as they raised enough cash. They were promptly offered some of Dave's finest hospitality, which they gladly accepted. "Don't worry about them," Dave reassured behind a veil of smoke. "They live their own kind of life." It is a life not unlike the Jobst Ride. [Dave Mulkey died in 2002.]



Mt. Hamilton on Sewups



APRIL 26, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Ted Mock, John Porcella, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Mt. Hamilton from Milpitas and around Livermore loop via Hwy 84 and Calaveras Road

WEATHER: Cool, then cloudy, then cold and cloudy, then partly cloudy and cool, then partly cloudy and warm and breezy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: John - 3 flats (sewups)

In case you were wondering, the four goldfish Jobst planted in the concrete trough two weeks ago on the backside of Mt. Hbamilton are alive and well — at least two of them are. Jobst went poking around inside the trough trying to find the other two, but couldn't locate them. We think one of the Jobst Riders secretly stole back to the site and ate them. The ride got off to a cold start, as the lingering elements of the previous day's storm were being pushed to the east. We rode to the top of Mt. Hamilton, where we were greeted by a big gray cloud obscuring everything. We froze our fingers coming down the backside, and it is a wonder no one crashed, shivering as we were.

Coming up Mt. Hamilton, Jobst spotted an Oriole, dozens of Turkey vultures, and hundreds of cows, which



were being herded to a watering hole in one of the many valleys below Mt. Hamilton. We also saw numerous woodpeckers, and heard them knocking at the trees. San Antonio Valley is full of wildflowers, and the California poppies are just beginning to come to full bloom. Jobst took pictures of us and the wildflowers, and I took a shot of John changing his third flat. We arrived at San Antonio Junction store where we stop for food; we were greeted by a half-dozen tourists coming from Livermore. Moments later, a couple of riders arrived from our direction. We had passed them at the base of Mt. Hamilton early in the ride, and they seemed somewhat miffed that we had beaten them, because they had taken a hard route to the base of Mt. Hamilton.

At this point, there was some discussion about bike frames, and other bike talk. One of the “racers” in the group of tourists said that he had heard about Ritchey (a fellow Jobst Rider), and how he wouldn't let people watch him build frames, how he uses Silly Putty to fill in lugs, and all kinds of other hocus-pocus. At which point Jobst nodded in agreement, “No you don't want a Ritchey.” Later on in the conversation Jobst struck back when the racer said he had Phil Wood's “guaranteed” hubs. “That's right, when you're out somewhere in the Oregon wilds during a tour, you can just pack up your rusted Phil Wood hub and mail it to him.”

We left the store and the riders soon after, at which time John said, “Gee, I hope we make it home on our Ritchey bikes.” The racer had no idea, until this moment, that Jobst and John rode Ritchey frames. Ted said of this tour group, “You know they're just going to die coming back.” Ted was referring to the fact that there are two difficult climbs before the descent to Livermore. We descended into Livermore with great haste. In town Jobst was forced to stop at an intersection, whereupon he reached down into the gravel and came up with 35 cents. “You can always find change in intersections, if you look closely.”

On our way into Milpitas, we passed a policeman, who promptly trained his radar gun on us as we sped by on a steep downhill. “You're doing 35!” he yelled to us. We were in a 30 mph zone, no less.



John Porcella changes a second sewup flat in San Antonio Valley while Jobst Brandt and Ted Mock wait.



From Butano Ridge Trail, Jobst Brandt looks toward the Pacific Ocean and contemplates the beautiful day, May 2, 1981.



Once Upon a Ride...

Lazy Day Sunday



MAY 2, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Dan Green, Ray Hosler, Parker McComas, “Strange” John, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down to Portola State Park, up logging road to Butano Ridge Trail, down spoor to Loma Mar, up Haskins Hill, up Alpine, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Intoxicating

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - occasional chain clunk

Ocean air. When it moves into the Santa Clara Valley in the spring, it does something to the world we live in. It makes life worth living to its fullest. Winds pick up, blowing off the smog and enveloping us in something that’s more than just oxygen. It’s the smell of spring, the colors of new plant-life and Nature’s symphony of chirping birds. This was such a Sunday.

On this day, Dan Green, winner of the 1977 Mt. Hamilton road race, would be with us for the first time in over a year. He is getting back in shape for racing. Also coming along for the first time in a while was Strange John. John thinks he’s a racer. Then there was Parker, with his shaggy blond hair and beard, who goes on Jobst Rides from time to time. He works with wood. Of course, the regulars, me and Jim, were there to complete the roster. Our journey through the concrete jungle was not without incident. At Sand Hill and Santa Cruz Avenue, a speeding cab



Jobst Brandt, Jim Westby, Dan Green and Parker McComas check out the Haul Road.

swerved into a lane behind us. The driver honked his horn and swung into the right lane as we prepared to make a left. A conversation ensued. “How’s the weather? Why don’t you guys signal; how am I supposed to know where you’re going?” We replied that he was getting upset over nothing, and he was going too fast. To which the cab driver replied, “Now I don’t have anything against bike riders. I just want to see you guys take care of yourselves.” We can do that without his help.

Soon, we were heading up dirt Alpine, which has not yet been plowed, so the road is in good shape. Halfway up, we saw Ron Hoffacker bending over his stricken bike. His Sedisport chain had come apart. Ron, being the mechanic that he is, put the chain back on improperly. He didn’t wrap the chain around the tension rollers the way they should

be. That meant he could only coast. Various attempts were made by the Jobst Riders to help him, but it was hopeless. We needed a crescent wrench. Ron decided the best course was to coast back to town, so we left him there.

Farther up the road, we met up with one of Ron's companions, who had ridden down to find out what happened. He went up to Page Mill Road with our group. There, we met up with his girlfriend, Kathy, Dave Prion and a couple of others. They were going down Stevens Canyon, and we gave them directions.

During the descent to Portola State Park, Strange John showed us his stuff. He passed me and Jim like some out-of-control kamikaze. We got out of his way quickly. Jim later remarked, "I'm staying away from that guy." As we passed Alpine cutoff, Strange John went flying off in the direction of Alpine, even though we told him our intentions of going to Portola State Park. He caught up with us a minute later. We were not relieved.

Entering Portola State Park across a narrow wooden bridge, Jobst pointed to a sign that declared, "Don't Hike Alone." It warned that a killer was on the loose in this neck of the woods. He had struck several weeks ago; it is believed that he may be the same one who kills in Mt. Tamalpais Park, and there is speculation that this may even be the long-sought-after Zodiac Killer. Needless to say, nobody got separated from the group. I quipped, "Okay you guys, did everyone bring their 357 magnums?" As we rode through the campgrounds, which were crowded, Jobst's keen senses picked up the distinct odor of Oscar Mayer. "Don't you just love that smell," he swooned.

Once through the park, we rode on the Haul Road, which runs from Highway 9 to Pescadero Road. When we reached the first gate [it has been replaced by a new one] a deer was spotted. It seemed not to mind our presence and made no quick moves to run away. Jobst mentioned that this time of year the deer are particularly receptive to curious tourists. "In Big Basin State Park, the deer let people feed them and you can even touch their antlers."

We stopped for water near an intersection. "Wow," Jobst exclaimed. "Last summer you had trouble finding this intersection." Now it looked like trucks had been using it. I said, "They'll have a stop light here pretty soon." "And a Howard Johnson," Jim added. The stream we drank from was particularly high, but Jobst showed us where they dam it. Jim was offered water from Strange John's water bottle, which he took obligingly. But when he looked into Strange John's water bottle he turned green. "Yuck! There's an inch of slime at the bottom of that bottle!" Strange John said that it wouldn't come out.

"Don't Hike Alone...a killer was on the loose in this neck of the woods."

A tough climb greeted us up to Butano Ridge Trail. It's about a three-mile climb, and it can be deadly when it's hot. Jim remembered a time that it was hot and there was a four-inch layer of dust on the road, making riding difficult. "We suffered." Conditions on this road and on Butano Ridge Trail were ideal, however, and a cool breeze kept us from overheating. Once on Butano Ridge Trail, we struggled over the many roller-coaster hills. John, Parker, and I looked like the Three Stooges the way we handled our bikes on the dirt, when compared to Jobst. While assaulting a particularly steep section, Jim fell, scraping his right thigh. But he was able to continue. When we reached the rusted gate that declares this area county park, Jobst, me, John and Parker took a breather and waited for Dan and Jim. Jobst then proceeded to give us an on-the-spot education concerning hummingbirds. He pointed out the flighty little buzzers as they dipped and fluttered through the air. Jobst said that you could tell one hummingbird just by the sound it made with its wings. This was lost to everyone but we did enjoy their antics. And the view of the forest, the ocean and the blue sky was something to behold.

We headed off, once Jim and Dan arrived, intent on taking the Loma Mar Spoor. This shortcut takes you quickly to Loma Mar. On the barely discernible trail, everyone had quite a good time negotiating the many ruts, and pushing away tree limbs. Jobst did an endo when a twig got caught in his front wheel. Jim fell again. We reached Loma Mar safely though. There was some concern when Jim failed to materialize for several minutes. Jobst wondered if, once again, Jim had become lost here, as he was a couple years ago. But no, he showed up and we headed to Loma Mar for food and drink.

At this point, Strange John declared that he was going to ride up Tunitas Creek, so we bid him farewell. The rest of us headed home at a leisurely pace. On Page Mill Road, we passed a bicycle accident. The rider had apparently fallen during the descent, after slipping on an oil patch. But we didn't see any oil, as described by the authorities. We

made it home safely.

ARREST AT MCKENZIE RESERVOIR



MAY 10, 1981

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, John McDonnell

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain Road, down Shingle Mill Road, south on Coast Highway, Stage Road, over Haskins Hill, up Alpine Road, along Skyline Boulevard to Black Road, Lake Ranch Road, Sanborn Road, down Hwy 9 to Los Gatos and Cat's Hill Race

WEATHER: Warm, sunny

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

What started out as a pleasant bike ride through the Santa Cruz Mountains, turned into a nightmare by mid-afternoon. But first the good part. I rode alone this summer-like day. Jobst took his offspring on a leisurely ride to Los Gatos to watch Cat's Hill. I decided that I wanted to do a bit more riding and, headed up Kings Mountain Road. From there, I rode to Shingle Mill Road and discovered the fun of yet another dirt spoor, which parallels Tunitas Creek. I observed that there is some logging going on down in the lower reaches, but the road was in great shape. I saw a lone rider coming up Tunitas Creek Road, and another on the Coast Highway. From there, I rode alone to Pescadero and stopped at the new store, which is now open Sundays. Their prices are no higher than at the other store run by the ancient woman and her lazy dogs. It was a joyful ride up over Haskins Hill and then a challenge going up Alpine Road, where I spotted a Wilson's Warbler. I also saw two peacocks on the way into Pescadero.

At the intersection of Hwy 9 and Skyline I met up with John McDonnell who had peeled off from Jobst and his bevy. John had a hot dog, and I suggested that we go down Black Road and then through the San Jose watershed past McKenzie Reservoir. I knew that this was private property, but I still wanted to ride this dirt road rather than fight the traffic coming down 9. We arrived at McKenzie Reservoir, refreshed. I took some photos. Then we headed around the lake to the steep road that connects to Sanborn. At a large shade tree, we met our disturbing fate. Two Santa Clara County motorcycle sheriffs were issuing tickets to teens who had been fishing illegally. Because they were in the shade, we had no way of seeing just who was lurking there. We figured it was just a group of hikers who had obtained permission to be there.

Well, the sheriffs stopped us and said we were under arrest for trespassing. I blurted out, "But we're just passing through." To which one officer said, "I don't care what you're doing, you're trespassing." I said, "Yeah but we're not fishing." To which the officer said, "Shut up!" We could have given false names, since we didn't carry ID, but they would have separated us and gotten the information. One of the officers was really kind and suggested that next time we get permission from the water department. He said the fine will be anywhere from \$20-\$40, based on past experiences with this kind of thing, and we'd have criminal records, misdemeanors.

After the tickets were issued, John and I continued on our way. The upcoming descent, with loose dirt, caused a crash. My mind was elsewhere than on the road. The kids were just behind, and one of them said, "Better luck next



John McDonnell rides next to McKenzie Reservoir minutes before being ticketed.

time.”

My glasses flew off on impact, although I did not realize this until later, at the bottom of the steep, two-mile long Sanborn Road hill. So I painfully started back up. Fortunately, however, the juveniles were driving a truck down the road, and they had my glasses. John and I headed to the race without further incident. The court date is June 17th and the plea will be guilty. [I wrote a letter to the court and the case was dismissed. A year later, the water department sold the land to Santa Clara County and it became part of Sanborn Park.]

Flats, Flats, Flats in Marin County



MAY 17, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Parker McComas, Tom Ritchey, Strange John

ROUTE: Golden Gate Bridge, Sausalito, Mill Valley, Mt. Tam railroad grade, Hwy 1 to Olema, Pt. Reyes National Park, Stinson Beach, home via Mt. Tam

WEATHER: Overcast, fog on coast, then cool

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Tom – 4 flats; Jobst – 1 flat; Ray – 1 flat; John – 1 flat; Parker – 2 flats

It is sad to say that our clinchers failed us on this Jobst Ride [we recently switched over to clinchers]. They not only failed, they turned a potentially enjoyable ride into a trying experience. However, a good time was still had by all.

We started from the Golden Gate Bridge, south side, around 9:30 a.m., fortunately missing runners in the Bay to Breakers, as feared. We piled out of Tom’s VW bus and prepared our bikes for a ride that wouldn’t end until 5 p.m. As we made our way on the bike path between Sausalito and Mill Valley, Jobst pioneered a route through a bed of gravel that appeared to be a jogging path. Once on the other side onto pavement, Parker and I discovered that we had rear flats.

While fixing our flats, several riders went past and yelled, “That’s what you get for using sewups!” Jobst rejoined, “These aren’t sewups, they’re clinchers!” The argument over the advantages of clinchers vs. sewups had raged for years, and this day



John Pinaglia, Jobst Brandt and Parker McComas wait for Tom Ritchey (hidden) to fix another flat, this time on the Coast Trail in Point Reyes National Seashore.

wouldn't do anything to quell the controversy.

We entered the peaceful town of Mill Valley, and headed up the one-way road, past the sign that says "Do Not Enter." We passed the quiet splendor of homes overlooked by giant redwoods. At the railroad grade entrance off West Blithedale Avenue, we noted the ground was dry and firm. Sharp rocks menacingly pointed toward our tires.

Along the way, we spotted several Rufous-sided towhees, and the remnants of a railroad station's concrete platform. We stopped for water at the one-time watering station, where there is now a waterfall over moss-covered rocks. The cold water tasted delicious. [Don't be fooled. It's a Shay locomotive grade with an eight percent inclination.]

At the top of the climb on Mt. Tamalpais, we noted a poster warning not to travel alone, although the Mt. Tam trail killer had been captured several days earlier. We stopped for the traditional photo at the Stinson Beach overlook, clearly visible below. The fog had not yet moved close to shore.

On the descent of Ridgecrest Boulevard, Parker flatted again, and it was determined his rubber rim strip was at fault. John and Jobst had ridden ahead to wait at the gate. From here, you can ride a trail all the way to Olema, but today Jobst had other plans, so we took the Fairfax-Bolinas Road down to Hwy 1. In Olema, Parker purchased some elastic strapping tape for his rear rim.

Jobst typically rode up Mt. Wittenberg Trail, but today we headed straight into Pt. Reyes National Park, down Bear Valley Trail [off limits to bikes]. We passed many backpackers, who were returning from their overnight stays. Then Jobst flatted. He patched his tube while the rest of us checked out the giant ferns and wildflowers growing next to the trail.

From here, we had a long uphill to a ridge that overlooked the Pacific. The steep trail had us straining on the cranks. At the summit, Jobst pointed to the Coast Trail sign and recalled an earlier ride. "The hikers told us not to go that direction because it was too steep. Pretty soon we were rappelling down this cliff. We were lucky to get down that one."

We had a fast descent to the ocean on a trail littered with sharp rocks composed of shale, and we saw more backpackers. We passed speechless hikers, kicking up a trail of dust as we went.

At a corner, Tom flatted. As we made repairs, some equestrians ambled by heading the opposite direction. I noticed Tom was riding Avocet Mod III pedals, which he just as quickly noticed did not have their dust caps. With no spare tube, he had to patch the flat. We looked around and listened to the crashing surf below, where a couple of tents were pitched near the shore.

Jobst pointed out all sorts of birds flitting about, and then noticed an Allen's hummingbird. We watched as it flew up in the air and then dive-bombed us. Jobst figured a female was hiding in the bushes, and the male was showing off.

No sooner had Tom fixed his rear flat than he discovered a front flat! Back to work patching tubes. On the road again, we faced a particularly steep section that had once been paved. Jobst and Tom rode all the way, but the rest of us had to walk. We continued, passing equestrians on the Coast Trail, which is lined with some beautiful small lakes where ducks can be seen swimming around.

Jobst lost control on a section of off-camber trail, crashing on his right arm. Blood flowed. However, he was otherwise unhurt, and the bike was fine. Jobst found a mud puddle with green slime and washed off his wound. We continued on the gnarly trail that at times came within inches of a cliff and the Pacific Ocean below. At one point, Jobst found a side path and disappeared into pampas grass.

Back on Hwy 1, via Mesa Road, we made good progress into Stinson Beach. We had to make a four-mile detour around Bolinas Lagoon, at which point Tom started talking about his idea for a bike with pontoons. "They could be folded down when in use, and small paddles attached to the cranks for locomotion."

As we battled unusual headwinds, Tom flatted once again. By now it was becoming routine. After fixing the



flat, Tom looked sadly at his other tire and said, "Oh no, this one is flat too!" He smiled and laughed. "Just kidding."

We stopped at a corner grocery store where Jobst always visited on his Marin County rides. While inside, he inquired about some keys left behind on a previous ride by Rick Humphreys. Lo and behold, Jobst's Volvo keys were in a lost-and-found jar kept by the owner. We headed back up Panoramic Highway, a long climb to the ridge overlooking the Pacific. It was here that Tom flattened for the fourth time. Tom borrowed my leaky tube, which was better off than his. Along the way, Tom had to stop several times to pump his tire.

Back at the Golden Gate Bridge, we faced a thick blanket of bone-chilling fog while riding across. Ships' fog-horns bellowed their warning. That VW van never looked so good after a long ride.

Revving Our Engines on Gazos Creek Road



MAY 24, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey, Strange John

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, up Hwy 236, down North Escape service road to Big Basin, up Gazos Creek Road and down to Cloverdale, into Pescadero, along Stage Roads, up Purisima Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road

WEATHER: Warm, partly cloudy, humid

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

As the Indianapolis car racers revved their engines this Memorial Day weekend, the Jobst Riders rode their machines through the Santa Cruz Mountains, talking about the upcoming Corn Roast and Sierra Ride set for the second weekend in June.

On this Sunday morning, Ted Mock came along. He is a professional photographer and a veteran bike racer who has since retired to Jobst Riding. Ted is a strong rider when he is in shape and very consistent descending or ascending. In his mid-30s, Ted rents a house with Peter Johnson, the frame builder, on College Avenue in midtown Palo Alto.

Ted would stick with Jobst most of the way through the ride, as would Tom. The rest of the riders were left to struggle along. The struggle began up Alpine Road, but not before the Jobst Riders met up with the Palo Alto Bike Shop ride. As they entered the dirt section, the Jobst Riders met Ron Hoffacker, Don McBride, Kathy Lee, Dave Prion, and Brian Cooley.

We passed another rider I knew, Mark Sisson, as he changed a flat near Interstate 280 and Alpine Road. At the green gate Jobst observed a Hutton's Vireo as it fed its young while perched in a nest. A conversation ensued between the Jobst Riders and Shop Riders, about the chance of rain, about our route down Last Chance Road, and the like. Kathy, a shop salesperson, was along for the ride on her Gios, which she keeps in immaculate condition. Finished with his bird watching, Jobst headed off, with the Jobst Riders following closely. The road was in perfect condition.

At the Page Mill Road intersection, John babbled, "Now watch Jobst ride around this gate. I've never seen anyone else do that." But Jobst had to get off his bike this time, because the wire cable on the other side had been put up. As we headed up Page Mill, Ted noticed two riders coming down that he knew and yelled to them.

As we rolled along Skyline Boulevard taking in the view of fog hugging the nearby mountain tops, and small lakes that are part of a Christmas tree farm, we were soon being shadowed by a telephone company van. It followed us for nearly a mile, going our speed the entire time. We couldn't figure out why it was shadowing us; however, we sur-

mised that the driver must have been looking for a certain power pole or telephone line on the side of the road, so he was forced to go slowly.

At the traditional watering hole, the forest service fire station, we took our fill of water and swatted horse flies, which were to be found in abundance this spring day. Jobst told about one particular incident with a horse fly that landed on him, while traveling through France. "I was riding along and felt this sting under my neck, so I took a swat and thought I had gotten rid of the pest. Well, a few minutes later I noticed a stinging sensation again, and took another swat at the same spot. This time I felt a big splat and saw blood all over my hand when I drew it away."

Now Strange John started babbling. He talked about how he was not going to go the rest of the way with the Jobst Ride. Earlier, on Alpine Road, he had said he was going ahead. He began sprinting on the first dirt section but was soon out of breath and struggling at his cranks. John told us that he couldn't see how we were able to keep up the hard rides week after week. We left John at the fire station, or so we thought.

The ride down Hwy 9 went at the usual breakneck speed, while Rick had turned off at Waterman Gap to head back for a noon wedding. This left Jobst, me, Ted and Tom. We discussed various routes on the way down, but couldn't reach a firm decision, so we took Hwy 236 into Big Basin State Park via the North Escape Road. Along the way, on the descent, Tom noticed a sign. When we stopped for water at a stream, Tom said, "They put that sign there because of what happened to me in Yosemite Park." Tom explained that he was cited by a ranger a while back for riding his bicycle on the trails in Yosemite. He said that was because the park had a rule against riding any mechanized vehicles on park trails. The sign Tom was talking about said, "You are responsible for knowing park regulations."

Before proceeding with the story, it should be mentioned that I ran over a black snake on Skyline, although it is not known if I killed it. We rode along at a steady pace up a slight grade, me in the rear. Everyone swerved to miss the snake, but I didn't hear their conversation. I saw it at the last instant, thinking it might be an oil smear on the road.

We headed on into the state park, which has a large grove of old-growth Redwoods and is most spectacular on a clear day, such as this one. We passed a group of tourists, and then headed into the store to buy food.

Outside, we chowed down and talked about the sleeping habits of Peter Johnson, the amazing ability of John Howard to remember names, distinguishing marks over the eyes of Steller's jays, and puzzled over the fate of Strange John. Instead of following on the service road, he went on ahead along Hwy 236, and was never seen again.

We decided that we would head up Gazos Creek Road. We entered the gravel dirt road, which starts at a parking area. We rode right past a deer, within a foot or two, and it didn't so much as blink or twitch an ear. Jobst said, "He knows where he is!"

Gazos Creek Road is not a tough grade, except for a couple of short jabs. At a trailhead, Jobst stopped and wheeled over to a gate, where he believes the road behind the gate will take the Jobst Riders to Last Chance Road along a yet undiscovered route. After checking the scene out, we headed further into the forest, enjoying the quiet and solitude of a place without cars. After about four or five miles of climbing mixed with level road, we reached an intersection known as Sandy Point Guard Station. A forest service fire lookout located here burned down in the 1960s. This is also the point where Johansen Road heads uphill to intersect with China Grade, and where The Chalks road goes west to the Pacific Ocean.



Jobst Brandt drinks from



Purisima Creek on March 24, 1981.

We headed steeply down Gazos Creek Road, passing a large wooden sign declaring this land a tree farm. Jobst pointed out where someone had tried to chop down the sign with an ax. He then related about the sign in Marin County — Dog Town — that is unique for its strange name. The green sign that announces a town along Highways 1 is found before entering the city limits. “If you look at that sign,” remarked Jobst with a big smile, “it’s held down with four or five huge bolts. You’d have to destroy the sign to get it off.”

A steep descent began along Gazos Creek Road and we had to go through a couple of gates. The road was still in good condition, moist in places from recent drizzles. The descent soon quickened as we descended ever more steeply. We passed two tourists, male and female, who had been camping with their bikes. They descended about as fast as a banana slug.

Jobst and Tom pulled ahead of Ted on Gazos Creek Road, which was in amazingly good condition. Eventually, we reached Cloverdale Road and continued to Pescadero Road into a stiff headwind. Tom and Jobst got into another one of their frequent arguments over religion. Jobst contends that religion is inherently corrupt, because of the nature of man and so it serves no useful purpose. He points out all the holy wars. Tom always declares that Jobst is a heathen, only concerned for his own welfare. Ted just talked about the beauty of the road they were riding on, and how the changes from shadow to white rock on the way down made seeing quite difficult.

Along Cloverdale Road, a car came barreling along at 60 mph as it passed us, kicking up a cloud of dust and rocks. Jobst turned around to watch and see if the driver would make a difficult corner. When Jobst returned, he declared that he did not see the car come out of the corner. “They could be in a ditch right now, for all we know.”

Once onto the pavement, Jobst pointed out several birds, made comments about the California poppy and said that the Pedali Alpini should once again hold a bike race in the forest along Butano Ridge. Jobst was referring to a race that was held here several years ago that covered the many fire trails that cut through the hills. The race ended on Cloverdale Road.

Tom headed home up Haskins Hill, while Ted, Jobst, and I rode into Pescadero. Jobst noted that the town has a new flag pole and a new flag. The pole must be 40 feet tall, and the flag is 10 ft. x 12 ft. Jobst said that the old wooden pole was blown down in a storm. Pescadero had banners flying for All Ghosts Day, or something like that.

We stopped in at the new grocery store, opting for it over the traditional place with its flea-bitten dog and old woman who looks like she has worked the cash register since Pescadero was established as a town in the 1800s.

In the new store, Jobst recognized the owner and greeted him with a smile. Outside, we ate lunch and shooed away the chow hound begging for a handout. Jobst then railed on the drivers as they went by, and made all sorts of comments about car suspensions, lousy tires on a VW Bug, and the like. We also spoke with Joe Tourist, who was riding a Singer French 10-speed. He had two water bottles, a front handlebar bag, and an assortment of mirrors, helmet and doodads.

The tourist followed us out of town. He mentioned that the next day he would be riding in the Mountain Charlie Century that starts in Santa Cruz. Jobst noted that this person might have been biting off more than he could chew, riding so far on this day and planning a century the next, considering

his obvious poor conditioning. We passed the traditional white house marked by a row of giant eucalyptus lining the road. We saw a peacock with its splendid blue feathers, and heard its raucous “CaaaCaaa!”

During the climb on Stage Road, Ted talked of the incomparable beauty and joy of riding this direction. Jobst agreed, but added that he did not like the second climb, with its steep hill. We saw several goldfinches along the way. The fog began to take hold around San Gregorio, and it got much cooler on the Coast Highway. We rode along the highway until reaching the turnoff for Purisima Creek Road. We began seeing a bewildering variety of birds. Jobst pointed them out one by one. He saw a hooded bobolink, and numerous Allen’s hummingbirds swooshing and diving all over the place.

It was also at this point that Jobst pointed out the first oil well drilled in San Mateo County. The well has long since been abandoned, but you can still see the concrete platform sticking up from the brush on a distant hillside. Jobst said that he first saw this well pumping away when he was a child. “They could probably still take oil from there, if the more modern equipment and longer pipes were used.”

As we approached the dirt section of Purisima Creek Road, the sun began to shine. It cast its rays on the outspread leaves of the trees over the road, and there was a great splash of color to be enjoyed. With the sound of the chirping birds, the colorful trees, the smell of spring and the quiet and solitude of nature, we were inspired, living so close to such beauty in the Bay Area.

While riding up the trail, Jobst moved tree limbs off the road. He spotted a Wilson’s warbler at very close range.

“...it was we who were even more startled because one of the hikers was carrying an AR-15!”

Farther up the trail, Jobst removed more felled tree limbs. The trail was in perfect shape, otherwise, and the sun shone through the trees onto the creek. It was a sight and a feeling one does not often experience.

As we headed up the lower reaches of the trail, before the traditional watering spot where the wooden bridge is, we came upon a group of four hikers, one of them carrying a dog. The hikers said that their dog had broken a leg. Jobst mentioned that a wounded dog oftentimes will bite its owner, being paralyzed with fear. But in this case, the dog seemed quite content to accept the free ride. Later on, along the trail, we passed a curious pair of hikers dressed in military camouflage. They looked like Marines on maneuvers. We startled them, but it was we who were even more startled because one of the hikers was toting an AR-15!

Jobst said, “What are you going to do with that!” Upon which the gun-toting Marine said, “Oh, we’re going to shoot with it; we’ve got targets.” Ted mentioned that it was indeed fortunate they were not guerrillas, because bullets might be flying at them. Ray said to the gun-carrying Marine, “I trust that is semi-automatic.” The gunman said it was. If it were not, then he would be carrying an illegal weapon.

Just past the hikers, Jobst slowed to negotiate a mud puddle on the side of the road. Ted was right on his wheel and nearly fell over. I was on Ted’s wheel and did fall over. When I remounted, I fell again trying to get through the puddle. By this time, the gunmen were upon me and wondered if I had flatted.

At the bridge, we stopped to enjoy the fresh water, and Jobst commented what a pity it was that trout no longer lived in Purisima Creek. He also talked about how this spoor was once a logging road, and that big logging trucks once plied the narrow lane. Ted couldn’t believe that this place used to be a road.

I took a couple of photos before continuing up the most grueling section of Purisima Creek Road. From the creek, the road turns steep; however, on this day the road was in great condition, and the climb was not quite as difficult. This road is a real killer, though. Just when it eases up a bit, and you think you can pick up the pace, it becomes steep again. And then just when it seems like you can’t take the grade any longer, it will ease up and you can relax.

Jobst told of a time when Jim and Tom Holmes burst ahead of him while he played the more cautious role of

shadowing. He picked off Holmes and then Jim, “It just goes to show that you can’t charge this hill. You’ve got to take it at a steady speed all the way.”

The rest of the climb went without incident. At the top, we turned right to head down Kings Mountain Road. We arrived in Palo Alto, spent but happy. As is his custom, Jobst pushed hard the last miles into Palo Alto. “Jobst likes to hammer like that,” Ted observed.

Loma Prieta Road and Freewheel Test Ride



MAY 31, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, Parker McComas, Tom Ritchey, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline Boulevard to Summit Store; up Loma Prieta, down Mt. Umunhum, down Hicks Road through Los Gatos and home via Hwy 9. 80 miles

WEATHER: Clear, hot

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - 2 flats; Parker—2 flats and loose seat; Tom Holmes - 2 flats; Jobst—jammed freewheel

Besides the fact that Jobst hadn’t traveled up Loma Prieta in more than a year, this trip was to be the test—or trial by fire—of the new Avocet freewheel he was developing. He decided to combine the two plans, which proved to be an ideal test for the new freewheel, because Loma Prieta is a tough ride with some hard climbing. Would the pawls hold up under the strain?

Jobst’s freewheel is somewhat like the Shimano freewheel with a cassette body. It had a pawl design he saw in a Sturmey Archer hub that is no longer manufactured. Rather than using the traditional spring-activated pawl, Jobst’s pawls are gravity-activated. They fall in and out of place as the hub turns on its axis. The test freewheel has 10 pawls, compared to a standard freewheel with four. The intrepid engineer had no difficulty climbing Alpine Road with the new freewheel. At the iron gate, Jobst stopped to search for a Hutton’s Vireo he had observed on the previous week’s ride. The bird had built a nest right above the gate in a large oak tree; however, there was no sign of the bird or nest.

At Page Mill and Skyline Boulevard, Tom Ritchey, who had ridden from his home on Skyline a couple miles away, joined us. The ride along Skyline went without incident, as the riders discussed various topics this clear, warm morning. Tom said he wanted to head to the coast. Dan Green was going that way too, to visit friends in Santa Cruz. [They peeled off at Hwy 9.] Jobst talked about next week’s Corn Roast in Swanton, and the impending ride on Last Chance Road. Jim showed how badly his recent cold had affected him by being dropped on one of the climbs.

Several motorcycles buzzed by at high speed, one of the riders leaning into a curve with his leg extended to one side. Jobst said that his technique serves no useful purpose; that became a subject of heated debate between Parker and Jobst. The rest of us had heard it all before.

At the fire station near Highway 9, we stopped for water at a fountain. Soon after stopping, two other cyclists came swooping in. The young riders were both known by Jobst, who had seen them racing tandems down Highway 9. Jobst struck up a conversation with one of the riders, who said that recently he had raced down Bonny Doon—a steep, straight road leading to the coast—and noted that his tandem reached 75 mph. The two young riders soon headed off on Skyline in search of dirt roads. Our conversation ended, we saddled up and headed off to the Skyline Boulevard summit and ensuing descent to Summit Road.

Shoddy Shoe Work

On the climb up from Saratoga Gap, Jim was once again dropped. I had sore muscles from a previous day's run, so I slowed for Jim where the road leveled off. I coasted along peacefully, hands off the bars while eating a fig bar. Jobst and Parker were up ahead. I looked down at the road and noticed a white piece of plastic, dead ahead. A thousand thoughts raced through my mind: "avoid the plastic, hands on the bars, stop eating, slow down, determine origin of plastic." With so many wheels in motion, I couldn't coordinate every action fully. In a split second, my tire ran over the plastic, followed by a loud hissing sound as my rear wheel swerved crazily. Flat!



Taking a break on Loma Prieta Road, Jim Westby, Jobst Brandt, Parker McComas, Tom Holmes.

hit the road back here, but I couldn't figure out what it was." I cursed at Parker, and Jobst joined in, telling him that the Adidas cleats were poorly designed. Parker yelled back that he was just buying what the people at Wheelsmith recommended. "This was supposed to be the hot setup," he said defensively.

I replaced my tube, and we were off again. We descended the long stretch to Hwy 17 at great speed, winding and twisting along Summit Road, which is barely wide enough for two cars. We passed apple orchards and Christmas tree farms, hilltop homes, and blackberry patches. Once past Hwy 17, Summit Road traffic picks up. We rolled along to a lunch break at Summit Store, the traditional rest stop for all rides east and south of Hwy 17.

Peanut Gallery

After purchasing food and settling down outside, Jobst made his usual people observations. He went on about how the residents are not really country people, but Silicon Valley engineers who like to commute long distances to enjoy the countryside and keep their high-paying jobs. As usual, Jobst offered astute observations about the cars they drive and the clothes they wear. In between sage and pointed criticisms, Parker quizzed Jobst about what lay ahead.

Our group headed off, intent on reaching the summit by noon. The Summit Road climb past San Jose-Soquel Road left us gasping for air, as Tom Holmes and Jobst rode off the front. Just beyond the swamp, we stopped at the fire station and got water for our bottles, except for Jobst, who never carries a water bottle. The real climbing began on Mt. Bache Road, which rises steadily past mountaintop homes. We faced the biggest challenge on "One Mile Hill," with a steady grade of 14-17 percent. At the summit, the road turns to dirt, revealing the southern end of the Santa Clara Valley—mostly ranches.

The Dirty Bump

I had one hand on the brakes by this point, and the fig bar fell to the pavement. I got the bike under control, but was going too slowly to remove my foot from the toe clips before keeling over. I banged my elbow, and suffered a small cut. In a few moments, Jim was at my side asking me what happened. I fumed and cursed up a storm when I saw that I ran over a cleat. It didn't take long to see that it was an Adidas cleat, and I guessed that it had come off of Parker's shoe because he had been complaining about loose cleats! Jim found the cleat and tossed it off the road. When Jobst and Parker realized what had happened, they returned to the scene of the accident and heard my story. Parker looked down at his shoe. "Yeah! that's my cleat! I thought I heard something

More climbing ensued on the dirt road, as we passed the junction of Summit Road and kept left on Loma Prieta. The next hill is known as “The Dirty Bump,” a section of about 18 percent [paved now]. During the approach to the Dirty Bump, disaster struck; Jobst’s freewheel made a sharp pop—the sound of metal snapping. While riding by his side, at first I thought it was a broken spoke, but Jobst quickly ascertained that it was the freewheel. “Maybe one of the pawls broke,” I said.

We struggled up the Dirty Bump, and at the top a car passed with two youths, who were firing a small-caliber rifle. From this plateau we saw a rugged set of hills to our right and a radar tower once used by the Air Force. At the iron gate, Jobst told me, “I’ve got a fixed gear now.” Whenever his rear wheel moved, so did his drive-train. Jobst would have to ride the rest of the way in fixed gear, down the steep and dangerous Mt. Umunhum Road and through the busy traffic of Santa Clara Valley. This did not worry him a bit, as he pedaled to the traditional watering hole a few hundred yards beyond the gate.

Watering Hole

Here Jobst, Tom, and I stopped for some badly needed water. At the roadside, there’s a concrete block where water issues from a copper pipe about an inch wide. We rested and took our fill of the sweet, cold water.

During a 20-minute rest stop, we made insightful observations about our surroundings. I pointed out a flycatcher. Jobst identified a wren by its peculiar loud sound. I then found two ants—one quite large and the other one tiny. Watching their antics, I described a scenario for their doing battle. By this time, Jim and Parker arrived and tanked up on spring water. While waiting, I snapped several pictures with my Olympus XA. As I sat there, I found another interesting bug, this time a kind of wasp, regal in appearance. Jim looked at it and thought it was a drone ant, but that was quickly ruled out on closer observation. It was too big, and it had a long neck with large, clear wings. It might have been an ichneumon fly. Its larvae are parasitic on the larvae of other insects. The riders also tossed around the idea that it was a space invader, in the guise of a bug. One never knows these days.

As Jim took in the sweeping vista of the mountains and Pacific Ocean in the distance, we spotted an Allen’s hummingbird. “It’s attacking me!” Jim exclaimed. Jobst speculated that it was attracted to Jim’s bright orange jersey. “It wants you, Jim,” Jobst said. After realizing Jim was not another hummingbird, the little guy buzzed off. Rested, we headed to Mt. Umunhum.

Immediately, Tom flatted. Despite Jobst having a fixed gear, he kept up with the group on the dirt. Then Tom flatted again. I had to go ahead and get one of Jobst’s tubes, because Tom was out. On my way back up the hill, I noticed a large junk yard full of wrecked cars, miles from civilization. After fixing Tom’s flat, we quickly caught up with Parker, who had once again flatted in the front tire. This time, his seat had also come loose and he was cursing the Campy old-style double bolt. Tom waited while I rode ahead to find Jim and Jobst.

Back on pavement, we began the long, winding descent of Mt. Umunhum, which usually has no traffic since it dead ends at the top. [The road was also closed.] We came upon Jim and Jobst quickly enough; they were resting on



Jim enjoys a drink of spring water.

the roadside, next to what looked like a mine entrance. Jobst crawled around inside, and when he emerged he declared, "There's a cold water spring in here." We resumed the plunge down the mountain, Jobst managing to stay with our group most of the way despite the fixed gear. This predicament forced him to keep his rear brake on the entire way. When he got to the Hicks Road intersection, he asked me for my water bottle. Jobst poured water on the front rim and said, "That rim is hot! I don't want to have a patch unglue on me." We still had more steep road to negotiate, as Jobst told the others to meet him at the creek at the bottom. After a harrowing descent, we arrived at the creek and waited for Jobst. "Maybe he crashed back there," someone ventured. But no, Jobst was seen emerging from the bushes about 100 yards up the road, where there was apparently another creek. He rolled up and said, with a gleam in his eyes, "When I put that tire in the water it didn't go 'hissss' but it was just about hot enough to do that." We continued to Los Gatos. Leaving a store, I yelled, "Oh no! I've got a flat tire!" I had to use Jim's spare tube. Once that was taken care of, we headed off through Los Gatos onto Saratoga-Los Gatos and home.

Afterword: Jobst determined that a jammed pawl caused the freewheel failure. "Appalling," Jobst said. The freewheel never made it to market. A hiking trail and paved road to the Mt. Umunhum summit opened in September 2017, but Loma Prieta Road remains closed indefinitely. After being ticketed for riding here in 2012, I appealed in court that the road was public, but the judge couldn't rule on matters of public roads. A higher court could make the ruling.

Corn Roast



JUNE 7, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Dan Green, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Roger Leff, Parker McComas, Tom Ritchey, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road to Page Mill Road; south on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, Hwy 236 to Big Basin State Park; Last Chance Road to Swanton Road and town of Swanton, returning same route. 88 miles

WEATHER: Warm and clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Rick - flat; Ray - broken rear spoke

Anually in early June, Jobst and friends ride to the "town" of Swanton on the Pacific Coast to enjoy bluegrass music at the Corn Roast. It's a modest affair in the redwoods on a hay-covered hillside. Hundreds of people show up to hear the music, buy locally produced arts and crafts, and chow down on beer, burritos, corn, and other good food. [The Corn Roast ended at this location in 1988.]

Leave it to Jobst to find an interesting way to get there. Last Chance Road is one of his favorite wheeling grounds. The ride heads out from Big Basin State Park following East Waddell Creek through a narrow canyon with waterfalls and cliffs.

This Sunday morning, a gaggle of riders arrived at Jobst's doorstep at the appointed 8 a.m. start. Rick decided to pump his tire, but discovered it was flat. We were already losing precious time and behind schedule. Tom Ritchey joined us on Skyline, and we continued south to the fire station, where Jobst stopped for water and then sped off to meet Roger Leff at the Hwy 9 junction. Hwy 9 snakes downhill through the redwoods to Santa Cruz, offering cyclists a whirlwind descent. It's not too twisty or too steep to slow you down. You can just blast, and blast Jobst did.

A swarm of angry hornets

Our black shorts, colorful jerseys, and the whirring sound of freewheels reminded me of a swarm of angry hornets flying along at more than 40 mph. We jockeyed for position behind the head hornet, Jobst. He's not only a great descender, but his 6'5" frame creates the best wind break.

Swooshing off Hwy 9 at the Hwy 236 junction, we immediately began climbing on the narrow, twisty road. The climb took the sting out of our group and we proceeded at a slower pace, but not for long. Tom, Rick, Dan, and I blasted off, not wanting to miss out on the burritos. We didn't let up until China Grade, where 236 descends into the forest and park headquarters.

We took the narrow Service Road and continued downhill into the cool, dank redwood forest, headed for the Big Basin Redwoods State Park store. While refueling, conversation turned to the cool beers waiting for us over the hill. Our group headed off, turning right at the Blooms Creek campground, also the paved access road to the water treatment plant, before climbing a dirt road for a few hundred yards and then taking the crucial left turn onto unsigned Last Chance Road. [It's a trail today.]

From here, we found ourselves riding on washboards, trails, and rocky roads until the coast. The first part of the road is rocky, with sandpits and short, steep uphill that make going tough. The final approach to Waddell Creek is so steep and loose that only a few riders can make it without walking [not so bad in 2014, but overgrown].

Waddell Creek fun

We dismounted and crossed Waddell Creek. Leaping from rock to rock, and using our bikes as crutches, most of us made it without getting our feet wet. On the other side, we continued on a single track following the cascading creek in the rocky canyon. Depending on the past winter's rains, it can be rideable or covered with boulders and debris. On this occasion, we could ride, but even then it was a challenge on a road bike. This went on for about a mile before we came to a steep climb on a "road" over sandstone bedrock. It's hardly a road now, hidden by Scotch broom and pampas grass. The climb tested our legs in places, but we all made it without dismounting. The end of the climb brought us to a respectable dirt road, only now we faced six miles of bone-jarring washboard. We passed numerous modest wood-frame houses, occupied by burned out hippies, survivalists, and people who enjoy solitude.

Parker had trouble with his seat, so we told him we'd meet him at the gate where the pavement begins, which was a "mile down the road," according to Jim. But it was more like four miles. He blasted down the bumpy paved road with a car right behind him. The landowner obligingly opened the gate for himself and for us to pass. We took a group photo next to the Pacific Ocean. All that remained was a quick descent to Swanton, hidden away in the redwoods several miles from the coast. We walked our bikes up a hill and dumped them in some blackberry bushes. While enjoying the music, we had our fill of beer and burritos.

After a while, Rick and Dan decided to head to Santa Cruz. Tom, Jim, Parker, and I started back the way we came. In the baking afternoon sun, we walked our bikes up the steep section of trail next to Waddell Creek. Tom looked to his left and saw a waterhole. "Let's check it out," he said. So we put down our bikes and dashed into the creek to cool off. Pretty soon we were splashing around and enjoying ourselves, dropping down into deep body-size pools. We found a small waterfall and enjoyed the refreshingly cool water.



Corn Roast 1981 saw us regroup near the coast off Swanton Road. We cooled our heels in Waddell Creek on the way back up Last Chance Road after enjoying country music.

Reality eventually set in, and we knew it was time to leave. We dressed, got back on our bikes and struggled over the hills and steep dirt road back to park headquarters. We still had to climb Hwy 236 and Hwy 9, but it was well worth the effort. [In 2014, that waterhole was still there.]

Sierra Ride



JUNE 12-14, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Parker McComas, Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey, Jim Westby

ROUTE: From Sonora up Hwy 108 over Sonora Pass, on Hwy 395 to Bridgeport, then Lee Vining via Conway Summit. Overnight stay in Lee Vining. Up Tioga Pass through Tuolumne Meadows and Yosemite Park, then to Groveland on Hwy 120, Wards Ferry Road to Sonora

WEATHER: Cool, then windy (tailwind) and warm. Sunday: Cold, then freezing and windy, but clear; then warm, then hot

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - broken rear spoke; Ray - front flat

Jobst could not remember a more enjoyable climb up Sonora Pass. “I may have ridden up it faster in the past 20 years, but this time it was so easy!” The reason — tailwinds. They pushed us almost the entire two-day odyssey, over both Sonora and Tioga passes. But first a rundown of events leading to the ride over Sonora Pass.

The plan was for Tom Ritchey to drive his Volkswagen van and Jobst drive his car. But Tom decided at the last minute not to drive, so Ted Mock rigged his 1976 VW Rabbit for carrying four bikes on a roof rack. Jobst would transport two bikes in his car trunk. We left at 4:30 p.m. but within minutes we hit Friday afternoon traffic on the approach to Dumbarton Bridge. Road planners want to expand Willow Road, the approach to Dumbarton Bridge; however, Menlo Park residents will have none of this. The new Dumbarton Bridge, almost finished, will be much wider and safer than the old one, but poses no benefit in reducing the commute across the South Bay, due to the approach bottlenecks.

The new bridge has a bike lane, which opens up new opportunities for East Bay riding [not much to speak of]. We wondered why the old bridge couldn't be used for cycling. Jim said that by next summer we'll take rides to the East Bay, up Mount Diablo and on Palomares Road. Once onto the bridge, the pace picked up.

We drove on freeways through the hot San Joaquin Valley, observing fruit orchards on the roadside, as Jim pointed out the grape vineyards from which most of the cheap wine is made. Around 8 p.m. we met in Oakdale, home of the Hershey's chocolate factory, and about a 34-mile drive from Sonora. Oakdale is



Heading to Strawberry on Hwy 108.

the traditional stopping place for a big dinner. We decided to dine at a Mexican restaurant, the same one Tom and I ate at on the previous Sierra Ride.

Jobst reminded me that he griped about severe stomach pains after eating at the restaurant, but I told Jobst that was only because he had overeaten. Satisfied with this explanation, Jobst and the others went to the restaurant with but one intention — to deplete the food stores and to down a keg of beer. During the rowdy dinner, Jobst made a big to-do about table manners. “I always leave both hands on the table where they can be seen. That’s proper etiquette in Europe, and European etiquette is acceptable in the U.S., but it doesn’t work the other way around.”

We noticed that a large front window, near where we were seated, shook every time the kitchen door opened and closed. “They’re out back picking the Chili Rellenos,” Jobst quipped. Most of us ordered a large serving of Chimichunga, a house concoction of tortillas rolled with refried beans, meat and cheese, and then covered with hot sauce. A hot plate simmering with Mexican food and refried beans looked innocent enough at the time, but later in the evening it took its revenge.

After dinner, while heading out the door, we were greeted by an equally rowdy gang of motorcycle riders, not of the Hell’s Angels ilk, but spirited souls with a sense of adventure. Jobst made a comment about a rare motorcycle, “All right, which one of you owns the Vincent?” Jobst was joking, but outside he noticed that one of the riders was indeed riding the Vincent, and both he and Parker, being motorcycle buffs, gave it a good look.



The drive to Sonora went without incident. Jim pointed to the motel from where past Sierra Tours had left, the Miner’s Inn. But it had come under new ownership and we were not welcome. Last year’s incident in the parking lot after our Sierra Ride left a bad feeling among us. In the sweltering heat after the ride, we were sitting down to enjoy some cold watermelon when an old, fat woman came storming out of the manager’s office, shouting obscenities. She told us we had no right to leave our cars on her lot for two days, and demanded a storage fee. Jobst exchanged a volley of nasty words, but it was clear she had the upper hand in the matter.

We quickly loaded our bikes and headed down the road to Jamestown, where we could drink our beer and enjoy the watermelon in peace. “Imagine her upbringing,” Tom observed. “She’s a person filled with hate.”

Sonora hosted the Lumbermen’s Convention, and it became apparent that every motel in town was filled. We drove up and down the narrow streets of this historic gold mining town looking for a room. While cruising Main Street, Ted got behind a motorcyclist who was riding too slowly. While attempting to pass, the rider sped up. He cursed at Ted, and Ted gave him a blast of his horn.

Jobst led us out of town, stopping at the sleaziest of motels next to the railroad tracks. Finally, we found rooms in what looked like army barracks [torn down a few years later]. Jobst and Tom greeted the managers, while the rest of us waited outside cracking jokes. For what seemed an eternity Jobst and Tom negotiated prices. They emerged from the



Donnell’s Overlook. Ted Mock, Jobst Brandt, Tom Ritchey, Parker McComas, Jim Westby.

office with the owners, an old man and woman who both had country draws. They checked out the room, and Jobst returned with the keys. "That old lady. I can't stand it when women take charge of business and the husband stands around being mealy-mouthed about the whole thing," Jobst said. The owners had to look at the rooms, because earlier in the day a young couple took a room, messed up the sheets, then left an hour later, demanding a refund.

We settled in, checking out the sagging mattresses, shower, kitchen and refrigerator. Jobst flopped down on a bed, his feet poking over the end of the mattress.

Day 1: Sonora Pass

We got up at 5:45 a.m. for breakfast. Jobst literally bounced out of bed, while the others crawled from the sack. He took two giant steps to get to his breakfast of cold cereal with milk, the traditional Sierra Tour meal on day one. He dipped his big hand into the grocery bag only to pull it back quickly. "What's this?" he asked as he studied a cockroach crawling up his arm. "What kind of cockroach is this?" He proceeded to let the cockroach go about his business and dove into breakfast.

We prepared our bikes and packs between bites of food. Most of us had small bags attached to the rear seat. I wore a belt with a Palo Alto seat pack attached, while Ted Mock used a Blackburn rack with a handlebar bag strapped down by Bungee cords. Jobst had his 20-year-old Carradice canvas touring bag that was ready to fall apart. He carried his usual assortment of tools, spokes and clothing, which included a thin shirt, equally thin slacks (three sizes too small), a faded blue nylon windbreaker and plastic bags for gloves in cold weather. Jim traveled the lightest, with just a sewup bag.

At 6:30 a.m., we left the motel, bracing ourselves against the cold. Traffic was already picking up. We warmed up the first 20 miles by riding over rolling hills covered with oak trees. Jim got dropped early, but Jobst was not aware of this until midway on two-mile hill. "You guys are going to have to speak louder," he complained. Ted argued that he had yelled to Jobst twice that Jim was dropped. Then Jobst got behind Ted and mumbled something. He asked Ted what he had just said. "I couldn't hear a word," Ted said. I told Jobst that he mumbled and didn't speak clearly. Jim caught us, and as he joined up, said, "All right I'm here, you can drop me again." Which we promptly did.

Jobst made an unplanned stop just past Mi Wuk Village to let Jim catch up. When Jim arrived, he said, "Jobst, you're breaking tradition. You've never stopped here." Jobst said that he had. "Not in the eight years I've been on this ride you haven't." On the ensuing long hill Jobst told how one time he chased John Porcella unsuccessfully during the long descent. "He only had 30 yards on me at one point, but I couldn't bridge the gap."

The weather continued cool, and frost was visible on the roadside. Only Jobst braved the weather with a short-sleeve jersey. Tom wore his freaky green leg warmers, while Ted and Jim wore warm-up jackets. Predictably, Jobst jammed into Strawberry. "I really like to ride hard on this stretch," he said. We rested on the grass in front of Strawberry Store, and ate fruit or drank pop. After 15 minutes, we were back on the road heading up a steep grade. We saw many monster-size pine cones littering the roadside



while taking in the views of the Sierra pine forests.

At the crest of the hill, Jobst stopped on the left side of the road to wait for Jim and to observe the canyon of the Stanislaus River. “Look over there on the other side of the river. You can see Spring Gap Road. That used to be a railroad cut, but now it’s a dirt road. One year, Tom decided to take a short cut from Hwy 88, on Devil’s Gate Road. The rest of the riders went around on the pavement and, even though it was twice as far, they still beat him [not sure what route he refers to].” Jobst concluded that this was one road he would just as soon not ride on. “It’s bumpy like Last Chance Road, only twice as long.”

We stopped at Donnell’s Overlook, a vista point that takes in Donnell Reservoir on the Stanislaus River. We rode our bikes on the narrow, twisting paved trail to the overlook, protected by a high railing. We gazed at the reservoir far below. Ted, wanting the best photo, edged onto a rock near the cliff while we smiled and directed him to keep moving closer to the edge. “Just one more step,” we yelled.

We continued to Dardanelle, 5,800 feet. Dardanelle has a general store where we bought food before the climb over Sonora Pass. We sat in the lounge chairs outside and ate. Jobst finished eating and headed up the road to a fork of the Stanislaus River, where last year he saw a dipper. We joined him at the bridge over the roaring creek. Jobst had already spotted a dipper perched on a ledge near the water, gathering twigs for a nest under the bridge. The dipper darted from its perch and submerged to look for food, emerging several seconds later. After picking up a twig, the dipper carefully doused it in the creek by shaking it in its beak. We left the bird to its nest building and headed uphill to Kennedy Meadows. We noticed the altitude. Those playful surges were not so fun anymore, nor were they as frequent.

We arrived at Kennedy Meadows after some roller-coaster hills while following the creek. We noticed a large yellow sign that read, “Trailers and Trucks Use Alternate ROUTE: Steep Grade.” At this point, the road narrowed and got steep as it cut into the side of a granite outcropping. A half mile up the road, we saw what Jobst calls The Window, a notch blasted into the mountain to make way for the road. Jobst said that once past the Window, the road became less steep, but it was still 14 percent, just not 20 percent at The Window. Tom kept telling Jobst that he was making too much of Sonora Pass. “It’s not that tough, Jobst.” To prove his point, Tom blasted to the front, followed by Ted, Jobst, me, Jim, and Parker. A few miles later, Tom and Jobst stopped to wait for the rest of us. As I arrived, Jobst said, “Better not drink that water Ray, it’s too cold.”

The second and final steep grade on Sonora Pass came a mile up the road, beginning at 8,000 feet. We passed a grove of willows near the road. To our left were granite cliffs and to our right a vertical drop into Deadman Creek. Last year, at least 10 feet of snow covered the ground, but now all we saw was exposed granite and the rushing creek. The long, steep straightaway ended with a left bend and a yellow sign with an arrow. From there, the road maintained a steep grade until the 9,000-foot sign. It was all I could do to turn the cranks, gasping for breath in the thin air. Beyond that sign, the grade eased significantly, allowing us to shift into easier gears and enjoy the tailwind. Jobst reached the summit first, followed closely by Tom, then Ted, Parker, me, and Jim. A howling tailwind greeted us. We laid on our backs off the side of the road and sunned ourselves. While we rested and ate, a car drove up and stopped by the summit sign. A man and his wife

and child got out of the car. He took photos of his wife and child standing next to the car. They would have evidence of



their difficult drive over Sonora Pass.

We began descending the east slope of Sonora Pass, which plunges into a broad, glaciated valley. Much like the backside of Mt. Hamilton, the road requires concentration and braking skill around some of the more difficult hairpin curves. On the first roller-coaster hill, we braked going up the hill because there's a sharp left hairpin curve just past the crest.

We stopped at Leavitt Meadows to warm up; it was still quite cold, even though the day was getting on. Inside the general store, a fire warmed the owners and visitors. Jobst quickly replaced a broken rear spoke. Fortunately, the store owner had a wrench to remove the freewheel. Jim recalled last year's ride when the Marines based at the nearby Mountain Warfare Training Camp crammed cases of beer into their backpacks for the long walk back to base. Across the road, they practiced climbing and rappelling.

We headed off, descending more before reaching a broad plain where the West Walker River flowed. We passed the Marine Corps base, nothing more than turquoise-colored barracks in the middle of nowhere.

During the ride through Pickel Meadows, we passed by marshes filled with cattails. We checked out the yellow-headed blackbirds that live here. At the stop sign just beyond the marsh, we turned right heading south on Hwy 395. The well traveled two-lane road links towns along the eastern Sierra Nevada. Fortunately, we still had a strong tailwind along this relatively flat stretch of road. We headed steadily uphill on a gentle grade to the Devils Gate Summit at 7,519 feet. The descent was just as gradual, but combined with the strong tailwind, our speed matched a Tour de France race pace. Jobst expressed delight in the fair winds, taking his hands off the bars and flapping his arms like some bizarre mechanical bird trying to fly. As the pace quickened, our group began to disintegrate, Jobst, Ted and Tom off the front, with me, Parker and Jim chasing. We sped along at 30 mph, slicing through wide open and desolate prairie, human caricatures of locomotives, legs churning, lungs puffing, dripping sweat. A sprint into Bridgeport was contested by Jobst, Tom, and Ted. We rolled into town like so many tumbleweeds, stopping at the Dairy Queen to fuel up on carbohydrates. The wind howled, causing multi-colored flags overhead to flap and make sharp snapping sounds. A young boy lapped his ice cream, Ted spilled his soda all over the pavement, while I ate a toasted cheese sandwich and Jobst downed a large shake.



**"We rolled into town like so many
tumbleweeds, stopping at the Dairy Queen
to fuel up on carbohydrates."**



Jobst pointed to a California gull that sat peering down at us from its vantage point on a light pole. Jobst also spotted some Arctic terns flying overhead, but they were missed by the other riders.

Shortly, we headed off again for the long, steady climb up Conway Summit. To the right, we watched Virginia Creek and checked out beaver dams. Jobst, Tom, and Ted went off the front immediately, while I tried to bridge the gap. Parker lagged behind. Midway in the climb Jim surged up to me and I said, "All right Jim, this isn't fair. You're enjoying a second wind while all I've got is a tailwind." We rode together briefly, but I grew stronger on a flat stretch and pulled away. At the summit, Jobst chased Tom, while Ted lagged. We greeted the magnificent blue waters of Mono Lake in the distance, Hwy 395 disappearing in the distance. The lake level has fallen, as Southern California drains off inflow, leaving behind giant white bumps, called tuffa, that look like termite mounds. Environmentalists warn that the lake is a valuable habitat for migrating birds. Most of the California gulls nest here [that has changed drastically, and now they overpopulate the Bay Area].

Tom sped down the wide open highway, passing a trailer. "I must have been doing 60," he said. A lone cyclist rode up the hill, battling headwinds with fully loaded panniers. In the distance, we saw Lee Vining, our destination, at

the top of a hill.

Lee Vining looks like most towns on Hwy 395, a few gas stations, souvenir shops, restaurants and motels. We found lodging at Murphys Motel, with rooms so small that our bikes barely fit. We showered and walked casually over to Nicelys Restaurant, grabbing a corner booth. Jobst began commenting on people sitting around us, as he is prone to do. Whether or not it was true didn't matter. It was fun listening to his armchair psychoanalysis. When it came time to order, Jobst went for two servings of the pork special. We traded stories about past rides and reviewed the day's events between beers.

Day 2: Tioga Pass

We got up at 6:30 a.m. after a solid night's sleep, and bought breakfast at Nicelys. Jobst had two helpings of pancakes, and I had one. The others ordered bacon and eggs.

After packing our meager belongings, we headed out, and soon enough we saw our destination — Tioga Pass, nearly 10,000 feet. While the grade isn't steep, it's unrelenting. A few early morning drivers passed us on their way to Yosemite National Park. Jobst pointed out the old road.

I felt like I was having some kind of low-sugar bonk. My pace slowed to a crawl. Near the summit, a state highway grader came along behind me, scooping up rock fall. I half-hoped it would scoop me up too. After what seemed like an eternity, the road finally eased up, and we passed Ellery Lake and then Tioga Lake. Between the two lakes, we went by Tioga Pass Resort, but did not stop.

As we passed the park entrance, the guy in the booth [Felix] told us we could pay upon exiting, cost \$10. Under crystal clear skies, we began a gradual descent through alpine marshland and smooth granite outcroppings. It would have been nice, except it was still freezing. Our hands froze on the metal brake levers. I drafted several vehicles to catch up with the group at Tuolumne Meadows store. We went into the tent store for a bite to eat. We shivered in the cold, downing hot chocolate in an attempt to warm ourselves. Tom and I purchased gloves, while Jobst used his plastic bags. We also put plastic bags over our feet. Hikers and backpackers offered encouraging words as we waited outside, temperature 22 degrees. "You're going to freeze your butts off."

My condition didn't improve as we rolled up and down Hwy 120. I was hypoglycemic, and fell behind the others, fending for myself. While you'd think the ride would start descending, much of the upper park is long rolling hills. Fortunately, the air warmed with each mile as we slowly descended. At Yosemite Creek, we stopped to take a break. I had a chance to recover and started feeling better.

The character of the terrain began to change after Yosemite Creek. Now the downhill were more frequent and the uphill shorter. The air got thick as the temperature became comfortable. By the time we reached Old Big Oak Flat Road, I was feeling back to normal. We headed down the one-way road to the Big Tree for the ceremonial photo session. Its trunk had to be 20 feet around. As we took photos, tourists looked on in amazement at the big tree. One fellow, a heavyset man who drove a large camper, called his friends over to have a look at the tree. "Now isn't that something. That's a big Son of a Bitch isn't it? I bet that tree has one hell of a big root system." It was as though this man were sizing up the tree for the kill. Given a hatchet, he would probably immediately set about chopping down the tree to see how soon he could bring it to its knees.

We descended into the canyon, and quickly came up behind a green van from Illinois. Jim halted when the van edged him off the road on a sharp corner. Ted maneuvered around on the inside curve, barely clearing the vehicle. The rest of us got past the van, but not without some trepidation. At the base of the hill, Jobst took water and began talking with some bird watchers.

We left Jobst behind, and it would be several miles before he caught up. Before exiting the park, we had a steep climb for a half mile. At 5,000 feet, it was already quite warm. We rode through heavy traffic as campers made their way home to the Bay Area. On a long descent, we drafted a camper towing a boat, staying within a few feet of the truck as it barreled down the road.

The ensuing miles to Groveland seemed endless and energy-sapping. The road went up and down for what seemed like forever. We raced toward Groveland, intent on getting there for a meal.

Jobst headed for the general store next to the Dairy Queen. Ted and Tom went to a general store down the hill from the Dairy Queen. During the next five minutes, Jobst left the store and couldn't find Tom or Ted. He looked in the Dairy Queen and didn't see them. At this point he assumed that they had headed down Hwy 120 without him. Jobst

started chasing. Little did he realize, they were still in the store down the hill. Parker, Jim, and I rolled into Groveland a few minutes later. Nowhere was Jobst to be found. Everyone expressed puzzlement. "This isn't like him," Tom kept insisting. "He always stops at this Dairy Queen for lunch." Believing that he might have crashed, Tom headed back up the road to look. Tom checked the other general store, and even asked the proprietor if he had seen a bike rider. The owner said he saw no riders. We ate lunch under the cool shade of some pine trees and wondered about Jobst. After about 45 minutes, we finally decided that Jobst had missed us and rode ahead.

After a mile, we stopped at Deer Flat Road. Tom suggested taking a right here and going back to Sonora via Wards Ferry Road. He said it would cut off 10 miles from the traditional route down Priest Grade. However, there was a long climb out of the Tuolumne River. We chose Wards Ferry Road, and descended the patchwork road down, down, down. Although it was hot and dry, we enjoyed the countryside and lack of traffic. We passed a large open-bed truck going about 10 mph. A woman drove the vehicle down to the river to pick up rafts and rafters. At the bottom of the canyon, I got a front flat and had a chance to take in the river and all the skinny dippers. So began the long climb out of the river canyon in 90-degree heat. The grade was steep, but not too bad to prevent a comfortable pace. On the way up the canyon, around each corner we saw more of the canyon of the Tuolumne River.

We stayed left on Old Wards Ferry Road back into Sonora, where we found Jobst waiting.

A Road too Private



JULY 5, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Parker McComas, Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey, Jim Westby, Kelly, Strange John

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, south on Skyline Boulevard to Page Mill Road; down Old Page Mill Road to Big Dipper Ranch; return uphill to Alpine Road, Alpine Road, Pescadero Road to Pescadero, Stage Road to San Gregorio, up Hwy 84

WEATHER: Humid and warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat

It isn't often that Jobst and his merry band are turned back on their adventure ride. Jobst usually manages to talk his way past distraught landowners. This ride was the exception, in more ways than one.

It all started at Jobst's house one sultry summer morning. He sat at his dining room table, playing Space Invaders with a newly acquired Radio Shack TRS 80 computer. His son, Olaf, would master the intricacies of machine-level programming on that TRS 80.



After being turned back by the Big Dip, we hatch a plan of escape.

In the next 10 minutes, nine riders rolled up to Jobst's house, including his mercurial nephew, Marc. The talented racer occasionally joined Jobst on a ride.

Having recently read *Sawmills in the Redwoods* by Frank Stanger, I was convinced that Page Mill Road went

all the way through to Portola State Park [it does]; Tom Ritchey thought so too, so Jobst was willing to give it a try.

We set off under partly cloudy skies and muggy air, remnants of Hurricane Beatriz in the Pacific.

Along the way, Jobst complained about his Fourth of July meal. He said it was slowing him down, but nobody complained about the pace. Parker and Jobst had an eating contest, and Jobst won. That evening, they celebrated the 4th by dropping an explosive “bigger than an M80” down the “No Parking” pole in front of Jobst’s house.

The ride up Old La Honda Road went peacefully enough, until Marc went off the front and everyone chased, including Strange John. We screamed mockingly, “Go John!” John was strong all right, but he lacked guile, a prerequisite for bike racing.

We were dripping like leaky faucets by the time we reached the top of one-mile hill on Skyline. Jobst stopped and rummaged around in a blackberry thicket. He found a spring and took a deep drink of the delicious cold water coming from a pipe sticking out of the hill; we joined in and filled our bottles before continuing. At the Page Mill Road junction, we headed southwest into Skyline Ranch [now a Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District ranger station]. After a half-mile on an old paved road, we made a crucial turn onto a dirt road – Old Page Mill Road. At last, we would find out where this mysterious road went, or so we thought.

Bouncing along the rough road, we descended steeply over sand, rocks, and brush. We were headed down a ridge, with Lambert Creek and gorge on the left. At one point, we passed a dirt road that went up to a house. Soon, we were skirting the side of a ridge, with a grand view of the redwood-covered hills to the south. A few bulls munched grass on the hillside.

After a couple miles, we came to a large wood gate plastered with “No Trespassing” signs, “Violators Will Be Prosecuted,” etc. They must have known we were coming. We climbed the fence and continued, like latter-day Lewis and Clarks. Another gate and more “no trespassing” signs.

Suddenly, we came upon a scene that jolted our senses — a house deep in the redwoods, but not just any house [it was the Big Dipper Ranch]. It had a swimming pool and was lavishly landscaped. We rode past the house in the distance, below us and to our left, and a chicken coop on our right. We rode through another gate — the final gate for the Jobst Riders.

Coming up the dirt road was the Big Dipper [Cummings?] himself, putt-putting along on his tractor. We pulled our bikes over to the side, as though to let him pass, like we were just out for a Sunday ride minding our own business. We wondered what would happen next. A growling dog sat behind the rancher. The rancher stopped and asked brusquely, “Where do you think you’re going?”

“We’re lost. We’re trying to get to Portola State Park,” several riders replied innocently. “Well, this road doesn’t go through,” the farmer replied, his eyes bearing down on us. “You can just turn around and go back the way you came.”

The riders asked if there was a way out ahead, not wanting to back-track.

“No,” he replied. “The only way out is to go back the way you came. That’s how you got here in the first place, isn’t it?”

Jobst said nothing. I think he decided it was useless.



Riders climb uphill cross-country style to find Alpine Road.

Send in the cows!

Realizing there was no use debating, we turned around. Tom tried to find a way up the hill behind the chicken coop, but that plan laid an egg. We'd have to go all the way back to Page Mill, but Jobst and Tom had different plans.

After a mile or so backtracking, Tom attacked up a field, with a small pond visible below. His plan was to ride straight up the hill over to Alpine Road. We dismounted and started our hike in the heat and humidity, flies buzzing our heads. We made our way successfully by another house without being accosted, and then stopped to refresh ourselves at a cattle watering hole with an old iron bath tub. Tom said that those tubs sell for hundreds of dollars. Several riders dipped their caps in the slimy trough, while Jobst drank from a nearby spring.

Passing the house, a resident came out to watch us ride by. She must have been wondering, "Where did they come from?" Back on Alpine Road, we sped down the hill and took a final look at the Big Dipper Ranch far below. Tom vowed that he would return and find a new way to Portola State Park. [There was a logging road in the late 1880s that went all the way to a sawmill in today's Portola Park. MROSD maps show a potential route into the park, but Big Dipper Ranch is still a private enclave. MROSD bought Big Dipper Ranch in 2002, although it looks like the ranch itself is still private, and the land is used for raising cattle. It's off-limits.]

Canine Catastrophe



NOVEMBER 29, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Sterling McBride, Dave McLaughlin, Paul Mittelstadt, Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey, Bill Robertson, Tom Sullivan, Jim Westby, John

ROUTE: Up Bear Gulch Road, down Swett Road, Star Hill Road to Native Sons Cutoff, Tunitas Creek Road to Hwy 1, Stage Roads to Pescadero, Pescadero Road, up Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cold, then cool, mild on the coast. Clear to partly cloudy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Sterling – flat

It has been said that a dog is man's best friend. That may apply to bird hunters, but not to cyclists, especially when riders are on their bikes flying downhill. Dogs and bikes have a nasty habit of colliding, like a magnet to steel. Jobst has had more than his share of encounters.

The riders showed up at Jobst's doorstep, well-dressed for the cold weather. Sterling and Mac wore their new baby-blue foot warmers, inspired no doubt by the blue-footed booby commonly found on our Pacific shores. Paradoxically, they dressed in shorts to face the numbing cold. I dressed more conservatively with a wool long-sleeve jersey and plastic bags for foot warmers. Everyone else suffered in regular cotton socks.

We took Sand Hill Road, heading west on the newly paved and striped bike route. Jobst held a steady, yet conservative pace. He had already done some long rides over the Thanksgiving holiday. It was easy to tell because his red bike had a coat of mud, a bit more than you would normally see.

On Highway 84 outside Woodside, Jobst and Bill became involved in a discussion (one often heard from Jobst) about nuclear weapons, overpopulation and the movies *Alien* and *Wolfen*. Jobst noted that the reason homes cost \$100,000 on average around the country is because we are feeling the effects of a burgeoning population. When people



Ready to ride on Nov. 29, 1981. Paul Mittelstadt, John Pinaglia, Rick Humphreys, Sterling McBride, Dave McLaughlin, Jobst Brandt, Tom Sullivan.

talk of head counts, they usually look to Bombay or Hong Kong. Overpopulation in the U.S., with its miles of empty prairie and high plains? No way.

The real riding began on Bear Gulch Road, a steep paved grade that never lets up all the way to Skyline Boulevard. Bear Gulch Road is also a private road, so private in fact that a big electronic gate keeps out the curious.

The road has a long and murky history involving wheeling and dealing, payoffs and greedy landowners who want their very own road. They agreed to pay to have it paved, if San Mateo County would make it private and maintain it. The county relented, but retained half-ownership. None of this ever stopped Jobst from riding on Bear Gulch Road, however. He grew up here and he continued doing what he had been doing since his youth, exploring the Santa Cruz Mountains by bike. Private property be damned.

We all followed along willingly, letting him deal with irate landowners when the time came. This Sunday was one of those times.

A mile past the gate, we were stopped by a landowner driving an orange van. Maybe because Jobst is the tallest of the bunch, or because he looks like a natural born leader, he got tagged for a discussion about trespassing on the nicely paved road. The conversation went something like this:

“This is a private road, you know, so why don’t you turn back?”

“I know that,” Jobst said. “But look, we’re not trying to cause any trouble. We just want to ride our bikes through here.”

“But if somebody gets hurt, there could be trouble,” said the landowner. “We have to insure the road.”

“Well, the county technically owns half of this road. If it wasn’t for Mortimer J. Skinflint pushing the county supervisors so hard, this road would still be public.”

“That’s not true. This is a dangerous, narrow road. Some riders come flying down here and are a real hazard.” [and we thought we were the only ones using the road]

“We’re not riding down and we never do,” Jobst claimed [not true]. “We just ride uphill. Besides, Old La Honda Road is narrow and dangerous, and school buses drive it all the time. It’s a public road.”

“I don’t think you have all your facts straight about what this area is like,” the landowner argued. “What’s your name?”

“Brandt, Jobst, J-O-B-S-T.”

“Where do you live? What’s your address?”

“In Palo Alto. I’m in the phone book.” [they were still used back then]

“Well, the insurance is the real problem. We have to pay for it and we don’t want anyone hurt on this road and suing us.”

Jobst continued. "But I've been using this road even before it was paved. I know all about it. I bet I've used this road a lot longer than you."

The landowner shot back, "I've lived here for 20 years."

Jobst countered, "I've lived here longer than that." [40 years]

The landowner never got upset during the conversation, but it wasn't clear what he had in mind as he drove off.

We continued our ride, passing the landowner on the way, as he worked on his house next to the road.

Jim, Tom S., and I fell off the back on the hard climb, no doubt a bit wasted from the previous evening of wine tasting.

After heading north on Skyline, we turned left onto the steep, pot-holed Swett Road and continued down to Star Hill Road, which turned to dirt soon enough. But it was on a wide, gently sloping paved section where Jobst met his fate. A mongrel dog, weighing at least 40 pounds, dashed toward us, Jobst seemingly protected in the middle of the pack.

This dog didn't pull up, as dogs usually do. He barreled into us, despite an angry chorus of commands from the riders. We all scattered and somehow Jobst tangled with the dog. His bike fell out from under him, and he rolled once, using his right hand to break the fall. He lay on the pavement for several seconds before moving. Then he sprung up and said, "I'm all right." He only complained of a sore wrist and the shock of falling.

But Jobst's bike wasn't so lucky. I noticed that the paint had buckled in the downtube and top tube where it meets the head tube. Tom Ritchey came over to inspect his handiwork, and determined that it was only warped, not broken, still safe to ride.

Jobst said that this was his second dog collision. He had his other one 22 years ago, with the same result — a broken frame. Meanwhile, a motorist wearing his Sunday best drove up and honked at us to get off the road.

We continued the ride on Star Hill Road, peeling off onto the bumpy, leaf-covered Native Son's Cutoff, a route only known to Jobst and friends. It turned out to be a muddy spoor after recent rains, so we slipped and slid down the road as our hands froze on the brake levers in the dark, dank forest.

Giant gray and brown mushrooms covered the trail, which brought howls of delight from Sterling and Mac. "Shrooms!" Sterling then flatted, right where Tom R. had flatted a week ago, ruining an expensive silk sewup. That had proven enough for Tom, who was riding on new clinchers. [It was about this time that everyone switched to clinchers]

Back on Tunitas Creek Road we headed downhill, while Jobst turned back home, feeling the effects of the fall. We headed to Pescadero on Stage Roads, stopping at the local grocery store for a bite to eat and to see Miss Pescadero 1981. We headed home over Haskins Hill and Alpine Road bathed in the late- afternoon sun on a November day.

Slipping in a Slide Zone



DECEMBER 6, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt, Bob Childs, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Randy, Strange John Pinaglia, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine, up and down Haskins Hill, Stage Road to Hwy 84, up 84 and down 84

WEATHER: Cold valley fog, then clear and warm on the coast.

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Rick - broken rear derailleur; Ray - broken Avocet seat post bolts

The title of this week's summary of the Sunday ride, "Slipping in a Slide Zone," comes from a song by the Moody Blues, which really has nothing to do with what happened, except that there was a good deal of slipping going on. A thick layer of valley fog mixed with oil on the roads, causing some crashes, involving me (who had only recently been scraped off the windshield of a Mercedes Benz after a head-on collision) and of all people, Jobst, who really got stung this time, but more on that later.

We headed out Alpine Road under cloudy skies and in cool temperatures; our wool jerseys glistened with con-

densation. Because rain had not fallen in the valley or in the Santa Cruz Mountains for over a week, Jobst figured that dirt Alpine would be rideable. But that became a subject of debate once past the green gate, because the dirt road was soft and muddy. Mud obstinately clung to our tires, jamming brakes and making for slow going. On one corner early on, every rider except Jobst was forced to dismount and walk before reaching more firm ground. I said, "Jobst, this is really hard going." Jobst countered, "No Ray, it's soft going." We strung out, finding our own pace.

Near the top at Page Mill Road, Rick caught a stick in his Sun Tour derailleur and ground to a halt. He cursed his fate, and it took several minutes before he was able to get underway again, with a poor-working derailleur no less. Jim and I rode ahead, knowing full well that the others would outdistance us.

At Page Mill Road, Jobst turned and headed down Stevens Canyon, followed by Rick and Randy. Jim, Bob, Marc, I, and Strange John went the opposite direction, intent on riding to the coast. There was a discussion at Skyline as to riding north on Skyline Boulevard or heading to Pescadero, but Skyline was ruled out because of heavy traffic caused by people buying Christmas trees from the numerous tree farms in the hills. The ride went without incident for our Pescadero-bound quintet. We paid our respects to Miss Pescadero, as beautiful as ever.



"Descending Hwy 84 less than a mile from Skyline, I took a right-hand curve too fast for conditions, sliding into the oncoming traffic lane, banging my elbow and cutting my left hand."



She works in the new grocery store, down from the old one that is a ramshackle wreck these days. An old lady runs it with two mongrel dogs, which are always lurking at the entryway, looking for handouts. Outside, we sunned ourselves while sitting on the sidewalk and taking in life in sleepy Pescadero. To our left, we could see the white steeple of the town church, and in the distance, quite appropriately, the cemetery on the side of a hill. Looking the other direction, we saw the heart of Pescadero, a few apartments, some stores and a restaurant and gas station on the corner. The residents are a mixture of the artists, well-to-do, retired, and Mexican laborers who till the fertile land along the Pacific Coast, famous for artichokes, Fava beans, and brussels sprouts. The setting is idyllic, a mile from the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Cruz Mountains at its doorstep, but perhaps a bit too slow for those used to life in the city.

We decided to head up Stage Road with the intention of taking Tunitas Creek Road. The ride on Stage Road offered spectacular views of the Pacific, and although the road was wet in shady areas, traction was good because car traffic is light and there is little chance for oil slicks to develop. At Hwy 84, I decided I was beginning to tire and headed up Hwy 84 because the distance was less and the hill not as challenging as Tunitas Creek. Jim did a lot of pulling on the flat stretch of road leading up to SkyLonda, while the rest tucked in and enjoyed the farmland scenery. While housing is still sparse along 84, it is filling in, and someday they may even have a Holiday Inn at San Gregorio, if it keeps up.

Descending Hwy 84 less than a mile from Skyline, I took a right-hand curve too fast for conditions; it was wet and oily. I slid out on the road into the oncoming traffic, banging my elbow and cutting my left hand. I was panicky because my right arm had been broken just five months ago in my bike-car collision.

I checked myself and felt no serious pain. I crossed to the other side of the road, where I straightened my handlebar and tried to adjust the seat. But a bolt had broken, and the tip of the seat tilted crazily into the air. Soon,

Marc and Jim came around the curve, and they did not stop, unaware that I had crashed.

I rode down 84, where I met Jim at Portola Road. I pulled up my jersey on the right arm and saw a bleeding, swollen elbow. I thought I had broken my arm again. I rode directly to Stanford Hospital with Jim. After some X-rays, I was informed that no bones had broken. It was just a bad bruise.

Meanwhile, Jobst and his band had their own problems. Rick reportedly fell twice on the descent of Stevens Canyon. Jobst was still in bad-luck mode as well. Only a week ago, he tangled with a dog, and his wrist was still sore from the incident. While negotiating the single-track section of Stevens Canyon, Jobst put his hand out to break a fall. It went straight into a wasp nest! Rick, who was right behind Jobst, watched in horror as Jobst was swarmed. Jobst took three stings, two in the head and one in the arm before escaping the swarm.

On Monday, the bike shop buzzed with reports of cyclists who had crashed on Sunday, including Kathy Lee, who works in sales.

Post-Christmas Reveille



DECEMBER 27, 1981

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: cold and breezy, then cold and misty, cool and then cool and dry

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Rick - flat

Only the really hard-core riders appeared at Jobst's doorstep for this Yule tide celebration, as was evidenced by the dearth of participants. As it was, Jobst was preparing to leave right when I rode up, and Jim barely made it before we left. Rick was taking a photo of Jobst standing next to his recently repaired bike frame that was painted a fire-engine red, just as it had been before the accident that caused it to crack and bend. At the Shell gas station on Sand Hill Road in Sharon Heights, the riders waited a few minutes for Don McBride, Dave McLaughlin, and other shop riders, but they were about 10 minutes away from the scheduled rendezvous, and Jobst was not patient enough to wait. We headed out Sand Hill and turned off at Manzanita, where Lupita came driving up in her truck. She stopped and talked with Jim.

Meanwhile, Jobst had ridden ahead a short distance and had discovered a poisonous mushroom. He asked me if I wanted to see the mushroom, but I demurred, having had enough to do with mushrooms in recent months. We climbed Kings Mountain Road at a leisurely pace, only increasing the effort near the summit, which caused Jim to be dropped. But I held on well and seem to have recovered nicely from the collision with a Mercedes. At Skyline, Rick suggested riding to the coast, but Jobst would have none of that, and headed north on Skyline Boulevard, intent on descending Page Mill. I wanted to ride through Foothill Park on a fire trail, but the other riders thought better of that because of the previous night's rain that turned the roads into quagmires.

We rode through a thick mist caused by water evaporating from the road. Near a lookout point, Rick flatted and everyone stopped to await the repair job. I told Jobst that Mount Diablo has the second largest viewshed in the world, next to Kilimanjaro [not true]. But Jobst disputed that statement, pointing out that there is a huge rock in the Australian outback that is much larger. He also noted that from Mount Diablo you can see more of the state of California than from anywhere else [true]. The view encompasses the entire San Joaquin Valley, the Sierra and Mount Lassen in the north, not to mention the entire Bay Area.

After the repair, we headed north again.

While riding past the home of Tom Ritchey, Jobst bellowed, "The bike rides great Tom! Great job!"

There was a distant reply from someone at Tom's house. Jobst mentioned that Tom's home is modest size. It was still under construction when Jobst visited, missing kitchen cabinets. In the living room there's an old couch and a wood-burning stove to keep the two-story house warm during cold winter nights. Tom's workshop, where frames are built, is more like a garage, with a concrete floor and a toilet. He already has plans on expanding his operation, and has hired several workers.

At the top of one-mile hill, Jobst stopped for some spring water. He yelled for Rick to toss him his water bottle so he could fill it from a spigot sticking out of the side of the hill. Rick threw the bottle filled with water across Skyline and into Jobst's back. It bounced off his right kidney. Jobst cursed Rick and grimaced, holding his side. "Dammit Rick! You shouldn't have done that!" Rick apologized and asked if Jobst was okay. "You hit me right in the kidney." Jobst proceeded to fill the bottle, and offered me a sip. I noticed that the water didn't seem as cold as the last time I tried it in the summer on a hot day. "That's because it is always the same temperature," Jobst explained, and today is a cold day."

The ride down Page Mill Road went without incident. Later that same day, Jobst and I attended the national cyclocross championships in Pacifica, about a 40-mile drive from Mountain View. Some 50 competitors soon dwindled to fewer than 20, as the course took its brutal toll. It went up the side of a mountain on pavement, then descended the side of a grassy hill in a zigzag, went through a muddy creek onto some grass, up a hill onto a slab of pavement, then up another hill in which the riders had to carry their bikes through a grove of evergreens, down a steep slope again, then across a baseball field with soggy grass, crossing two foot-high barriers (which some of the riders were able to jump over without dismounting), around a baseball back fence, down a hill onto pavement again, and then up another short hill that required the rider dismount, to complete a loop.

There were eight of these 1.1 mile loops to cover in the race, and while it didn't seem like all that far to ride, the winner, hometown favorite Clark Natwick, finished in a little over an hour. He was pursued for the entire distance by another American, Myron Lind, who had trained for a year in Switzerland just for this race. He made a bold move on the last lap at the grassy area, held the lead for a short distance, but was unable to maintain it. Clark only became more determined at this point and charged ahead to take a commanding lead on the last half of the last lap. There were numerous mountain bikes entered in the race, but the winners were riding road or cyclocross bikes. The mountain bikes had a decided advantage on the downhills but they were no match riding up hills, although it would be interesting to see if the results would differ had Clark been riding a mountain bike. Attorney Joe Ryan, a favorite because of previous wins, finished in the top five, but looked tired. Another favorite and past winner, Laurence Malone, was not entered because he was off in Brazil on a journey down the Amazon River.



Clark Natwick races to victory at the 1981 Cyclocross National Championship held in Pacifica.

Dave Faust, a frequent rider on the Jobst rides, entered but performed poorly in the mud. Fred Boos, a Palo Alto Bike shop employee and racer, also entered but dropped out after a couple of laps. Rebecca Daughton, a racer, was remarkable in her performance. There were several other female participants in the race, open to all riders registered with the USCF. That was the only requirement. A crowd of about 1,000 turned out for the event, held on a cool but sunny day near the Pacific Ocean.



New Year's Resolution on Montebello Road



JANUARY 1, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, along Skyline Boulevard, down Page Mill Road to Montebello Road, to Stevens Canyon Road and home

WEATHER: Cold and clear, then breezy and clear, then partly cloudy and breezy and cool

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - chain clunk

Fair weather greeted us this Friday morning, but we enjoyed solitude in the Santa Cruz Mountains overlooking the Bay and the fresh, cool winter air. In the past week, several inches of rain fell on the peninsula, filling the mountain streams and turning the countryside into a verdant pasture. The sweeping views of the mountains and the Pacific Ocean offered a vista from Skyline Boulevard that is unmatched anywhere in the world.

We headed out through Palo Alto and onto Willow Road. Cars were scarce; however, the broken glass bottles were not. They littered the roadside. On Sand Hill Road, Jobst said of the sinkhole that keeps growing, “There is the sinkhole. Looks like they need to put some more pavement into it.”

At the Interstate 280 intersection, Jobst spotted a White-tailed kite, which was hovering in the distance, its white body plainly visible against the blue sky. To our right was a car with a tow truck. Apparently, the driver had been drunk, and slid off the road into the muddy shoulder. At the turnoff to Hwy 84 on Portola Road, Jobst pointed into the bushes to where a caboose was resting. The property owner probably had it hauled to that spot. Because it was painted green and obscured behind some bushes, it presented a hard target to locate. But Jobst found it. On the ascent of Old La Honda Road at the base of the hill, Jobst pointed out where Portola Road had once gone. Previously, it swung further up the hill. On the climb up Old La Honda, the road was not too wet, but the creeks we rode over sounded like waterfalls. We passed a concrete driveway where a new home is being built, and Jobst criticized its builder. “That guy is going to have problems. When the rain comes down the road, it’s going to go right down his driveway. He should have put in a lip.”

Farther up the road, Jobst noted the smell of a septic tank that had overrun because of the recent heavy rains. I

“The dog started to lunge for Jobst, but the owner called him off.”

couldn’t help but notice it, either. Continuing up the road a bit farther, Jobst pointed out a nicely landscaped home with a wood-pine finish. “Used to be you couldn’t see that house from the road; it was covered with bushes and trees. But some new owners moved in, and now look what they’ve done.” Jobst seemed to have an opinion about every landmark along the way and he also had answers for my many questions. “What was the road like 20 years ago, Jobst?” “Well, it wasn’t so wide then. When you re-surface a road, it always gets a little bit wider. You have to widen the drainage and so on.”

“Back then did you notice the trees being a lot smaller?” “That’s not something you think about over the years. These trees don’t grow all that fast, anyway. Sometimes you will make note of something, and over the years keep track of it, but not trees.” As we rode through the lower reaches Jobst noted, “I wonder why the redwoods aren’t growing down here? This used to be redwood land.”

Jobst began having trouble with chain clunk on the steeper portions of road. This puzzled him, but he had plenty of explanations. “These Shimano cogs are too soft. Bill Robertson had to treat them so he could re-shape them for my freewheel. I’m determined to find out what is causing this.” Later on, “Every time the chain skips my foot comes out of the toe clip.” Jobst wore his same strange shoes, which had recently been refurbished. But one cleat had been put on backwards.

On the final hill, Jobst said that he might not make it because of his clunking chain. Now he theorized that the clunk was caused by a new chain link he had put on his old chain. As I passed Jobst, who was struggling, I said, “Now don’t hit me.”

We rode south on Skyline Boulevard, the sunlight shining on the wet pavement, almost blinding us. Jobst pointed to a nearby hillside to the west, where cattle grazed. “Just up there near the top of the hill, I spotted a bobcat in the grass last week. It crouched down, but I could still see it.” Then Jobst pointed to the homes in the distance and named some of the owners. He could see two cars parked in the driveway of one home about a mile away, although I could hardly make out the house.

We passed a holding pond, where last week Jobst had spotted a cormorant, but this Friday there was nothing to be seen. Then we passed a van, and a dog and its owner. The dog started to make a lunge for Jobst, but the owner called him off. A short distance later, we came to the location where a vineyard is being built on the eastern slope, right next to Rapley Road. Jobst pointed to the road and said that it is steep. Then we passed the place where a stream comes out of the base of a tree, which Jobst always likes to point out. After climbing one-mile hill, we stopped for some water at the spring, and enjoyed a good drink from a beer can that lay on the roadside. I noted that the spring is located on a

topographic map.

Refreshed, we headed to Page Mill Road. At the intersection, Jobst showed me where Skyline had once been, and Page Mill Road. The old roadcut was still visible. We turned onto Montebello Road at the gate. The land has been shifting from private to open space. Now people can take advantage of a tire swing hanging over a pond up on a hill. The gate was open on this occasion, and the gravel that once lined the road had been removed, making the climb up possible, although it's still long and steep. But the surface, wet and slippery in places, was rideable. The ancient pavement is cracked and crumbled, more dirt than pavement these days. Jobst pointed to where a bobcat ran across his path while he rode his bicycle.

Jobst made light of the open space sign that said, "Wildlands." "Yes," I added, "this is a wilderness area." Upon reaching a short downhill, Jobst said that this spot is where snow accumulates some winters because the sun never shines on it. Soon, we reached the gate at the end of the paved Montebello Road, which is never locked, and got through without any problem. On the top of the ridge at the communication relay towers, Jobst left the dirt road and headed off into some very thick grass to a bay overlook. We took photos.

Jobst framed Mount Diablo in the background. By this time, the clouds had begun to roll in and the temperature was dropping. We mounted up and headed off down the road for a long descent into Stevens Canyon. We passed a house on the hillside, which looked like something out of an Italian movie. It was a villa where the owners of a vineyard might live. Jobst pointed out that this house is mysterious. "In all the years I've ridden past here, I've never seen anybody living there. But somebody maintains the house." Indeed, it appeared as though somebody was living in it.



At a large steel gate, Jobst cursed the telephone company for putting up barbed wire on the edge of the gate. He set about unwinding the barbed wire so that runners would not have to climb the gate, but could walk through the narrow gap between the gate and hillside.

We headed down the pavement, passing Ridge Winery. The grape vines stood in stark relief on the barren landscape, but by next spring their leaves would be out and another year's harvest would begin to age. Jobst rode conservatively. It was not as I had imagined, because the turns aren't sharp. At one point, we took a corner almost at a crawl because of how wet it was. A stream had overrun its banks here. We continued down, as our hands became increasingly cold in the winter air. Jobst pointed to an ancient winery building [Picchetti] of red brick that had been abandoned, and laughed at the idea some people had of bringing it back into commission.

Once onto Stevens Canyon Road, Jobst picked up the pace. He stopped at the crest of the hill and headed into an apartment complex next to the road [torn down and replaced with condos] to visit an old racing companion, Rick Lyman. Lyman toured the Alps with Jobst in 1978. Rick was home with his two cats. He had just returned from Illinois, where he visited his family. Rick showed Jobst a magazine, *Science* 82, that told of a motorcycle steered by the rear wheel. He showed Jobst an IBM personal computer, which Jobst did not care for because it was "slow" and had a green screen.

Rick introduced his cats, which were resting in his study, and said that while away for a week he had left them alone locked in the apartment. They were given a bag of cat food to eat, they drank water from the toilet, and had control of the house. Rick's Ritchey bike rested against a wall in the dining room, and he said that he had not been doing much riding. Jobst encouraged him to do so, and suggested he attend the San Bruno Hill Climb later that day. Rick said he had made other plans and that he needed to get some sleep. He had just returned from the trip. Jobst said goodbye

to Rick. Jobst said that Rick is a whiz at programming computers, has a master's in business administration and is a talented athlete.

Mt. Umunhum in the Snow



JANUARY 3, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Rick Humphreys, Paul Mittelstadt, John Porcella

ROUTE: From Palo Alto through Santa Clara Valley, Novitiate property, Alma Bridge Road, up Soda Springs Road, through Almaden Air Force base, down Mt. Umunhum, Hicks Road, Saratoga-Los Gatos Road (Hwy 9), home. Jobst and Rick – Loma Prieta Road, Summit Road, home

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray – flat

This winter in Northern California is one of the coldest in recent memory. Fall came early, and so did the rain. Snow has fallen in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The ski resorts are enjoying a banner year. We met at Jobst's house, dressed in heavy woolens. It wasn't enough. You could see your breath, and in Northern California that means COLD (high 30s). The humidity at 79 percent didn't help matters. Despite the cold, Jobst didn't wear a hat, as is his custom. John had only a junk pair of gloves. I wore three wool jerseys, wool mittens, three layers of socks, and plastic bags over my feet. Still, my feet froze.

Novitiate visit

We got through the Valley without incident. However, Jobst, who attended Bellarmine High School, wanted to get closer to God, so we made our way into the Novitiate over a bridge that had once been used to hold a drainage pipe. We passed a high gate with a gap and got through that.

A derelict sat on a bench overlooking Hwy 17, apparently also there to meet God. At another gate, we dis-



Snow falls on Mt. Umunhum once every few years. Rick Humphreys, Ray Hosler and John Porcella head toward the air force base at the summit. Jobst Brandt photo

mounted and walked through a narrow gap that put us onto a hiking trail. After a short distance, we passed an old man (Lucifer?) who started yelling nonsensical stuff at us as we passed. With this weirdness behind us, we descended the steep Jones Trail to Alma Bridge Road.

The ride continued around Lexington Reservoir on dry roads, but after turning left on the Soda Springs Road, that changed. The road is long and winding, with a grade of about eight percent, and some steeper sections. The vegetation is mostly scrub brush and manzanita.

We got colder as we climbed, and the road got wet-

ter. About two-thirds of the way up, we saw patches of snow; pretty soon we were riding through a blanket of crunchy

white stuff with ice beneath. We stopped so Jobst could drink from an icy stream. Paul, not feeling well, headed back down the hill.

A motorist was trying to jump-start his snow-covered car. A handful of residents live off the road, but they were no doubt staying inside.

At a gate where the pavement ended, we put our bikes over and continued right on a dirt road, which wasn't so steep. We broke out into the open and saw Almaden Air Force base, a collection of low buildings that had been empty for years, but not officially abandoned until 1980. [Fortunately, we did not see Loren McQueen, whose family owns the land on which nearby communication towers stand. The pistol-packing owner died in 2007, but his children still maintain the property. They're not amenable to allowing public access to the summit either. MROSD used eminent domain to force the issue. Mt. Umunhum Road opened in September 2017.]

At this point, we were riding through several inches of snow. We inched along, trying to avoid falling. Finally, we reached the paved road through the base.

Military police

Our luck was about to run out. As we rolled uphill to a final gate and Mt. Umunhum Road, a groundskeeper driving a military truck (probably a Federal agent) yelled at us. "You're trespassing on government property. Why don't you get off this land right now!" [Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) did not buy the land until 1986.]

"All right, you don't have to get upset about it!" Jobst retorted.

"You're trespassing, and it's my job to tell you to leave," the guard repeated.

"OK, OK," Jobst said. "You're just doing your job. I don't yell at people at my job."

After another exchange of vitriol, we got through the gate. But our problems weren't over. Several hundred yards farther [more like a mile], John and I came to the descent of Mt. Umunhum Road, while Jobst and Rick went right on Loma Prieta Road.

**“You’re trespassing and it’s my job
to tell you to leave.”**

About a dozen people, who had driven up Mt. Umunhum Road [it was still open, but closed later], started pelting John and me with snowballs. We zoomed by and began the descent. At this point, our hands and toes were frozen. It was an unpleasant descent — to say the least — on the steep, winding road.

If this wasn't enough, I flatted, and had to fix my tire with frozen fingers. Fortunately, I had switched to clinchers from sewups in January 1981. John sped down the mountain, but came back five minutes later after realizing I might have crashed.

We continued down Hicks Road into Los Gatos and stopped at the first 7-11 to buy a warm drink and thaw out. On a final note of excitement, in Sunnyvale we nearly got broadsided by a man driving a station wagon. [John and I would enjoy a few more fun rides before he joined the military to fly P3s. He went on to be a pilot with Delta airlines. Rick, a geologist, moved to the Sierra foothills.]

Mt. Umunhum Road was repaved before opening in 2017. MROSD has signed sections of Loma Prieta Road where bikes are allowed, but as of this writing, access is still prohibited. Jobst and friends enjoyed riding on that road starting in 1958.

Use extreme caution riding down Mt. Umunhum and Hicks Road.

Down Windy Hill on a Green Velvet Carpet



MARCH 6, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Parker McComas, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Page Mill Road, down Alpine Road to Towne Fire Road, down to Hwy 84, up Old La Honda Road, down Windy Hill and home

WEATHER: Cloudy and cool, then rain, then cloudy and dry

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jim - new chain clunking; Peter - flat

Everyone knew they were going to get wet on this ride; the question was at what point in the ride. This winter had been one long rainstorm, and this weekend was to be no exception. The ride got off to an ominous start when Jim's chain kept skipping, despite the fact that it was a new, reliable French-made Sedisport. Jobst inspected the chain and could find no stiff links. He determined that the chain was defective. Jim had no choice but to return home and replace it. Jim was riding his newly painted bike, chocolate brown. Jim is partially color-blind, so brown was fine by him. Marc Brandt, Jobst's nephew, rode over to Jobst's house minus a pedal on one crank arm. He expected Jobst to replace the pedal with new ball bearings, but Jobst had none. He spied a new pair of Avocet Mod I pedals, and Marc put those on, toe straps, clips and all.

The ride took us up Page Mill Road. I noted that the increasing number of new homes being built along the roadside is creating a parallel increase in the number of cars using the road. During the ascent, we did a lot more



talking than we did working. Just before a steep right hand bend, Jobst commented, "This is where we separate the men from the boys." He was referring to the fact that for the next half mile or so the incline increases to 14 percent or more, until Shotgun Bend, where the modern house is located. Peter is

just beginning to go on the Jobst Rides more frequently, having recently announced his intention of going with Jobst on the tour of Europe. The whole trip is one big hill climb, followed by a descent, followed by a climb and then another descent.

Jim went with Jobst last year. On Skyline Boulevard we decided to head down to the Pacific, despite the fact that it looked like it was raining in that direction. We flew down Alpine Road at great speed, Jobst leading the way,

closely followed by Marc and Peter. At Towne Fire Road [Alpine Ranch], where there's a white wooden gate, we stopped and opened the gate. I was far enough behind that I didn't know where everyone else was heading. When I reached the hairpin curve, I stayed on Alpine. Jobst yelled out, "Ray! Where are you going? We're over here!" My brakes squealed as I slowed, and turned around.

"No wonder you never see any birds," Jobst said emphatically. I said that my stiff neck prevented me from seeing the other riders. On the road, we took a right-hand fork and started to climb. Eventually we crested the hill, entering Pescadero Creek Park, and passed a small, quaint house with a large glass window [hikers' hut]. Peter said the home was where Dave Mulkey lives. Shortly, we descended a steep hill and rode into Sam McDonald County Park, where we passed a hiker. And then the rain started. By the time we reached pavement, we were wet. After stopping in La Honda for food, the rain stopped. We rode up Hwy 84 at a casual pace. We turned off at Old La Honda Road and enjoyed a traffic-free ride through the redwoods. Once onto Skyline, we headed south, and then turned onto Windy Hill.

From a distance, Windy Hill looks like a green velvet carpet. You can imagine yourself riding down it with all the gracefulness of a soaring eagle. The bumps look like smooth moguls on a ski run. Narrow, winding trails head down the mountain. But when you actually get onto Windy Hill, it's a different story. The green velvet is a pockmark of ruts and holes [years before Spring Ridge Trail]. It's as though you were seeing that same mountain close up through a microscope. It's like seeing a razor blade with your naked eye and then seeing it with the aid of a microscope. The smooth edge becomes a mountain of ridges and valleys. We turned onto that rough mountainside and banged down it on our thousand-dollar ten speeds. Bike control was all but impossible. The smooth trails turned out to be rutted and muddy. In places there were gullies that might swallow a bike and rider. Jobst forged the way on his big red machine. Finally, on the lower slopes, after falling twice, I made my way through a field of rocks. Then we forded a swollen creek, getting our leather shoes wet in the process. The ride ended with a smooth descent on Alpine Road.

Mount Hamilton Sees Snow



MARCH 21, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Tom Holmes, Peter Johnson, Ted Mock, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Mount Hamilton loop

WEATHER: Cool and partly cloudy, tail winds

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Peter - flat; Jobst - chain clunk

Snow. You can find it in colder climates at higher elevations. You would not think that snow could be found in Northern California at lower elevations and warmer climates. But Mount Hamilton is the exception in the San Francisco Bay Area. There is snow on the 4,000-foot mountain, and this first day in spring was no exception. Despite cool temperatures and some clouds hovering ominously over the top of the mountain range, Jobst decided on doing the Mount Hamilton ride, a 100-mile butt buster so early in the year.

As we set off, time 8:50 a.m., the Milpitas bank thermometer read 57 degrees, although it felt much colder while riding. On the ascent to the base of Mount Hamilton Road, the temperature dropped. After taking a circuitous route to Mount Hamilton Road, we started the 19-mile climb. Jobst forged ahead, followed by Peter, me, and Jim. Peter lagged far behind. He kept complaining, "I haven't ridden all week. The weather has been so miserable." As Jobst and the others rode out of sight, Jim and I were left to plan our strategy for survival. "This is definitely the worst condition I've



Jim Westby heads to the Mt. Hamilton summit on March 21, 1982.

ever been in for this ride,” I said. “I keep expecting the road to level out, because this seems so steep compared to years past.” Jim agreed. He said that he would work on keeping a conversational pace, yet not dally.



At San Antonio Junction we stop for food. “Car Man” watches over us.

and man behind the counter. “Give me some soup. Give me some chili. I’d like a Mountain Dew. Do you have some hot cider?” This store isn’t much, but it is all we have between Milpitas and Livermore. Inside, there is a counter with bar stools and a pool table. There are some other tables and chairs, and a jukebox. The food is meager, and the “homemade chili” isn’t even on par with canned chili. As the waitress scurried about serving, we downed our chili and soda pop. I glanced out the window for a sign of Jobst riding away. Last year he had left me and Mulkey still eating. But this time Jobst made no such moves. Jim and I wisely leaned our bikes against Jobst’s bike.

After eating, Jobst escorted everyone off and up the hill. The mountains had an ominous layer of clouds hanging over them, and it looked like it would rain. Jobst and Peter fell back again. We split up, but gathered in Livermore, where we stopped at a Safeway for more food. The rest of the ride would be easy compared to the early going. We had only to climb up one more ridge, past Calaveras Reservoir. But first we had to take Hwy 84, a narrow road with much traffic traveling at high speeds, along with a climb of 950 feet over Pigeon Pass. We held a straight and narrow line on the shoulder in order to avoid being hit. At least we enjoyed a strong tailwind over the rolling hills until reaching the bottom of the ridge at Calaveras Reservoir.

From there, the group broke up once again. Ted and I rode together, followed by Jobst and Peter, and Jim and Gary. On the descent to Milpitas, my right quadriceps cramped going around a right turn and I almost crashed. But, fortunately, the ride ended soon after, and we made it safely home.

(On one ride in the 1990s, Jobst snuck past a sheriff posted at Grant Ranch county park and rode to the summit, where the road was covered with ice and snow.)

Halfway up the mountain, Jobst turned back to escort Peter, who was still far behind. Jim and I rode together, until Jobst and Peter caught up. They stopped for a drink of cold mountain water. And at about 3,000 feet we saw our first snow. It was indeed strange to see snow, when below you could see palm trees swaying in the breeze, and people walking outside for their Sunday morning paper dressed in only a t-shirt. At least we dressed warmly.

Nearing the end of the climb, Jobst yelled to me, below on another switchback, “Did you see the Golden eagle?” I yelled back, “No! But I saw a woodpecker!” I stopped to take Jim’s picture, with the Lick Observatory dome in the background.

At the summit, Jobst took a group picture, as everyone downed some food. Then it was down the backside of Hamilton. During the descent, Peter crashed. But he was unhurt, despite his high speed. “You just have to learn how to tuck and roll,” he said. The ride continued, but no sooner had Peter recovered from his fall then he flatted. Fortunately, he did not crash. Ted, Jim, Tom and I, left Jobst and Peter. We knew full-well that they would catch up on the flats. Riding through the long stretch of green pastures where flowers bloom in late spring, we enjoyed a tailwind. Gary became upset that we had not slowed for Jobst: “Come on you guys, let’s turn our bikes around and head back.” But nobody was anxious to do that.

So the ride continued without Jobst. Soon, Jobst and the others caught up and he led the way into the only store on the backside of Mount Hamilton. Inside the Junction Store, we took to the bar stools and began yelling orders to the woman

Mount Hamilton Flowers in Bloom



MARCH 28, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, John Pinaglia, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Mount Hamilton loop

WEATHER: High fog, then clear and warm, headwind going home

TIRE/MECHANICAL: John - casing failure in clincher

Invariably, the second ride up and around Mount Hamilton has something different to offer, what with the better weather and progressing spring. Most notably, the flowers on the backside of Mount Hamilton are in full bloom. The yellows, blues, and lavenders dust the countryside. Hillsides are covered with the orange state flower, California poppy. And the birds that are migrating north can be seen everywhere.

On Sunday, we spotted no less than a dozen different birds, including the Western tanager, White-tailed kite,



several varieties of woodpeckers, a blue bird, magpie, several types of hawks, and so on. Jim saw a tarantula. I saw a flattened toad on the road, too. During the ride up Mt. Hamilton, Jim told about John (at Palo Alto Bicycles and not to be confused with Strange John) and his ride up Mt. Hamilton the previous day. This ride covered 120 miles, 15 more than the Jobst Ride, and was organized, complete with sag wagon and food stops. John told Jim, "It was hot, windy and the road was treacherous with gravel." He called Jim at 9:30 p.m. Saturday night, so proud of his achievement.

Jobst, John, and Tom went off the front, leaving me and Jim to go a slower pace. It was at the base of the first of two

descents that the we saw the Kite. It is a bird of prey, similar to a hawk but smaller. As the climb continued, Jobst pointed out different birds by their songs. Then a sheriff's truck brushed past the riders as it headed down the mountain. Jobst said, "That guy doesn't like bikes." In years past, during the Mt. Hamilton bicycle race, the same sheriff harassed cyclists. The riders rode on the increasingly narrow pavement, surrounded by an umbrella of oak trees just beginning to show their leaves. Near the top, I stopped to take Jim's picture. At the summit, the ride is only one third complete, something that must be kept in mind. Often, riders overextend themselves on the ride and are tired the rest of the way.

The descent of the backside went smoothly, despite the large amount of gravel on the corners. At the traditional water stop two miles down, Jobst discovered that he had a flat tire. He proceeded to patch the front flat. Shortly, a truck stopped and the driver got out with his old tin cup. He was an old-timer, you could tell, and probably knew of the watering hole for many years. When we arrived at San Antonio Valley, we saw nothing but fields of wildflowers. Jobst instructed John to walk into the field with his bike so that he could take some photos of him resting in the flowers.

At the Junction, we stopped briefly for food. There we met four or five other riders heading the opposite direction. Jobst commented, "You can tell they're not cyclists because they're wearing jock straps, and they've got funky clothing on." A group of motorcyclists inside engaged Strange John in a conversation. They made the usual comments that non-athletic types make, like "I don't see how you do it. That sure sounds hard. You guys must be crazy."

I went to a faucet to fill my water bottle. A few seconds later, the store proprietor came outside and said, "You won't like that water, it's full of sulfur. Come inside and I'll give you some good water." But I said, "Is it drinkable?" She said it was. "Then it's good enough for me." I took a sip. "This tastes okay. The minerals are good for you."

Next up, there are two long hills that test your gears and legs; they come right after the stop at the junction. On these hills, Jim and I struggled.

During rides with Jobst, you are expected to sprint to county line signs. There is one sign past the two hills. It comes at a downhill, where a creek cuts through the road. In the previous ride, water covered the road. But this time the road was dry. Jobst led out the sprint, followed closely by Tom and John. Strange John sprinted with all his strength right through a gravelly section of road. Seconds later his front tire had four bubbles. The casing had ruptured from the impact on the road gravel. Jim and I came along to find John cursing his tire. "Dammit. Why did I have to buy these Wolber tires. These tires aren't any good." John talked to himself while Jim and I looked on helplessly. Jim suggested that John use some boot casing that he had in his bag. John took the casing and, with some glue, patched the bubbles. This was after John had cursed his tire pump for not working, and the inner tube for not taking air. He would put the tire on and then take it off several more times before getting it to work. We stood on a hill, with a creek on our right, a warm sun, and it was quiet out on that country road. It was the perfect setting for fixing a tire, or getting a suntan.

I noticed a tree filled with an army of ants crawling up and down in their endless search for food. Finally, John got the tire in his bike and started riding. Then, "Dammit! I've got a flat!" Sure enough, John's front tire had gone flat. He must have pinched the tube when replacing it. A few hundred yards down the



road, everyone stopped again and John started cursing again, damning the Wolber tire and himself. Unable to find the flat, he pulled out his only spare, a sewup tube. But he still wanted to fix a remaining bubble. First, John tried to leave the old inner tube in the tire. He ripped off the valve of the bad tube. That wouldn't work. He couldn't get the new tube to seat. Then Jim suggested that he use some fabric from his tube pack. But he had nothing to cut it with. I spotted some glass. "Glass cuts, why not try it." The glass did cut through the fabric. "Now you see," I said. "Everything was planned out. John was supposed to get that flat, to get us to where this glass was, so that I could think of using it, so that Jim could think of the fabric. And it was good."

Once John got the fabric into his tire, he could pump it up with considerable pressure. Then the ride got underway with force. Already, four riders had passed us going our direction. Earlier, a woman had ridden by. Still in need of help, Jim said jokingly, "Knock her off her bike and take her front wheel." Jim said that Tim Nicholson had done essentially that during the Mt. Hamilton Road Race one year. He had flatted while riding up with the leaders. A woman racer who had been dropped happened along and Tim said, "Here, give me your front wheel. You aren't doing anything in this race."

We started noticing headwinds as we rode through the narrow valley, the flat area along the creek lined with yellow flowers. Soon we caught up and passed the four riders. We hoped to catch up with Jobst and the others, who did not stop for John's flat. Just before arriving in Livermore, we caught up with Jobst. He said he waited with some Audubon folks doing some bird watching. "We saw wild turkey and some other birds." Jobst said John's tire was no good

because it had cotton cords. “Those Wolber are terrible tires.”

On Hwy 84, we faced more headwinds, but we enjoyed the green fields and nearby reservoirs filled to capacity. We passed the Livermore Labs where atomic research goes on.

On Calaveras Road we did some more birdwatching while climbing. Buzzards and hawks circled over Calaveras Reservoir. The road flattens near the top and offers some enjoyable cycling around many banked turns. Then there's a swift descent to Milpitas, where we parked our cars in the Safeway lot [Ocean Supermarket in 2018].

Deluge Wipes Out Gazos Creek Road



APRIL 18, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt (Jobst's nephew), Jan Causey, Dave Faust, Ray Hosler, Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey, Tim Louis, Frank, Tom Sullivan, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, up Hwy 236, up China Grade, down Johansen Road, down Gazos Creek Road, Cloverdale Road north; up Pescadero Road to Hwy 84 and return home; 75 miles

WEATHER: Clear, warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ted – flat; Jobst – flat; Dave – broken rear derailleur; Marc – bent rear wheel

A raindrop isn't a potent force, but when it marshals its diminutive form into a downpour, it can be deadly. Man's creations become Tinker Toys in a deluge. Tall redwoods uproot and crash downstream with boulders. This winter the Santa Cruz Mountains felt the fury of the raindrop army, and riders suffered the results of a wet season on their sacred ground.

Riders gathered at Jobst's house for a fair-weather ride. Jan arrived without Peter, her boyfriend [and later husband], who was home in bed. Tom Ritchey waited for us on Skyline, hoping his pregnant wife, Katie, wouldn't deliver while he was away.

Stung by a bee

A rider on his first Jobst Ride stood next to his bike, with its distinctive fat aluminum tubes, as Jobst and others burst outside onto the front lawn. Jobst looked at the rider's shiny fat-tube bike and bellowed, “It looks like your bike was stung by a bee!” Jobst took our photo standing on the front porch, and then we were off. Right after crossing the railroad tracks on Alma, a police cruiser behind us blared, “Stay to the right of the road!” But everyone was intent on crossing El Camino Real. We blasted across to Stanford Shopping Center.

The ride went without incident until the upper reaches of Alpine Road, where we saw the first evidence of winter's heavy rains. A large section of road had collapsed, as though from an earthquake. We dismounted and walked our bikes across the sinkhole. After assembling at the intersection of Page Mill Road and Skyline Boulevard, where Tom joined us, we headed south on Skyline. We stopped at the fire station to tank up on water. At Highway 9, Tom Sullivan, the mystery rider, and Frank turned left back to the valley.

Jobst began his usual furious descent, with everyone else going for the draft on a 40 mph joy ride. We had the good fortune of riding on Hwy 236 free of traffic. The road was closed to repair a landslide, but passable on bikes. Just before China Grade, Jobst amazed everyone by dismounting and carrying his bike up the side of a hill. We thought we could beat Jobst, so we picked up the pace and raced around the curve. Jobst won handily, much to our chagrin.

Johansen Road

As we climbed China Grade, the Pacific Ocean and a vast redwood forest came into view. The greens and blues painted an unforgettable tapestry on this warm, sunny Spring day. We rode to nearly the end of China Grade before heading left down Johansen, an old logging road [now part of Big Basin State Park]. Considering the heavy rains, it



Ted Mock and Dave Faust clamber down what's left of Gazos Creek Road.

was in good shape. Ted flatted. I stayed to help while the other riders went ahead. We met the group at Gazos Creek Road, where Jobst was busily straightening Marc's bent wheel, and Jim was nursing a sore knee from a fall. [Gazos Creek Road is a steep dirt road linking Big Basin park with Cloverdale Road. It's a favorite route for today's mountain bike rider, but in 1982 the only riders who took it were Jobst and friends.]

Where's the road?

What followed can only be described as a nightmare vision of nature's fury unleashed. The road vanished, replaced by a raging creek and downed redwoods. If not for the creek, we would never have known where to go. In the brief rideable section, Dave bent his rear derailleur roller wheels when a stick jammed them. It didn't matter at this point that he couldn't ride, because we walked the next mile, picking our way through fallen trees. We scrambled over logs and boulders, wondering if we would ever reach a rideable road.

After a while, we came to a clearing and took a break. Jobst and Tom noticed Dave's difficulties. When Dave said his bike was broken, Tom looked concerned, having built Dave's bike. He became visibly relieved when he found out it was just the

derailleur. Jobst and Tom set to fixing Dave's derailleur. Tom grabbed a couple of large rocks and pounded on the roller cages. Using the tools of cave men, they operated on a highly refined piece of steel manufactured halfway around the world. They fixed it well enough that Dave could grind out a turn or two on his cranks.

Newts frolic

Jobst walked to an inviting pool of water and looked down. "I see a couple of newts," he said. Marc went over to investigate, coaxing the newts into activity. "Don't worry," Jobst said, "they have to come up for air." [Speaking of newts, on one ride Jobst put a newt into the water bottle of Nikola Farac-Ban or "Bike Barb," a well-known San Francisco rider. He was not amused.]

More scrambling followed, Ted dropping his bike down a steep cliff when he made a bad choice in the tangle of trees. We used our bikes as crutches, clambering log to log. Along the way, we saw a beautiful waterfall. I spotted a tiny

red snake.

Bleating sheep

At the final gate, the road finally became a road, but we still had to cross the raging Gazos Creek where a bridge had washed out. We walked across the creek and then encountered a bevy of bleating sheep. On the flat section before Cloverdale Road, we tried to avoid huge mud holes, but to no avail. Soon we were covered in mud. Dave struggled along as riders pushed him. At Cloverdale Road, Dave found a ride to Loma Mar, where we'd meet again and Jobst would make more permanent repairs. After chowing down in Loma Mar, we headed up Pescadero Road and home.

Loma Prieta Road Has the "Dirty Bump"



MAY 30, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Parker McComas, John McDonnell, Tom Ritchey, Strange John Pinaglia

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, along Skyline Boulevard to Summit Road, up Mt. Bache Road, up Loma Prieta Road, down Soda Springs Road and home through valley

WEATHER: Cool and foggy, then clear and mild, then warm and clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - flat; Tom - flat; Parker - flat

A recap of previous rides: On May 23 we rode to Portola State Park and then along the Butano Ridge Trail and down the spoor to Wurr Road; the trail was demolished by winter rains. The ride on May 16 was to Cat's Hill Criterium with Jobst's offspring, Adrian and Olaf, via Alpine, Skyline and down to Los Gatos on Bear Creek Road.

But back to the Loma Prieta ride. Fog and clouds caressed the mountain tops on this Sunday, but by heading south we took advantage of sunshine and warm temperatures. The toughest section of the Loma Prieta ride has to be the Dirty Bump, a section of gravelly, dirt road near the top of Loma Prieta summit with its radio transmission towers. On this day, we were up for the Dirty Bump, as everyone rode his bike up without dismounting. Even Peter Johnson made it, who has started showing up at the Jobst Rides in preparation for his trip to Europe with Jobst for some really serious riding.

Peter has devoted most of his free time to his machine business, which includes frame building on the side. It will not be long before he is up there with Jobst pounding out the pace. McDonnell and Holmgren were surprisingly fresh, despite having ridden the Davis Double (a 200-mile ride) the previous Sunday. McDonnell, who is a machinist for Hewlett Packard in Palo Alto, enjoys a fast descent and he is not wont for keeping up with Jobst at times. Tom, who has just become a father (boy), has had less time to ride lately, spending much of his time building mountain bikes,



Tom Ritchey, Jobst Brandt and John McDonnell check out the view from Mt. Umunhum looking east, May 30, 1982.



Peter Johnson and Jobst Brandt arrive at the spring on Loma Prieta Road.

made for riding on trails and rugged terrain. On the ascent of paved One-Mile Hill, just before the Dirty Bump, Tom, Holmgren and McDonnell rode with Strange John. Said Tom, "You just know what everybody was thinking right then. We all wanted to beat Strange John up that hill." And they did. Earlier, after the Summit Store stop, he went off the front and tried to drop everyone, after saying he was going to take it easy. And John disappeared after we stopped at the spring for water, which is just beneath Loma Prieta.

The ride to Soda Springs Road along a dirt trail was comical [not sure where this was]. Several riders took spills on the rock-strewn path, more for lack of coordination than because it was difficult to negotiate. After the twisty descent of Soda Springs Road, a few commented to Jobst, "Now that is one place you can really crash. All the gravel on the corners..." Jobst burst forth with his usual tirade. "You guys act like you've a never ridden bikes before!"

The ride through the Valley went without incident, and once in Los Altos, at Loyola Corners, we stopped to watch a bike race put on by San Jose Bike Club. Dave Faust won the event, lapping the field after breaking away midway in the race with two other San Jose riders.

Trees Down in the Forest of Nisene Marks



JUNE 21, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Tim Louis, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, along Skyline and Summit Road, Highland Way, Buzzard Lagoon Road to Mount Rosalia, down Aptos Creek Fire Road in Forest of Nisene Marks Park, through Aptos on Soquel Drive, Water Street, Branciforte Drive, up Granite Creek Road to Scotts Valley, Glenwood Drive to Mountain Charlie, Summit Road, Skyline Boulevard, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Foggy and warm, then clear, then foggy and cool, then clear and mild

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Tim - flat; Ray - loose spoke

It was appropriate that, on this longest day of the year, the Jobst Riders should go on the Forest of Obscene Remarks ride, being that it covers some 120 miles, more than 16 miles of dirt.

Devastation. The word has been on the minds of the Jobst Riders just about every time they ride into the Santa Cruz Mountains. Once again, we encountered the effects of the previous winter's havoc. Mudslides blocked the road through the Forest of Nisene Marks in many places.

But first, the story of the ride to the fire road in the redwood wilderness. Few riders gathered at Jobst's doorstep for this Sunday excursion. Most of the regulars were in Nevada City for the race. Keith Vierra was recovering from the Coors Classic in Colorado. That left me, Peter (who is going with Jobst to Europe on July 12), Jim and Tim Louis. Jim was late and called to say that he would meet us at Skyline. The ride went without incident to the base of dirt Alpine. There, Jobst noticed that the road had been smoothed. "Oh look," he said, "they've graded Alpine. Now the road is going to be hard to ride up." However, for the first mile the road was hard-packed. "You know, in Europe," said Jobst in his usual matter of fact voice, "you can't tell if the road is dirt or paved. It's really hard-packed. I've often debated other riders about whether a road is paved or dirt." The road had been made smooth and hard, besides the fact that it had been

worked on, because of the heavy moisture in the air.

Jobst identified birds during the slow climb up Alpine. “What’s that Ray?” Jobst would ask. I was unable to supply the answer. “That’s a black-headed grosbeak,” Jobst said emphatically. Other bird songs that Jobst heard that day included a wren, olive-sided flycatcher, finch, and more. About midway up Alpine, Jobst vaulted to the front, Tim



Peter Johnson crosses Aptos Creek where there was once a bridge.
Jobst Brandt photo

thought we were hallucinating when we passed a pond that was so black it completely reflected all light. I thought I was looking down into a valley. It took us several moments to realize we were seeing a reflection.

Once in Aptos, we stopped at Safeway for lunch, then headed out to Scotts Valley via Soquel Road. The ride up Mountain Charlie Road went without incident. The old toll road had no signs of devastation. At the summit, we passed the cabin that Mountain Charlie lived in, now with newer homes nearby. “When I first rode up here,” Jobst said with irritation in his voice, “there was only one home on that hillside.”

At the end of the climb, Jobst stopped for a drink of cold spring water coming from a pipe. “Some years I’ve been up here and it was dry,” Jobst said. “This is as strong a flow as I’ve ever seen.” The rest of the ride went without incident. We took in the warm sun, the spectacular view and the fresh air. It was truly a beautiful day in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

following close behind. At Skyline Jim waited. He had worn a long-sleeve jersey, believing that it might be cold. But he was wrong. It was mild, despite the fog. As we rode south, we broke into the clear. At a lake in the Christmas tree forest, steam was rising. Jobst said, “Oh look, the lake is on fire.”

We didn’t stop at the fire station as we normally do. Jobst was bent on getting to Summit Store before 11:30. At the Summit Store, Jobst criticized autos and people who walked inside. “Look at that VW. I bet he can’t turn his wheels more than 10 degrees. That Saab. What a mess. They should join forces with the French car builders.” On Highland Way, signs of devastation began to appear. Mud coated the road where there had been mudslides. Once onto Mount Rosalia, everything appeared normal. But it was when the descent began that the first sign of problems began to show. A tree was down across the road. We dismounted and went around. We rode another half mile before we had to dismount again. Then after only a quarter-mile we were forced once again to dismount. The pattern continued all the way down the mountain.

Once into the valley floor, the damage caused by the creek was truly awesome. A bridge we normally took had been ripped away. All that was left was two concrete supports. And the creek had gouged out the surrounding area, leaving the trail crumbling at the edges. Farther down, near the roads, another bridge had been wiped out. A huge landslide on the right had to be traversed. Jim made the most telling comment. “I don’t think I’ll do this ride again until I know the road has been fixed.”

On the way down, we met up with some cyclists on shiny new mountain bikes. Jim and I

Star Hill Road a Rancher's Refuge



JULY 11, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Jan Causey, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey, Bob

ROUTE: Up Page Mill Road, down Alpine Road, Pescadero Road to Pescadero, Stage Road to Tunitas Creek Road, up Star Hill Road, down Kings Mountain Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat; Jobst - flat; Bob - flat

The Santa Cruz Mountains are home to a good number of wealthy people who like to preserve their privacy on isolated ranches accessible only by private roads. Some of those people have made their fortune in entertainment. As much as they love their followers, they still like to enjoy some alone time. Star Hill Road crosses one of those entertainer's property and rest assured, you are not welcome. The last thing they want to see is some grimy bike riders using their roads.



Tom Ritchey, Peter Johnson and Jobst Brandt discuss topics of the day before heading home on Star Hill Road.

The morning started with the usual fog, but it was warm and humid. By the time we started up Page Mill Road, it was already warm and everyone dripped with sweat. We met a bunch of riders, who Jobst engaged in conversation during the climb.

At Shotgun Bend, I went ahead. Jobst said as I departed, and he said it often, "Tom is always stronger than the rest of the riders because he doesn't have to climb this hill to Skyline." Tom met us at Skyline, having just returned from

a Super Tour in Canada. He wasn't impressed. "There's nothing but pine trees. You can't see through them, they're so thick." [I had the same experience on my trip to Vancouver Island.] Jan followed us down Alpine Road at high speed, showing her excellent descending skills. She headed up 84 to finish her ride.

On Haskins Hill, Jobst and Tom rode hard, although they would never admit to being competitive about it. We stopped at Loma Mar store for food and drink. We enjoyed the descent to Pescadero, but as we arrived at the city limits, one of the town's upstanding citizens took it upon himself to give us a warm welcome: "Get the hell off the road!"

Before hammering up the climbs on Stage Roads, a bit of levity ensued. Fresh with thoughts of "Sexercise," a term coined by the Runner's World publisher for a new book, I blurted out, "Sexerride." Then Peter added, "This is what you call erotic cycling." And Jobst, just ahead, chimed in, "What, do I have a hole in my shorts?"

Never one to pass up the opportunity to use his alluring peacock call, Jobst bellowed in his most convincing voice to the denizens of Willowside Ranch, "Aaarrrrr! Aaaaarrrr!" I commented, "Better watch out Jobst, they're after you now." To which Jobst replied, "They know who their master is."

At San Gregorio, Gary turned up Hwy 84, having done one too many rides up Tunitas Creek Road in recent weeks. We started up Star Hill Road, me with some foreboding because I heard it was hideously steep and rutted. Not true.

After the long climb, we had a short downhill to a farmhouse, but the only residents appeared to be some lonely peacocks strutting their stuff. We stopped at the beautiful concrete fountain and watched the goldfish swimming around. Jobst began telling some stories of past rides, one of those reflective moments when all seems right with the world.

Jobst fooled me by pointing to some clay pigeons, as we headed off on the steep road, which was paved for a mile. For unknown reasons, everyone started flatting, Bob first. Peter noted, with complete accuracy, "It seems like this road goes forever." Star Hill Road is a long climb, made the more so coming off Tunitas Creek Road. It's no shortcut. The pavement ended and we began the long climb on dirt Star Hill Road past the last gate. [The road has since been paved.] Then Jobst and I noticed we had flattened. Jobst fixed his tire at a drainage trough.

The descent of Kings Mountain Road went without incident, but Peter had one more trick up his sleeve. While riding behind me he clicked his brakes as hard as he could. It sounded just like someone crashing. Then Peter sped by and yelled, "Fooled you!"

[I never took the private Star Hill Road section without Jobst present. Not recommended.]

Ride Like a Slinky



AUGUST 29, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Jan Causey, Tom Holmes, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Kelly, Tim Louis, Paul Mittelstadt, Strange John Pinaglia, Mark Sisson, Tursten

ROUTE: Up dirt Alpine, along Skyline Boulevard to Summit Road. San Jose-Soquel Road to Redwood Lodge Road. Laurel Road to Glenwood Drive Cutoff. Glenwood Drive to Mountain Charlie. Summit Road to Skyline Boulevard to Redwood Gulch Road, Stevens Creek Road and home

WEATHER: Perfect. Clear, warm, no smog in the valley

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Peter - front blowout.

For unknown reasons, on this Sunday, a large number of riders showed up to share their thoughts and ride with Jobst. There were even a couple of unknowns on the ride. Mark Sisson, a Hawaii Ironman Triathlon racer (4th), showed up with his injured foot. The previous week, at the Mt. Hamilton road race, he competed and did quite well to the top, but flattened on the descent. Strange John rode his junk bike, an old Peugeot, and his bike had very heavy, very fat tires. Jobst hasn't let up since returning from his Alps ride. This Sunday he would show how fit he was.



Ready to ride to Scotts Valley via Santa Cruz Mountains backroads: Kelly, Cycle Pro, Tom Holmes, Peter Johnson, Jobst Brandt, Paul Mittelstadt, Gary Holmgren, Jan Causey, Mark Sisson.

On the ride up Alpine, Jobst waited for Peter at the gate. Peter had been waiting for his girlfriend, Jan. Tom waited at Skyline Boulevard and Page Mill Road. He took off with Tursten, Mark and Kelly down Alpine. Mark commented of Tom's bike handling ability. "That guy is amazing on the downhills. Coming downhill toward Pescadero he was riding no hands around corners where we were holding on white-knuckling it!" [Not sure if this referred to another ride or what]

We continued south to Summit Road. Tom turned back at Hwy 9. After a long rest at Summit Store, we rode down San Jose-Soquel Road.

Once onto Redwood Lodge Road, we had to stop and traverse a landslide across the road. At that point there was a bang like a gunshot. Peter blew out his front tire. "That's the last time I let you change my tires Jobst," he said.

Jobst rode down to nearby Burns Creek and sat back to wait for Peter. It was a beautiful day; the birds were singing, the sun was bright, the stream below was filled with green moss. There's a campground a short ways down the dirt road. The culvert beneath the road is bigger now, because a year ago it overflowed from the rush of water. The creek turned into a small lake by the campground. There was even an empty swimming pool alongside the stream. At Laurel Road, Jobst showed us the now closed South Pacific Coast Railroad tunnel. It was sealed for safety reasons and is now serving as a freshwater storage tank.

The ride up Mountain Charlie went without incident. Jobst and Peter rode to Los Gatos to see a car show, while Tim, John and I went home via Summit Road. Sisson has noted that the Jobst Ride is like a Slinky®. It goes fast, slows down to a crawl, then speeds up.

Shop Party Revisited



SEPTEMBER 12, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, O'Reiley, Lynn, Peter, Grant, Frank, Dave Zanotti

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain Road, down Purisima Creek Road, Higgins Purisima to Half Moon Bay, Hwy 1 to Verde Road, Lobitos Creek Cutoff, Tunitas Creek Road, up Native Sons Cutoff, Star Hill Road, up Swett Road, Skyline Boulevard to Old La Honda Road, Morgan Cutoff to Neal's Palo Alto Bike Shop party at concrete lake

WEATHER: Clear and warm, then hot

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat; Tom - flat; Peter - flat

Exactly 14 months previous to this Jobst Ride, I collided head-on with a black 1979 Mercedes Benz sedan, whose owner lived in Portola Valley. This time it was the same celebration, the bike shop party that Palo Alto Bikes holds annually. This year, however, I did not get hit by a car, nor did I come close to being hit. About 50 other cyclists attended.

Two mountain bike riders showed up at Jobst's doorstep, a first for Jobst Rides. The male rider, O'Reiley,



Charlie Kempner heads up Native Sons Cutoff.

competed in last week's Palo Alto Criterium, riding his custom-built mountain bike. He was a former track racer. His girlfriend, Lynn, also rode a mountain bike. As the ride started, Tom Holmes bolted from behind some cars. He had gotten there late, but knew where Jobst went to get past, and lay in wait. Frank, an anesthetist, introduced himself. He wore a Skid Lid.

On Manzanita Road, Marc and Dave caught the pack. Marc snuck up on the pack. Dave and Marc giggled and acted strange. Marc rode up behind Peter and hit his tire with his front wheel. Marc then sprinted up to Jobst at a short, steep hill. "Surprise," he said to his uncle.

On the climb up Kings Mountain Road, we couldn't help but notice an inversion. It was hot higher up. Dave, Grant, and Marc put on more heat and went off the front.

Riding down Purisima Creek Road, it became immediately apparent that this road had taken on a new complexion. Before the ravaging floods of last winter, it had been a mere trail, overgrown by bushes and quite wild and scenic. Now, however, it had been widened by bulldozer. The trail was now a dusty highway.

Jobst and the mountain bike rider led the way on the descent. At the bottom of the first hill, the old bridge had been restored. But it was very different from before, nowhere near as scenic. There were two new bridges on the lower reaches of the trail, which was in better condition. The ride into Half Moon Bay went without incident. In Half Moon Bay, we stopped for food while Jobst made fun of how I drank my orange juice. "Now Ray, don't eat your orange juice! Why do you open your mouth to drink it. Sip!"

The guy with the broken wrist complained about the cast he wore on his right hand. He broke off the thumb covering with Jobst's help, using a pop bottle to whack it. On the ride south on Hwy 1, Peter flatted. While stopped, Jobst pointed out a marsh hawk circling a nearby marsh. It was easily distinguished by its white tail spot.

The ride up Lobitos Creek was hard and hot. It was my first time on this quiet road. On Native Sons cutoff, the ride turned into a hike. Jobst believed that the recent dozing of this road would make it suitable for riding. The winter rains had ruined it. But the dozer had done a poor job of it, and the ground was deceptively loose. There were also many ruts that prevented us from riding up the hill. It was a long, hot walk. Leaves covered the trail and made walking slippery and slow. Tom fought with his bike to get up and ride, but he had little success. At one point, he fell over on his back, his wheels sticking up straight into the air, like a beetle on its back, legs clambering to turn over. Jobst, too, fell over. After much walking, we reached Star Hill Road and then rode to Swett Road. On the ride down Morgan Cutoff [an old logging road that parallels Old La Honda Road], we had a tough time on the rough, dusty road.

Nobody was at the party when we arrived, except for hosts Neal and Ron. After about a half hour, the gang showed up — Bud's sister, Bernie's wife (Bernie did not come that day), Ron's daughter, Heidi, his wife, Keith Vierra, Don McBride, Ray Keener and girlfriend Denise, Sue, John, Sterling McBride, Dennis (who had recently fallen off his bike and broke his hip), Dave Prion, Strange John, Jim Westby, Ted Mock and his girlfriend Audrey, Mike and his girlfriend Rosanne, Bobby, and more.

We ate steak, pecan pie, and drank beer. Some ran down to the concrete lake and swam out to a large wooden raft. They threw a Frisbee in the water, teased Neal's young dog, played with Jan, who paddled a rickety old wooden boat that leaked. Jobst watched from the shore, his two sons Adrian and Olaf nearby. Bill Robertson was there with his baby boy.

A CRANK THAT CRACKED



NOVEMBER 21, 1982

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Peruez, John Pinaglia

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Rapley Road, Skyline Boulevard, Hwy 9, Hwy 236, up China Grade, Butano Ridge Trail to Cloverdale Road, Pescadero Road, Alpine Road, Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cold and hazy, then warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - broken crank

Jobst didn't have much of a turnout for this pre-Thanksgiving Day ride. It was just me, Strange John, and Jobst's HP co-worker, Peruez from Iran.

Where have they gone? Rick Humphreys is off racing; Tom Holmes is busy flipping houses and working as an engineer; Ted Mock no longer rides far; Parker moved away; Tim Louis disappeared; John Porcella is a Navy pilot; Dave Faust is nursing a sore knee; Bill Fallis is busy raising two daughters.

While Peruez was something of a novice, Jobst never discriminated and welcomed all who turned up, just as long as they could keep a decent pace.

This Pied Piper of the Santa Cruz Mountains headed out on yet another adventure. I often wondered when this aging rider would lose his following. It looked like it had already begun. When would the day come when nobody showed up, and would Jobst still ride? [I don't know the answer, but Jobst almost always had someone show up for his Sunday ride until well into the 2000s.]

“Jobst broke at least a dozen cranks in his long riding career.”

John mentioned riding up Rapley Road, and Jobst took up him up on the challenge. We climbed to nearly the end of the Alpine Road pavement before turning right onto a dirt road, crossing Corte Madera Creek and then heading straight up the hill, destination Skyline Boulevard. [The road goes to Thomas Fogarty Winery property.]

So steep is the road that no matter how good its condition, it is an extremely difficult climb. On this Sunday, the road condition could be called “perfect.” Rains the day before had removed the dust and made traction as good as pavement.

John pulled ahead with his 30-tooth rear cog, while Jobst muscled his way up using the power of his mighty legs and extra-long crank arms that gave him additional leverage. Halfway up, when it seemed the agony could not be endured any longer, the riders saw that they were a long ways from Skyline. Jobst circled while he waited for me and Peruez. He warned us that the road gets steeper and to ride as slowly as possible. How about walking? That worked.

At the top, Jobst opened a gate and let us through. To our right was a newly planted vineyard and the Rapley

home. On one occasion, Rapley himself (I have no idea of the name) met Jobst and his band of merry riders. Rapley expressed his displeasure in blunt terms.

As we climbed on Skyline, Jobst looked down to see Tom Ritchey preparing for a ride with the Palo Alto gang. Later that day Tom would lay bleeding on Haskins Hill following a spill behind the wheel of Keith Vierra.

As we descended Hwy 9, Jobst waited for everyone to follow along.



Jobst broke many cranks at the pedal eye. He developed a method to prevent this from happening by drilling out a concave hole and adding washers.

snapped, throwing Jobst off his bike. [It might have been a left crank, but my journal says right, so it stands.]

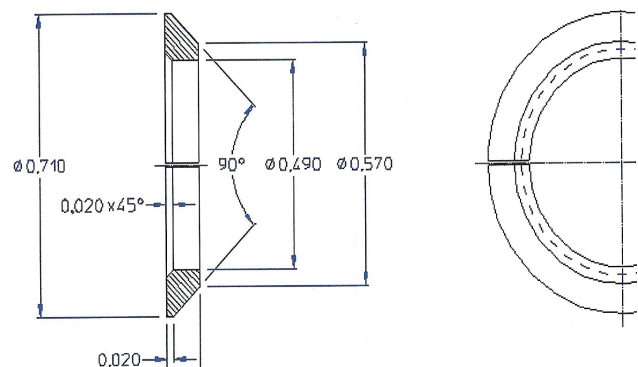
It was not until the long downhill to Cloverdale Road that I caught up to Jobst. He rode with his right leg dangling, like someone with a paralyzed leg. And yet he rode with purpose, unfazed by adversity, in full command of his crippled machine. [By 1982, the landowners already had plans to pave the road, which they did a few years later. They made every effort to keep cyclists out. One irate owner chased after Jobst and friends, who took refuge in Pescadero. They later saw the owner, but with other cyclists mingling at the local store, he had no idea who to finger.]

While riding to Loma Mar for food and to call on the pay phone for a ride home, Jobst came across two cyclists who were searching for mushrooms on the roadside. Jobst stopped to help them look. Mushroom hunting was one of his favorite winter activities.

After striking up a conversation with the married couple, Jobst learned that they had a spare crank back at their house on Pescadero Road. A plan was hatched. Jobst would remove his broken crank and install the owner's. I rode ahead with Peruez to Loma Mar for a bite to eat. After Jobst arrived, I remarked about the steepness of the hills on Butano Ridge Trail.

Jobst said with a touch of remorse, "There were days when I rode up those. Keith was right next to me." I had a hard time believing he could have done that. But then I thought back to the hill and considered the force required to snap that crank. I realized that back in the day when Jobst was young, even those hills gave way to legs as powerful as locomotive pistons.

[Jobst broke at least a dozen cranks in his long riding career. He finally solved the issue by developing a simple remedy based on the car wheel's lug nut. It has a tapered end that fits snug against the wheel frame. It was only when that innovation came to pass that car lug nuts stopped unthreading. Peter Johnson machined the parts.]



Schematic of the machining required for the crank.



McKenzie Reservoir a Muddy Delight



JANUARY 24, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, Skyline Boulevard, Black Road to McKenzie Reservoir, Hwy 9 to Pierce Road, Mt. Eden Road, up Montebello Road, down Page Mill Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - flat

Early Sunday morning fog from the previous day's rainstorm made conditions seem bleak, but rain was still eight hours away. I cycled to Jobst's house, where I found him putting on his chain, after cleaning it. Jobst commented that the chain had outlasted the cogs on his freewheel, something that he said was most unusual. Even more unusual was the absence of other Jobst Riders.

As we rode out on Sand Hill Road, we saw Portola Valley shrouded in fog, which was drifting upward. We headed up Old La Honda Road at a leisurely pace. When we neared the intersection with Skyline Boulevard, we smelled raw sewage. We were passing the last house near the intersection of Skyline Boulevard, at which there is always a steady stream of water running across the road. Jobst said that the house's cesspool had overrun from the heavy rains and was now spilling raw sewage across the road.

Jobst bellowed (it was still only 9:30 a.m.), "Hey! Why don't you fix your cesspool. It's smelling up the place!" On Skyline, we headed south; soon we encountered a female rider heading in the same direction on a 10-speed, with a rear baby carrier attached. Jobst told her about the women who cycled in the area, and how many of them did not look like cyclists, but more like models. We took in the spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean, the lush green hillside leading to the rocky shoreline. There was a surreal beauty about this view, a view that I have never quite accepted to be real.



But the cows cluttered the scene. At about this point, we passed Tom Ritchey's house. He was nowhere to be seen. At the end of the long climb before the descent to Page Mill Road, the weather turned nasty. The wind had already been blowing fiercely, but now the clouds were moving in. Still, it was not all that cold. Jobst passed a patch of barren-looking plant growth on the roadside, "Paratrooper's delight," he said as he pushed on the cranks. "That's poison oak, isn't it?" I asked. You couldn't tell because the leaves were absent, but the poison oak branches had their own unique texture that set them apart from the surrounding growth. They were a light red hue with white tops, and nothing else grew within their territory.

We stopped at a spring for a sip of water. Jobst filled an empty bottle that had been lying on the roadside. He held the bottle up to the light and said, "You can see that this water is milky, full of minerals." But it tasted good, although it seemed warm, because it came from underground, where the earth remains a constant temperature. On a hot

day, it tastes cold; on a cold day, it tastes warm.

I decided I would brave the rest of the ride with Jobst rather than turn down Page Mill Road. Fortunately, the weather became more comfortable further south on Skyline Boulevard. There was very little traffic. On the climb from Saratoga Gap, the weather worsened. Jobst noted a tow truck jumping another tow truck that had broken down. As we

descended through the fog toward Black Road, Jobst started talking about a similar ride several years ago. “Only it was a lot colder. We stopped by the roadside to take a piss. I found out something very valuable. I pissed on my shoes. You should remember that. It really warms them up.” Jobst complained that his feet had lost circulation after being frostbitten on one particularly cold ride in the Sierra.

During the descent of Black Road to McKenzie Reservoir, I rode cautiously so as to avoid crashing on the wet turns. Jobst also took it easy. Lake Ranch Road was damp, but not muddy. We stopped at the big hollow redwood. Jobst drank from the stream and looked up at the towering tree. “Look up and see how the light plays off the fog shrouding the tops of the trees. Isn’t that nice?” I looked up and took in the view, another photographic scene of fog and trees and incomparable beauty that made this ride worth the pain. At McKenzie Reservoir, Jobst looked for ducks and observed the system by which excess runoff left the reservoir. He noted that the system had been changed recently. The runoff left through a large concrete orifice and out a pipe. There were very few ducks to be seen. Jobst blamed that on some fishermen who had been at the reservoir.

*“Look up there and see how the light plays off
the fog shrouding the tops of the trees. Isn’t
that nice?”*

He spotted a bufflehead, however, diving for its food. It remained under water for at least 30 seconds. Jobst said that he did not realize that buffleheads dived for their food. “You don’t read that in the bird books because they don’t have room for that.”

The descent of Sanborn Road went without incident, as did the trip on Pierce Road. On Mt. Eden Road, I told Jobst that I remembered riding dirt trails near our house in Casper, Wyoming. I remembered over the years how much fun that had been. Jobst suggested riding up Montebello Road. He thought that the worst was over. Jobst said that the reason for the “no parking” signs on Montebello was because people who went up there and parked were often beaten by marauding gangs.

As we passed the aging winery, Jobst said that there were plans to save it from destruction by the open space district. They want to find somebody to run the winery. At many places in the road, the storm had wreaked its havoc. Gravel covered the road where rivulets of water ran down the pavement. The culverts were filled with gravel and dirt. About halfway up, Jobst flatted. But he was able to reach a stream, where both he and I drank some more fresh water. Jobst took my tube for a spare.

Past the Ridge Winery, and alongside the road, there were many grape dumpings, used skins that smelled of vinegar. We enjoyed a crystal-clear view of Santa Clara Valley, and the cloud-covered Sierra in the distance. To the west, a storm brewed in the form of dark, ominous clouds. The ride through Black Mountain went without incident, and we passed two hikers. Repairs near the Modern House had been made, so traffic was not being stopped.

Mudslide on Pescadero Road



MARCH 4, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Strange John, Tim Louis, Tom Ritchey

ROUTE: Up Page Mill Road, down Alpine Road, up Pescadero Road, to Hwy 1, north on 1 to Tunitas Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road

WEATHER: Hazy and cool, then hazy and warm

Finally, a ride with Jobst himself. In the past month and a half, the Force Who Rides has been down with a nasty bug that has prevented him from riding. But on this relatively mild Sunday, Jobst rose to the occasion. Tom dialed the traditional call to Jobst at 8 a.m., who was, as is custom, finishing breakfast. Usually it's some kind of gruel, oats covered with an inch of brown sugar, topped with blackberry jam. Or it's a hardboiled egg. He asked me to time the egg, and invariably I forget to tell Jobst, who then proceeds to rant and rave about his egg. He does not like it to be completely hardened.

Just as we were leaving, Tim Louis and Strange John rolled up. The duo share a house in Palo Alto. As we traveled along the road leading into Stanford University, Jobst pointed to the side of the road, which was under a foot of water. Barriers prevent cars from driving through the water. "Well, this is how they fix the road. That water has nowhere to drain. I guess they just let it seep into the ground." Jobst launched into a discussion of why this road was so bumpy and has a distinct crown. "Mrs. Stanford used to restrict auto traffic from this road. She would only allow horse and buggy. It was dirt then. When she died, they paved the road, but they didn't bother leveling it. They just paved it over and left the bump. That's why it's so broken up. The pavement can't be thicker than this." Jobst spread his fingers about two inches apart to show the thickness of the pavement.

Farther along, Jobst pointed to where the campus clock tower was being repositioned at a more central location, near the fountain. Jobst knows so much about the university because he was at one time a student. His father used to drive through the campus, where there is now a fountain and a nice plaza. Near the fraternities, I saw Peter Wood, a professor at the university who had just written *The California Diet*, which I helped edit for Runner's World Books. Peter was riding a bike with his wife, Christine. Peter, a runner, suffered an injury recently that prevented him from running, so he was cycling to stay fit.

Strange John, who had not said much this morning, turned off on Arastradero Road. The rest of us headed up Page Mill Road, which had a detour near the base of the hill. But we rode right through the signs and it was just as well.

There was nothing ahead to stop us. Recent heavy rains had made a mess of the roads. Tom said that he went for a run to Stanford University one day and his wife was to pick him up. "She almost didn't reach me. Highway 9 was closed, Skyline was closed, so was Old La



On most rides our preference was to stop at Loma Mar store.

Honda and 84, all because of mudslides or downed trees. She finally got through on Page Mill Road. "

Jobst wheezed and bellowed from the strain on the Page Mill Road climb. At the top, near the modern house,

Jobst said, "Hey, why haven't I recovered yet? And there's still two hills to go to the top."

We met Tom near the entrance to Montebello Road. He was recovered from his cold of the previous week. The descent on Alpine Road went without incident, Jobst leading the way. The road was covered with gravel, mud and tree limbs from the recent heavy rains. Near the bottom, we had to ride through goopy mud, the result of a mudslide. You couldn't help but notice the creek was high. This canyon is one of the coldest places in all of California. The sun hardly ever shines, because it is covered by redwoods. During the ascent of Haskins Hill we talked about the Ironman triathlon. Tom said he was interested in entering. After descending Haskins Hill, we passed Memorial County Park and then ran into another sign saying detour. We rode right past it and found ourselves smack dab up against a huge mudslide blocking the road. Even though the mud was thick and gooey, Jobst clambered up the steep slope and around the mud. On the other side, a tractor worked. Road crews were clearing the way for auto traffic. Everyone managed to get around the mess without trouble; nothing more than muddy shoes. Jobst and I took photos.

At Loma Mar, we cleaned our shoes and ate some food. Inside the store Roger Siebecker, the owner, a mustachioed fellow who wears Pendleton plaid shirts and blue jeans, greeted us. Once back on our bikes, we rode past a house perched on the edge of Pescadero Creek. It was abandoned even before completion because the previous year's flooding swept away enough embankment to make the house unstable.

Near Pescadero, we crossed the closed bridge, once again ignoring the signs saying that it was closed. After crossing, I said, "I've never had a bridge come out from under me in all my years of cycling."

Near the ocean, Jobst pointed to several birds in a marshy area that is a nature preserve. On Hwy 1, Tom said that where there was once a nice sandy beach, there is now just a rocky shoreline. The waves had wiped out the beach. Tom got into a discussion with Jobst about his having seen a beaver in a creek at the bottom of Alpine Road (paved side). Jobst refuted that, saying that beavers don't live around here. Besides, "where there's beavers there's beaver dams." [In the early 2000s, I saw beaver dams in Los Gatos Creek below Aldercroft Heights.]

In the lower reaches of Tunitas Creek Road, Jobst met up with Mike and Jean Higgins on their tandem, made by Tom. At the traditional watering spot of Mitchell Creek, Jobst stopped to drink his fill. The tandem riders asked Jobst if the water was okay to drink. Jobst reassured them it was. Mike and Jean decided at this point to turn around and head back to the ocean.

We enjoyed the quiet solitude of the redwoods, the green colors as they played off the mossy tree trunks, the redwood carpet of needles on the road, the many creeks filled with clear, cool water making its way to the ocean, the narrow, winding road in the mountains, the cool, crisp air. It was a day to remember. Every ride up Tunitas Creek is one to remember, a wondrous experience, one that you wish you could repeat over and over again for an eternity. During the descent of Kings Mountain Road, we passed Dave Faust, who was heading up. So ended a great ride.

Loma Prieta Road Minus the Hassles



APRIL 10, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Tim Louis, Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey, Tom Sullivan, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, Summit Road, Mt. Bache Road to Loma Prieta Road, Hicks Road, home through valley

WEATHER: Cool and partly cloudy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ted - bad rear bearing

This was the first occasion for a Jobst Ride to Loma Prieta in quite some time. Although the weather was on the cool side, seven riders made it to Jobst's doorstep for the excursion to the netherlands. Jim and Tom Sullivan had announced their intentions of heading south, and Jobst took them up on it.

Ted appeared for the first time in many months. He lost his second court battle over a car-bike accident, and

got married during the interim. Gary is going to Foothill College and preparing to leave the blood bank. Tom's son, Jay, is just starting to walk at 10 months of age. Tim Louis is getting over a cold and he has kicked out Strange John. "He really is strange!" Tim said. Jobst replied, "I told you so."

Alpine Road is devastated from the recent storms. It looked as though there had been a mudslide every 100



View from upper Mt. Umunhum Road looking southeast.

feet on the paved portion. A huge pile of dirt was dumped at the gate where the dirt road begins. And the bad part of Alpine Road has now become impassible. We encountered a huge landslide. Now we must walk our bikes up a hiking trail that parallels and eventually intersects the road farther up. It is too steep to ride in most places, and too rough. Farther up the road, there is a place where only about five feet of road remain, and there is a big crack in that. When it goes, there will be no way around it.

On Skyline, we met Tom. He mentioned how intelligent his son is, and credits his wife for staying home with the child.

Past Hwy 9, Ted's rear hub started making awful noises. Jobst suggested that it might be a broken axle, but it was not. Ted had to turn around and go home; Gary went with him. Tim had already turned down Hwy 9 because he wasn't feeling up to par. Summit Road has several barriers on it now, but is otherwise okay from the heavy rains. I said of the barriers, "Look Jim, an edifice. This is so big, I think I'm getting an edifice complex."

At Summit Store, Jobst was his usual self, mocking the patrons as they got out of their cars and walked inside. He said to one customer, who was dressed in a trenchcoat and had a scraggly beard, "Oh, you must get your clothes from St. Vincent DePaul." Later, when the patron came out of the store, he said to Jobst, "Are you guys dressed for scuba diving?" Some tourist riders had come along, and they said that they were going to Santa Cruz to visit a frame builder. "What's his name?" asked Jobst. "Salsa, do you know him?" "Oh sure," said Jobst. "Salsa de Ranchera, I use it on my tacos all the time." At which point every one burst out laughing. Jobst looked at the woman's bike as the duo got ready to leave, and he said, "What's that a Weyless seat, or a Worthless seat?"

On the ride up Loma Prieta, Jobst lagged badly because he had drunk 48 ounces of orange juice. He tried to

keep me from going ahead, but I refused.

Nobody had any trouble riding up the Dirty Bump, because there wasn't any pea gravel to cause slippage. We passed a Sheriff's truck and Jobst later said that you have to act like you know what you're doing, "or they'll sense something is wrong and stop you." We stopped at the traditional watering hole, a spring built into a concrete fountain. It was running freely. From where we stood, we could see the Pacific and Santa Clara Valley. On the ride down Mount Umunhum, we had the road to ourselves.

East Bay Ride to Walnut Creek



APRIL 17, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Tim Louis, Parker McComas, Paul Mittelstadt

ROUTE: Dumbarton Bridge, Hwy 84, Palomares Canyon Road, Crow Canyon Road, Main Street to Walnut Creek downtown

WEATHER: Cool and cloudy, then windy, then partly cloudy and warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Paul - flat

With clouds obscuring the sun for yet another weekend, there were no firm desires to ride Mount Hamilton. So Jobst decided on riding into the netherlands of the East Bay, something that he does on extremely rare occasions. And for good reason. The East Bay is only approachable by Highway 237, a southerly loop that is long and filled with traffic, or Dumbarton Bridge, recently opened for bicycle traffic. On top of that, nothing in the East Bay interests Jobst. Here there are only flatlands, cars, and condos.

We attacked Dumbarton with zest. The road was not so steep that we couldn't motor up at a fast pace sitting down on the saddle. Jobst pounded up the hill while breaking the wind for the rest of the riders. We ignored the bike lane, which is separated from the four-lane bridge by a concrete barricade. Jobst did not want to ride in the bike lane because he feared that it would be filled with glass. In addition, if a cyclist was coming from the other direction, there could be a collision [Later, Jobst used the path]. On the descent, we picked up a lot of speed.

Once into Newark, we passed old homes mixed with newer office buildings. But this town is definitely a backwater in the Bay Area. It housed a major repair shop for the South Pacific Coast Railroad. Jobst talked about the railroad as we cycled through town. Once off Highway 84, we took a maze of roads that led us back to Highway 84, Niles Can-



Riders enjoy a downhill section on Palomares Road.

yon. As we crossed Niles-Alameda Creek, one rider commented, "There's the River Nile(s)." The creek was running high from the heavy rainfall this spring. A boon to us was the closure of Hwy 84. We had to ourselves the entire two lanes of this normally busy highway. Other cyclists were also taking leisurely rides on the road. While ascending the lower reaches of the canyon, we saw a Great Blue Heron fly off from the creek. We passed the rockslide that caused the road closure, right next to the train overpass.

We turned left onto the steep Palomares Canyon Road. I had ridden this road during a century ride (Terra Bella, prior to Jobst Rides), so it was familiar. The canyon was quiet and free of traffic. The greenery mellowed us out, and chirping birds complemented the beautiful scenery. The descent to Crow Canyon Road was equally enjoyable, with long straightaways and a tailwind. To get across Interstate 580, we had to ride across the freeway itself, because the underpass had been blocked with earth from a new road going in on the side of 580.

Fortunately, traffic on 580 was not that heavy. Once on Crow Canyon Road, we motored fast and furiously. At one point, Jobst led out a sprint to the top of the hill, Paul following. The purpose of this ride was to go see the Devil's Cup criterium. When we reached Walnut Creek, we were treated to a bike race with the likes of John Howard, Eric Heiden, George Mount and Charlie Holbrook. Charlie finished second. During this time, I searched for a ride, and was fortunate to meet up with John Lehr and Cheri Wolpert. They drove me home. By this time in the afternoon, the weather had warmed up considerably. The rest of the Jobst Riders rode home the way they came.

Mount Hamilton May Day



MAY 1, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Paul Mittelstadt, Ted Mock

ROUTE: Mt. Hamilton loop

WEATHER: Cool and partly cloudy, then warm and cloudy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ted - flat

The heavy rains this spring failed to let up, even in early May. That prevented Jobst from riding up Mount Hamilton until May 1, perhaps the latest date he has ever gone for his first ride. Even at the late date, clouds obscured the sky, and the moisture was so thick that the air had a leaden hue. Clouds boiled over the top of the Santa Cruz Mountains, and they threatened Mount Hamilton with rain, but there was none.

The previous day, during the Mount Hamilton Ride organized by local bike clubs, it poured. Still, 100 hardy riders turned out. On the ascent of Mount Hamilton, Jobst made it clear that he was not fooling around. And with a cadre of experienced riders, there would be nobody to slow the pace. Riding on Old Piedmont Road, the effects of the incredibly wet winter made themselves felt. The road was washed out in places, and residents sandbagged city streets to prevent streams from washing away their homes.

On the initial climb of Mount Hamilton, Jobst powered ahead. The pace eased somewhat when Jobst met up with Mike and Jean Higgins, who ride a red Ritchey tandem. After riding with them until reaching the first descent, we headed off, never to see them again. This was a great day for Jobst sighting birds. He spotted the following: golden eagle, horned lark, bluebird, swifts, turkey vulture, magpie, an acorn woodpecker, scrub jay, a Lewis woodpecker, Forster's tern, a red-tailed hawk, brown creeper, and more.

Nearing the summit, with about 5,000 meters to go, the riding turned deadly serious as the challenge for king of the mountain began. Jobst led out with a strong surge, followed closely by Gary, who appeared to have the best chance of keeping with him. But Gary petered out with 3,000 meters remaining. I challenged Jobst, who on seeing that he was being pursued, lengthened his lead.

At the summit, Jobst asked me to ride down a side road for a photo. I complained that the road was too steep to ride up, being totally spent from the climb. Jobst then broke out into hysterics. "Ray you're ruining my shot! This is going to be a cover for the catalog [Palo Alto Bicycles mail order]! Look at the road in the background, shining, and the

clouds!”

Jobst even knew the name of the road. I wouldn't budge. Jobst managed to get a shot of the riders together riding along. He got off his bike and climbed a ledge. While climbing, Jobst knocked off a big rock that nearly dented his top tube. As is the tradition, we stopped at the spring on the backside.

On the first climb after Isabel Creek, Jobst took off and was not seen again until San Antonio Valley. This was true despite the efforts of the four riders drafting and riding as fast as they could. I wanted to drop back because of the frantic pace.

At San Antonio Valley, we were disappointed to see that there were no wildflowers to speak of. It is uncertain if they are delayed by the rain, or if there will not be any flowers at all. At The Junction store, the owner was just opening. Jobst berated the people here. “They think they're Texans. They can't give anything its Spanish pronunciation. Instead of San Antonio Junction, it's San Anton Junction.” Jobst had two Mountain Dews, and nothing else. The other riders had a Mountain Dew as well.

On the climb up the first steep hill, we went out like we were in a race. I lagged behind. Jobst said, “You went too hard on the climb of Mount Hamilton.” There are but two big climbs before the flats to Livermore. There is some beautiful riding here, a narrow, winding road that follows a gurgling brook bordered by wildflowers. In several places, intermittent streams covered the road and we had to ride through at each crossing. In a particularly nice meadow, some half-dozen dune buggies plowed through the stream, wreaking havoc. I finally caught up to Ted and Gary, who had cut the pace to wait for me, and generally because they were not feeling like racing. Jobst and Mittelstadt were nowhere to be seen. We rode together into Livermore at a strong but not aggressive pace.

During the long descent of Mines Road, we saw more evidence of the recent record rains and what impact they have had on the roads. Every mile there was a washout in which half the road was gone. A stop sign had been placed at each washout to warn motorists.

At this point, I started cramping in both hamstrings and was forced to slow down [it's a problem to this day]. I got a drink from Ted, which seemed to help. On the ride into Livermore on Del Valle Road, Ted flatted. The road had been repaved recently and was like new.

We ran into a massive influx of cars and people on the road into Livermore. They were all going to a winery centennial (Wente winery). In Livermore, we ate at Safeway, the traditional stop. Jobst saw two kids trying to find a lizard in some bushes next to a tree. The lizard ran up the tree but the kids didn't see it. They kept searching in the grass. Jobst told me not to alert the kids. The kids finally figured out where the lizard went, but it was too late. The lizard was out of reach. The kids looked up with a puzzled expression at the tree limb, when they thought of where it might have gone.

On the first hill on Hwy 84, I was dropped immediately. Even a soft drink hadn't helped give me energy. I was still cramping, too. From there to the car, I rode alone. The climb of Calaveras Reservoir went well. I saw many cyclists, but few cars. One reason for the lack of cars was that the road at Sunol Park was closed. I had to ride through a landslide, but otherwise the road was okay, except for one place where a 20-foot section had collapsed. I got to the car in Milpitas just as Jobst was putting away his bike.



On a June 1983 ride, Ted Mock and Peter Johnson ride at the Mount Hamilton summit.

Waddell Creek Washout



MAY 21, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Tom Holmes, Ray Hosler, Parker McComas, Paul Mittelstadt, Tom Ritchey, Bill Robertson

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, down Old La Honda, Hwy 84, up Pescadero Road, Cloverdale Road, Hwy 1, Waddell Creek hiking trail into Big Basin, up Hwy 236 and Hwy 9, down Page Mill Road and Moody Road

WEATHER: cool and foggy, then clear and warm, then cool and foggy on coast; then warm and clear in Big Basin

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Paul - flat

I knew this was going to be a crazy ride when Jobst said before leaving that he had no idea where he was going. By the time we reached Loma Mar store, our numbers had dwindled and we still didn't know where we were headed. Finally, I suggested Santa Cruz.

On Cloverdale, Jobst spotted a turkey vulture dining on a disemboweled cow (still alive). Otherwise, the ride went without incident. Even Cloverdale was in great shape [it wasn't paved then]. It was foggy on the coast, so Jobst started having other ideas. When we reached Waddell Creek, he suggested we search out a trail to Big Basin State Park.

Everything went smoothly at first. The trail— an old logging road—climbed gently through the redwoods, Monterey pine, and marshlands. We saw the occasional Sea to Skyline hiker, too. After several miles, we came to a sign that said the trail was closed from recent flooding. That was Jobst's cue for another "adventure ride."

Landslide blocks way

In less than a mile, we came to a landslide blocking the trail. There was no way through except to go around and up a hill, which we did for about a mile. When we arrived at the creek, there was no way across but to walk our bikes through. The road steepened gradually, but we still hadn't reached the steep climb we knew was coming. At the junction with Skyline to the Sea Trail, Jobst chose a road that went to the right. It was a good dirt road, but it didn't last for long. The road became more and more overgrown. At one point, we walked our bikes over a wooden plank with a 15-foot drop into Waddell Creek. We left the creek behind as the climb continued.

Finally, the road ended in a grassy area. A dead deer lay nearby under a cloud of flies. Jobst



Tom Ritchey carefully walks on a log over a chasm with a 15-foot drop during our search for a road through Big Basin.

climbed into a thicket of young redwoods, searching for the road. We had encountered a massive landslide. Soon Jobst was yelling to Tom as they probed for a way through. Would this modern-day Davy Crockett find his way? Not this time. Jobst concluded that the landslide was impenetrable. We had to go back.

There was only one way into the park, and that was on the narrow Skyline to the Sea Trail. [The trail is closed to bicycles, but in 1983 mountain bikes were scarce.] The trail was hardly rideable, so we walked along with the hikers, towing our bikes.

Berry Creek Falls

In the early going, we came across Berry Creek Falls; waterfalls are rare in the Santa Cruz Mountains. A man sat on a bench admiring the view. “Don’t you wish you could take that home with you?” he said. I did the next best thing and took a picture. After several miles of climbing, the trail crested and we began a swift descent. At park headquarters, we had a bite to eat before the climb on Hwy 236 and Hwy 9 in the shimmering heat, a fitting end to another ride in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Checking in on Keith Vierra



JUNE 19, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt, Ray Hosler, Tim Louis, Tom Ritchey, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine, Pescadero Road, Cloverdale Road, Hwy 1 south, Branciforte Road, Granite Creek Road, Glen Canyon Road, Mountain Charlie Road, Summit Road, Skyline Boulevard, Page Mill Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

WEATHER: Clear and warm all day

K eith Vierra is one of the country’s best bike racers. He learned his sport in the Santa Clara Valley, where his parents make their home. Keith’s “coach” has been Jobst Brandt. Jobst is not a coach in the traditional sense, but he is someone upon whom many cyclists have relied for advice — anywhere from wheel building to training tips. Jobst is also the person from whom many racers have learned riding technique. Because Jobst often rides on rugged dirt roads, accompanying riders hone their bike handling skills.

In his early years as a cyclist, Keith went on many such Jobst rides. At the age of 26, Keith was beginning to make a name for himself. He placed fifth at the Coors Classic in 1980. He was sponsored by a team in Santa Barbara. But all the while, Keith tried to play down his sport. He was not prepared to make the ultimate commitment and turn professional, as many American racers have done in the past five years or so. Instead, Keith attended junior college in the winter months, and raced in the spring and summer. That’s just the kind of person Keith is. He loves the sport, not the money it offers as a professional.

Well, Keith, being the great rider he is, had yet to crash and get seriously hurt. But his luck ran out a couple weeks ago. He crashed into a car while taking a left hand bend on the narrow, twisty Hwy 236 that leads into Big Basin State Park. He, along with Rudy Gunzell, another good racer, was hurt badly enough to require hospitalization. Rudy was not as badly hurt. He broke his arm and had a concussion. Keith is still in the hospital and will be for another four weeks. He broke his pelvis on his left side when he hit the car. It was a glancing blow, otherwise the damage report might have been much worse. He also had some internal bleeding, but nothing serious. Jobst decided to visit Keith in the Santa Cruz hospital. Because of his injury, Keith can’t be moved from his bed. On this beautiful spring day, we were more than ready for a ride of this length — about 110 miles.

Jobst was still recovering from his crash that happened only a day after Keith’s. He broke a crank arm and fell, chipping his elbow, but otherwise was uninjured. I was a bit tired from my ride the previous day, while Jim was unable to finish the ride because he had to find a place to live. Marc is attending UC Berkeley, age 20. Tim had just returned from a trip up the coast by bike. Tom wore his new Avocet polypropylene jersey, a Father’s Day gift.



Keith Vierra finishes third in a road race outside Lodi in February 1980, behind Greg LeMond and Kent Bostick.

We met Tom on Skyline Boulevard after an uneventful ride up Alpine Road. The dirt road is still a mess. We stopped at Loma Mar store for a bite to eat, then headed to Cloverdale Road, where we found a nice tailwind. On Hwy 1, Jobst and Tom picked up the pace as I frantically tried to keep up. We took Swanton Road so Jobst could see the miniature trains owned by Al Smith.

After a brief stop, we headed off to the Santa Cruz Lighthouse on West Cliff Drive. Seals barked on the rocky shore as a flock of pelicans swooped overhead, looking like an aircraft flying formation.

Finally, we left (it was about 1 p.m.) and went in search of Keith. We discovered which hospital he was staying at and headed off. Soon we were walking down the aisles of the hospital, shoes clicking on the tile floor. Keith looked great. He didn't have a scratch on him! It had been two weeks since the accident, so he was not having any problems by this time. At first, he had some minor internal bleeding and he was unable to eat for two days. His internal system had been knocked about badly. We talked for quite some time. Keith told how the accident happened and what he remembered of it. He never lost consciousness through the entire ordeal. He said the car he hit was in his lane

and that there was nothing he could do about it. He hit it with a glancing blow, right after Rudy did the same. Sterling McBride, who

was leading, got by. Dave McLaughlin, next in line, barely got past, and crashed in the bushes on the side of the road. Eric Heiden, who was a ways back, stopped and helped Keith. Keith said about one hour passed before the ambulance arrived. He was treated by the EMTs, who were from the Boulder Creek fire department. Keith was in good spirits, and talked about getting out.

When Jobst asked him if he was going to race Mount Hamilton in August, Keith's eyes brightened and he said, "When in August? I think I can be ready by then."

We still had a long ride ahead of us. It was warm outside but there was a good ocean breeze to cool things off. Tom had already gone home. Thus ended another Jobst Ride, 5:30 p.m.

One More Creek to Cross



OCTOBER 16, 1983

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Sterling McBride, Dave McLaughlin, Paul Mittelstadt, Ted Mock, Keith Vierra, Dave

Zanotti, Strange John, George

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, up Hwy 236, up China Grade, Butano Ridge Trail, down Butano Ridge Trail Loop (Harwood Creek), through Portola State Park and up Alpine, home

WEATHER: Foggy in the valleys, sunny on the mountaintops. Cool

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Yes, the Jobst Rides are continuing at full tilt. Jobst remains the unbending force that he has always been. Sunday, he rode with several top racers in the area and did well. He took me on a new trail in the Santa Cruz Mountains — one more suited for hiking than riding because of its many switchbacks. On the way up Alpine Road, a runner informed us that he saw a “wolf” on the roadside. Jobst immediately countered that he saw a coyote. Sure enough, moments later Jobst spied the coyote on the side of the road.

The ride up Alpine went without incident. Finally, after the previous winters’ rains, the road’s several landslides have been cleared, and we can make our way up the road without dismounting or taking the difficult side trail that requires considerable walking.

The ride up Alpine is always enjoyable in the fall. Leaves cover many parts of the road, which go “crunch” as bike tires roll over them; the air is brisk and the leaves are turning — reds, yellows, browns. On Skyline, we reached a maximum speed of 32 mph on the first descent, which was duly recorded by a CatEye cyclocomputer. Two unknown riders joined up with Jobst and rode a ways.

On the descent of Hwy 9, Jobst blasted off at a speed of 45 mph, and soon dropped me and George. I slowed down when I ran into a wall of fog, which coated my glasses and reduced visibility. George and I then rode together. On Hwy 236, Keith pointed out where he had been hit by a truck; it was a tight turn and is now known as “Keith’s Corner.” We maintained a friendly pace until near the top of the climb and then the going got serious. Before reaching China Grade, Jobst got off his bike and ran it up the shortcut of dirt stairs. We rode around on the pavement and tried to catch up to Jobst, but he beat us.

We assembled for a photo at Gate 12, a gate maintained by the Santa Cruz Lumber Co. Then everyone headed down the road to the Butano Ridge Trail. The first hill is steep, but most everyone made it.

We turned right at a new gate and went up a hiking trail. The trail led us circuitously down a narrow, switchback leaf-covered spoor. The trail was so covered with leaves, it was hard to see the drop-off. But the leaves were



Riders assemble at Gate 12 for a photo by Jobst Brandt. Ray Hosler, Keith Vierra, Ted Mock, Paul Mittelstadt, Dave McLaughlin, Sterling McBride, Dave Zanotti, George, John Pinaglia.

turning, and the redwoods were magnificent as always.

At a crucial intersection marked by a white sign, Jobst had decided to take the less-traveled trail. It was hard to follow; finally it dumped into a stream bed littered with fallen logs and huge boulders. We made our way over the obstacle course until the trail picked up again. We then headed down to Portola State Park. In the park, Dave repaired his Campagnolo Super Record derailleur with a park ranger's tool. The ride up Alpine went without incident. [Last entry for John Pinaglia, who died in 1984 in a head-on collision on Hwy 101 while driving his car.]



Easter Egg Hunt



APRIL 22, 1984

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine, down Alpine, Portola State Park, Haul Road to Memorial Park to Loma Mar, Jobst-home on Pescadero Road; Ray - to Pescadero, Stage Road, Tunitas Creek Road, Portola Valley, home

WEATHER: Foggy in valley and coast, headwind; sunny higher up, clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

As Wheelsmith co-owner Ric Hjertberg so aptly stated, Jobst has gone through several “generations” of riders. None of those generations showed up today. On this Easter Sunday, Jobst rode only a short distance so he could return early enough for the traditional Easter egg hunt. He had also ridden the previous day with his youngest son, Olaf, on Butano Fire Road. Last weekend, Olaf made the round trip to Santa Cruz, age 14.

The ride up Alpine went pleasantly. On two previous occasions, we got our wheels muddy, but on this weekend the road was dry and the sun shined. The birds were singing and the flowers blooming. It was a grand day for a bike ride.

Midway up the road, Gary Holmgren was seen riding with someone else. Gary asked Jobst where he was headed and expressed a desire to follow, but did not. This was the first I had seen Gary in about a year. The medical technician at Stanford said he was taking more college classes.

Jobst was not his usual self this day. He rode down the hills at a gentle pace. He stopped at an overlook to see the Big Dipper Ranch and study the lay of the land. Fog hugged the valleys, blankets of white smoke that give sustenance to the redwood forests. We descended further into the valley, destination Portola State Park. The road is winding and fast. It takes skill and daring to take the road at a brisk pace, but that is the only pace Jobst knows.

Once inside the park, we dismounted and walked down a stairway to a bridge that crossed Peters Creek. Jobst said, "That water looks so good!" We rode quietly through the park, observing the campers. Jobst was rankled by a sign posted at a gate, prohibiting all but authorized vehicles. "Somebody put that sign right where the bikes ride. He must hate bicycles."

After riding up and down a series of short hills, we came to a large wooden bridge. Jobst stopped and peered into the crystal-clear waters, but he did not see what he had known in past years. "There used to be big trout swimming in Pescadero Creek," he said with bitterness in his voice. Once on the Haul Road, we headed west. The road was muddy in places, but in better shape than in past rides. Work crews from a nearby penal farm had cleared the forest in places, burning the underbrush and filling in the washouts that had forced the Jobst Riders to dismount and cross them on foot in the past.

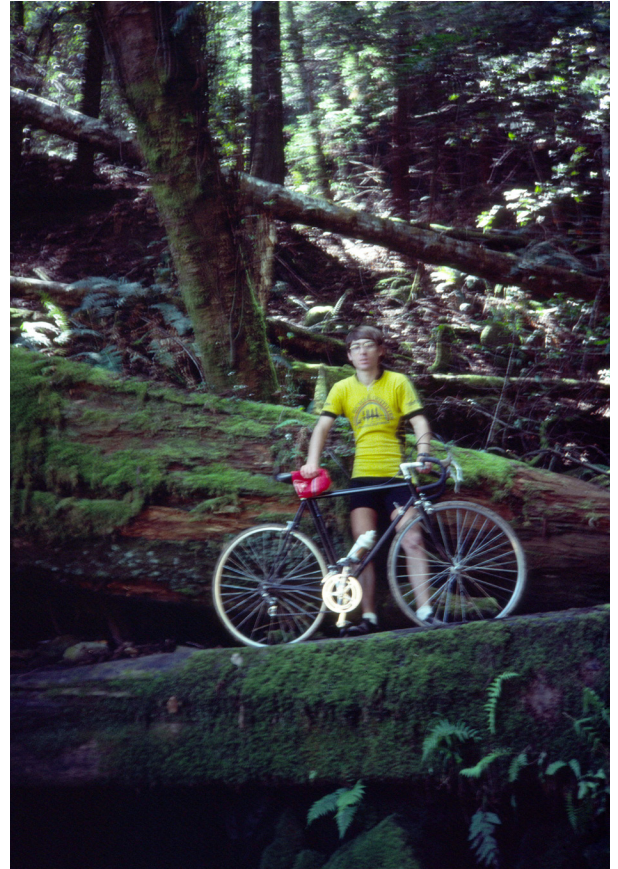
At the largest washout, two tractors stood silent. Work crews had placed a culvert to drain off water from the mountain stream. But Jobst said the culvert wasn't nearly large enough. "It's going to become plugged up after the first rain," he said with disdain in his voice. Jobst took a photo of me perched on top of a redwood log across the creek.

Once inside Memorial Park, we saw several deer and a winter wren. The tiny bird made quite a racket. On Wurr Road, Jobst pointed to the VWs in front of the drug house. We crossed the wooden bridge that several years ago had been the place where Jobst crashed with other riders. He was injured badly enough to require an ambulance. His thumb was mangled so that he needed a steel pin inserted. In Loma Mar, we saw Tom Holmes resting with two other riders. They were headed for Bonny Doon Road, and then China Grade. The two other riders drank beer and hardly acted as though they were excited about the prospect of riding up Bonny Doon.

Jobst sat down and told stories about how steep Bonny Doon is and how fast it is coming down. Jobst asked Roger, the store owner, about oil drilling going on in the area. Roger wasn't sure where it would take place. The oil will be sold to pay for improvements in Big Basin State Park.

Jobst showed the riders his Avocet cyclometer and the CatEye. He said Greg LeMond was using the Avocet cyclometer, and had ridden with it in a race. Jobst headed home as I went to Pescadero. On the way to Pescadero, I was passed by a bike race in progress. The riders peeled off to finish the race at Pescadero High School.

On a wide stretch of road entering Pescadero, I had my head down as there was a headwind. Then I felt something strike my right thigh. At first I thought I had been hit by ice because I looked back quickly to see white material hitting the road. But upon closer observation, I discovered I had been hit by an egg — a hardboiled Easter egg. I could only look back at the truck from which the egg was thrown, a Ford pickup. I waved and rode on. The weather turned



cool and windy on Stage Road.

I rode up Tunitas Creek Road at a brisk pace. At the top, I saw Dave McLaughlin with his new Rossin. He warned about car traffic on Kings Mountain Road as I headed down. Riding through Portola Valley, I thought about my accident as I passed by and wished it had never happened. My neck is always stiff [to this day].

Mount Hamilton Ride with an Olympic Champion



APRIL 29, 1984

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Eric Heiden, Ray Hosler, Ted Mock, Steve Potts, Tom Ritchey

ROUTE: Mount Hamilton loop

WEATHER: Cool, windy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Eric - flat; Tom - bee sting on cheek; Steve - chain fell off.

What would have been just another Mt. Hamilton ride turned into a star-studded affair with the arrival of speedskater Eric Heiden (winner of five gold medals at the 1980 winter Olympics) at the summit. Eric drove up the mountain with his grandparents, who were visiting from Wisconsin. He had to attend a bike function in Santa Clara Valley, and was unable to start the ride with Jobst.

Tom said he was out of shape, having spent 10 days in Japan arranging for products to be made, including a mountain bike tire he designed. Steve Potts, a mountain biker and frame builder from Marin County, was visiting Tom.

Ted made a rare appearance. He just moved his photography shop across the street from Palo Alto Bicycles, having taken over another photographer's business. Ted was going to visit friends in Danville, so he would turn off at Livermore and take Tassajara Road.



We stopped for food in Livermore. Ray Hosler, Eric Heiden, Ted Mock, Rider, Steve Potts, Tom Ritchey.

As was typical with Jobst rides, the climb had its moments when people went off the front and made others suffer by trying to keep up. As always, Jobst's eagle eyes started spotting birds, this time a Lazuli bunting. At first, I thought it was a bluebird, but Jobst corrected me. Along the way, I looked for cracks in the road after the recent 6.2 magnitude earthquake in nearby Morgan Hill, but none were found.

At the summit (4,200 feet), Eric passed us and tooted his horn. Jobst and I raced to the top and, like a fool, I tried a 52-17 combination, but couldn't push such a big gear. Leave the big gears to Jobst.

Eric changed into his cycling clothes as Jobst and I talked with Eric's grandfather, who lives in Wisconsin and said he was a hockey coach at one time. They live on a lake, and this past winter they had 200 inches of snow. They couldn't get over the beauty of Santa Clara Valley and Mt. Hamilton.

Jobst went on about the problems he had with painting distance-to-go markers for the Mt. Hamilton road race. The sheriff painted over Jobst's handiwork. This year, Jobst said, he would fool the sheriff and paint the markers the day of the race.

On the descent, Jobst led us down the steep side. We regrouped and rode together to San Antonio Junction store. Jobst spotted a Horned lark, Western kingbird, Lewis's woodpecker, and a Roadrunner. Wildflowers covered San Antonio Valley, but not as much as two springs ago when we had heavy rains.

We had our usual bite to eat at the store, and rubbed shoulders with the motorcycle crowd.

On the first climb after leaving the store, Jobst, Ted, and Eric blasted off the front, but slowed down on the second climb — the Double S — so I could catch up. On Mines Road, we had the usual headwind.

Just before reaching Livermore, Eric had a front tubular flat [Jobst quit using sewups around 1981]. A rider caught up to us and joined our group into town.

In Livermore, we stopped at Safeway for food. We then headed west on Highway 84 [we quit taking that route around 1987-88]. We had a nice ride up Calaveras Road in the late afternoon, enjoying the green valleys and hills sprinkled with yellow and orange California poppies.

Back in Milpitas, we loaded our bikes into our cars and headed home, 100 miles, and 8,600 feet of climbing, behind us.



Upper Calaveras Road and reservoir on a fine day in May 1984.

Saul Road Makeover



MAY 13, 1984

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Olaf Brandt, Jan Causey, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Paul Mittelstadt, Bob Walmsley, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain Road, down Purisima Creek Road, Hwy 1 to Stage Road to Pescadero, to Loma Mar, Wurr Road through Memorial Park and along the Haul Road to Portola State Park, up Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Warm, sunny and clear; some fog on the coast

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - front flat; Bob - flat

Word had gotten out that Jobst was still feeling the effects of a sore back, so a horde of riders showed up at his house. Little did they realize, even with a sore back, Jobst can maintain a withering pace up hills along the coast. Peter is finally riding again after being absent since the European tour with Jobst last summer. Jim made a rare appearance. He had just finished working on the 1984-85 Palo Alto Bicycles catalog. Bob, who has also not been seen for many months, was there, as was Mittelstadt, who was suffering from a cold. He graduates from Stanford in June. Olaf, Jobst's number two son, a sophomore in high school, came along. He has been riding more frequently and is getting stronger every ride.

The group separated on Sand Hill Road when Bob flatted. Jan and Olaf rode ahead. On Kings Mountain Road,

Jim and I followed Bob and Paul. Jobst rode at a leisurely pace with Peter. Taking after his father, Olaf pushed a giant gear while climbing the steepest part of Kings Mountain Road near Skyline. At Skyline, Paul turned back. The rest of us headed north on Skyline and turned onto Purisima Creek Road, an old logging road. Now it's a favorite place for



In the early 1980s the Haul Road looked much different than it does today. The trees have grown!

mountain bike riders, equestrians, and hikers. Soon, the land around the road will be purchased by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and preserved forever. Bob headed north. He said he had been on Purisima last week. The road was in much better condition than last year when it was dusty. We quickly made our way down the thickly forested canyon as we followed the narrow, bumpy dirt road.

At the culvert crossing on Purisima Creek, we stopped for water. I commented how different the place looked since I took a photo of Jobst getting a drink here two years ago. Several large trees grow where before there had been open space. Of course, the flooding from recent severe winter storms had changed much of the terrain. We charged down the road. But soon we encountered large mud holes. There was no way around, so we rode through and got our bikes and clothes muddy. Jan was the muddiest, perhaps because she had ridden through a large mud hole at high speed.

At the bottom of Purisima Creek Road, we put our bikes over a yellow roadblock and washed up in the creek. Jan took off her shoes and went wading.

We headed west through a quiet glen with a sprinkling of farm houses and secluded palatial estates. With the wind at our backs, maintaining a speed of 17 mph required little effort. I asked Olaf how fast we were riding. Olaf was using his new cyclometer made by Avocet, the mechanical components which had been designed by his father. On Highway 1, I challenged Jobst on the hill south of Tunitas Creek.

Despite my best efforts, I was beaten back

midway up the hill. In San Gregorio, we stopped at the town's only store for food and drink. A half-dozen cyclists were already there. As we entered the store, an overhead fan turned on and blasted us with cool air. There was some question as to the fan's purpose.

Jim and Jan headed up Hwy 84, leaving Jobst, Peter, Olaf and me to take a longer route. We rode up Stage Road at a conversational pace. While climbing, we were passed by a truck containing a prize bull. The owner of the bull had stopped at San Gregorio store earlier. Jobst said, "How would you like to take your cow for a Sunday ride?"

On the final descent before reaching Pescadero, Jobst said he was confused about which direction he was head-

ing. “It happens every time I pass this place,” he said with a wry grin. Jobst was referring to a concrete pad in a farmer’s field. The spot is used for magnetic studies by the USGS (see page 97), Jobst guessed. Why they chose this place is anybody’s guess. The valley leading to Pescadero offers an unspoiled view of nature’s splendor. We could see surrounding hillsides with their groves of eucalyptus, and the white farm house that was the Willowside dairy. This is also the home of colorful peacocks with their impressive plumes that, when opened, reflect the colors of the rainbow. Meanwhile, Jobst pointed out the light purple flowers and said they were wild radish.

Turning left before the white steeple church in Pescadero, we took the one residential street past the town’s elementary school and the old high school. The new high school is about a mile away.

On Pescadero Road, we saw Kay, Bud’s wife, riding to the ocean. But there was no Bud anywhere to be seen. Since last summer’s expedition to Nepal with Kay, Bud hasn’t been riding much. In Loma Mar, we stopped for food and water. Jobst got into a discussion about Corvairs with a person polishing his Datsun 280Z; he said his father had owned Corvairs back in the 1960s when they were being manufactured by Chevrolet. Jobst, although he spoke fondly of his Corvair, said they were indeed death traps as consumer advocate Ralph Nader had claimed. Jobst said the problem was with the suspension.

We headed onto Wurr Road, passing the bridge where Jobst took a bad spill several winters ago (ambulance ride home) and the farm with many sheep. We passed the house with the sinister driveway filled with broken down vehicles owned by drug addicts, then passed the apple orchard. Nearby was the trail we used to take down from Butano Ridge Trail.

The road through Memorial Park boded well for our ride — smooth and hard. As we turned onto the Haul Road, we were greeted by a freshly packed road. At a creek, Jobst stopped for water. A flood had obliterated the area two winters ago. The road was rebuilt, but the devastation was still visible. Drinking from this trickle of a stream, it hardly seemed possible it uprooted redwoods and moved a hillside. We followed the freshly packed Haul Road. Jobst said a steam engine many years ago hauled redwood logs to the sawmill. And he had ridden down the road “in an 85-inch gear” as fast as he could. That was when it was still being used by the loggers and logging trucks, who made it as smooth as a highway. But after the logging stopped, the road was abandoned and fell into disrepair.

Finally, the severe winter two years ago all but made the road impassible. Many creek crossings required dismounting and scrambling over felled tree limbs and picking your way through rocks in the creek. But work crews from the nearby honor farm had cleared the brush, and bulldozers made roads over creeks where there had been small canyons. Despite the condition of the road, it never stopped Jobst from enjoying this remote part of the Santa Cruz Mountains. But remote has some qualification. The honor farm isn’t far away, and there’s Portola State Park, where campers bring their RVs and “rough it” with their radios, TVs, portable toilets, showers, bacon and eggs for breakfast and, of course, roasted marshmallows over an open fire for dessert.



Old Pescadero Creek bridge in Portola State Park is crossed to reach the Haul Road. The wooden bridge was dismantled and replaced with a steel bridge in 2010.

Along the way, Jobst pointed to signs designating branch trails leading to Butano Ridge Trail. One such trail we

took recently was covered with leaves, was narrow, and had more than a dozen switchbacks. We had to walk our bikes down a canyon devastated by flooding. This trail led us to the Portola State Park entrance. At the back entrance, Jobst said he had pulled out a pipe blocking the space between the gate and the hill several times. But it was back again. Peter said “They don’t want to cut off their water supply.”

As is the tradition, we stopped at a wooden bridge over Pescadero Creek and looked for trout. There were fingerlings, but nothing the size of what Jobst was used to seeing 30 years ago. “There were big trout here before they got fished out,” he said. Now Olaf was beginning to feel the effects of the ride. He said he was out of energy; it would be a long ride to Skyline for Olaf. As Jobst put it: “When you get to Alpine Road, you’ll be glad.” I rode ahead and took Skyline to Hwy 84. I was rewarded with a clear view of Santa Clara Valley. White puffy clouds dotted the sky and an ocean breeze cooled me off. From Skyline, San Francisco gleamed in the distance at the tip of the peninsula. The city’s towering concrete and iron skyscrapers looked like giant stalagmites glimmering in a sea of blue. Yes, the sights and sounds of spring in the Santa Cruz Mountains are best appreciated on the bicycle.

Haul Road after the Alps



AUGUST 25, 1984

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Through Stanford Campus, past radar dish, under Interstate 280, Arastradero Road, Alpine Road, Page Mill Road, Alpine Road to Portola State Park, Haul Road to Loma Mar, to Pescadero, Stage Road, up Hwy 84 and Old La Honda, down Hwy 84 (Jobst down Windy Hill), Portola Valley, Alpine, Arastradero, home

WEATHER: Partly cloudy, breezy and mild

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

This was the first time I rode with Jobst since he left for his Alps trip with Peter Johnson. On Saturday, Jobst and I watched the Mount Hamilton Bike Race. Jobst painted numbers on the road, indicating distance to the top of the mountain, which the sheriff once again painted over. This time Jobst was ready though, and had black spray paint with him. Sterling McBride won the King of the Mountain and the race. But he was lucky, because his seat came loose and he had to exchange bikes at the top of Mount Hamilton.

Dave McLaughlin and Roger Marquis caught up to Sterling at this point, and they rode together until Dave dropped out with a flat 12 miles from the finish. Sterling easily took the sprint from Roger. On Sunday, Jobst was slow in getting started. But once on the road, we did some classic Jobsting. We rode through the Stanford campus, with Jobst explaining about a road he used to drive on when he was attending college here. Now there are buildings and manicured lawns on the old road. Jobst rode past Lake Lagunita, an irrigation holding lake on the western edge of the campus. The lake was dry. Jobst told me about a plane that had to make a forced landing in the dry lake bed, but the ground was so soft the plane’s nose dived into the ground.

While riding up to the radar tower, Jobst took a steep trail, one that he says he rides frequently on his way to work at Hewlett Packard’s research labs on Deer Creek Road. I walked, not wanting to risk falling off my bike with my new Avocet cyclometer attached. After many delays, the cyclometer is finally being shipped, but in limited quantities. Jobst says the computer chip is still defective, and he thinks the chip will have to be completely redesigned to be free of defects.

We saw a blue heron in a small pond on the other side of Hwy 280. Jobst then showed me a barn owl resting in

the rafters of a two-story building nearby. The owl never blinked or moved. The ride up Alpine Road went without incident. At the top of the road, we saw three mountain bike riders, two of them women. Women have taken a keen interest in this more comfortable bike. During the descent into Portola State Park, my speed hit 42 mph. I saw speeds of 30 mph while descending Alpine Road. In Portola State Park, Jobst stopped at the bridge over Pescadero Creek, the same one he always stops at. No crawdads this time. Just minnows.



We took the

Haul Road to Memorial Apple Jacks, a La Honda landmark on Hwy 84.

County Park, where we picked some apples on Wurr Road, but few were easily reached, having already been picked. Many *Amaryllis* graced the grassy apple orchard. In Loma Mar, we watched three immaculate German-made army trucks drive up. Apparently their owners are into such oddities.

Past the large white house, Willowbrook Farm, at the end of a long row of eucalyptus on Stage Road, Jobst stopped to investigate strange goings on in an open field. For many years Jobst had wondered about the concrete platform in the middle of the field — its purpose and who was using it. Today he would finally find the answers. We rode up to two vans, one of them occupied by two men. Jobst quickly struck up a conversation. He spoke their language, too. The men were computer operators, one working for Tandy, the other for Apple. The Tandy computer employee told Jobst that the site is used to test antennas. He said the location was chosen for several reasons. First, it is in a valley, far from radio or TV signals that could interrupt the testing procedure. Second, it was on land that the owner allowed them to use. Finally, there is very little car traffic on the nearby road. Cars emit radio-type waves, too, and could disrupt their experiments. In the past, Jobst had speculated that the government was using the site to test magnetic fields.

We continued up Stage Road and along the Pacific Ocean. Fog hugged the shoreline, and it was very pleasant weather from Stage Road. At Hwy 84, Jobst said he wanted to head home and not take Tunitas Creek, so I went along on the newly graveled highway. About a mile before reaching La Honda, a backwoods town of about 500 residents, a 40-minute drive from the peninsula, we saw a blackened piece of land next to the roadside. It was the first sign I saw of the recent arsons, including the Boots and Saddles bar.

I suggested we visit Bob Martin, my manager at Runner's World Books, and his wife Betty [what a coincidence that Jobst knew Bob's wife]. Jobst agreed, wanting to speak to Betty about a story/program he was writing for the HP 3000 computer. Betty was just pulling up when we were getting ready to leave. Bob Martin followed a few minutes later.

We talked for about a half hour as the Martins' new dog, Heidi, frolicked in the yard with several towering redwoods, a flower garden and a row of blackberry bushes, which we enjoyed. We said goodbye and headed up Hwy 84, where we saw another larger burn site on a hillside. After turning off on Old La Honda, we rode effortlessly over the newly packed and rolled dirt road. At Skyline, Jobst went south and I rode north. Jobst wanted to descend Windy Hill.

1985-86



Finding Happy Trails

DECEMBER 15, 1985

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, up Razorback Ridge, north on Skyline Boulevard to Windy Hill, down Windy Hill, right on Arastradero; right again uphill into Arastradero Park. Trail to Lake John Sobey, into Foothill Park, down Page Mill and left on Arastradero, trail under Interstate 280, Radar Tower and home

WEATHER: Cold and partly cloudy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

It has been a while since I wrote up a Jobst Ride. I guess that's because the rides have lost some of their adventure. Jobst is 50 years old and not riding as hard as he did five years ago. And nobody comes on the rides anymore. It's usually just me and Jobst or Jobst and one other. Tom Ritchey is busy with his mountain bike company, and raising three children. Ted Mock got married and started a photography business in downtown Palo Alto. Jim Westby owns a house, and doesn't show up as much. Tim Nicholson isn't riding much these days. Mike and Jean Higgins usually go together on their own. Peter and Jan are getting settled. Peter's work leaves him little time anymore. However, Jobst is always up for trail riding.

On this cold day, Jobst decided on an easy ride, easy in the sense we would not be riding a lot of miles. The previous Sunday, we went 70 miles on a familiar route — Old La Honda, Hwy 84, Pescadero Road, Hwy 1 and up Tunitas Creek Road. While climbing Tunitas, we came across a sheriff's officer inspecting the sight of a rape. The rapist's car broke down, which enabled them to capture the criminal.

During our ride up Alpine, Jobst stopped along the creek to look for mushrooms; his friend Madelyn found them here. But no luck. We continued riding, but I suggested that instead of going up Alpine we take the Razorback Ridge trail. I had run down it a couple times, and it seemed not too steep to ride up. Jobst was game, so we took the small dirt road which leads to the trailhead. The trail was ideal for uphill riding, although it was narrow and we had to dismount at the switchbacks. The lower reaches were thick with trees, while the middle part of the trail had a lot of brush and some great views of the peninsula. The upper reaches of the trail turned to pine trees, and the ground was more moist.

We saw a few hikers, but did not pass them because we took a turnoff to the left and headed up a steeper



Jobst Brandt checks out Langley Hill Road from a vantage point off Skyline Boulevard.

section to Skyline Boulevard. From there, we headed north 100 yards and Jobst hopped a fence at that point to take a road to an overlook. At the overlook, we had a view of the entire Pacific coast. There were bald hills mixed with trees, and at the tops of several hills we could see ranch-style houses. Jobst explained a little history of a road we saw below and how it led to one ranch. Now the land was being subdivided, and more and more houses were being built on it.

The dropoff from our vantage point was spectacular. After taking a couple of pictures [book's cover photo], we headed back onto Skyline. When we reached Windy Hill, we got on the trail and bounced along. The trail is about a foot wide and runs along a steep hillside. I took a picture of Jobst negotiating this part of the trail. At the top of a hill, we then headed straight down on a bumpy and muddy spoor. On our left, we saw a small grove of trees where there had once been a house, according to Jobst.

We got onto an old road, now used mainly by cows. There was a small water fountain with bubbling spring water next to the road, where we could get a drink. The old road is still in good shape, but when we reached a grassy slope, we once again had to get off and ride down the side of the hill, bouncing along and hanging on for dear life. I had to extend my arms and brace myself. I was so far back in the saddle that my rear end was behind the seat and over the rear wheel. Only that way could I keep from falling forward. Once back on the road, it was badly rutted and it took consummate handling to avoid falling. Soon, however, the road improved and we sped down the hill. Then we took a right turn onto a trail and bounced down into a rocky meadow, proceeding to Corte Madera Creek. There had once been a road where we crossed. We saw a lot of beer bottles, and Jobst made a comment about how nice it was for these people to come to enjoy the outdoors and then leave their trash behind.

Our ride had more to come. Jobst wanted to explore the new Arastradero Preserve, recently opened by the city of Palo Alto. The land is sandwiched between Arastradero Road and Foothill Park. Jobst got us there by a steep paved road, which then turned to improved gravel. When the gravel road began, we came to a sign that said no bicycles. We both groaned at this. No sooner had we gotten over the shock when a Honda CRX came up to us and the driver warned us we should not ride our bikes there. We argued the matter but the young driver warned he would call the sheriff. He said he didn't make the rules. But I said that he sure enjoyed enforcing them.

We took a trail to the left, instead, and headed into the park. Jobst led us past the mysterious Lake John Sobey. This was a utility easement for the city. Apparently, there was a squatter up here in the woods at one time by the name John Sobey. The lake is nothing more than a mud hole, and only about 50 yards across. The city let the man continue living there, and even put up a green road sign on a telephone pole that says Lake John Sobey.

We continued up a muddy trail, which Jobst said he uses to ride to work. We eventually arrived in Foothill Park, and then got on Coyote Trail. Thence we headed out the park entrance. We stopped at the entrance, where there's a water spigot, and took our fill. Jobst headed down Page Mill Road at flank speed and I could not keep up. We then turned left at Arastradero Road, where the summer's fire was still in evidence. The majestic eucalyptus trees that used to form a canopy over the road are burned down or looking sick [they were all cut down]. We turned right into a parking lot, where we then rode to a trail and passed Felt lake near Interstate 280. On the way, we saw a red-shouldered hawk, a species I had never seen before. At the lake, we saw buffleheads and loons. We finally made our way through the Stanford property and down the hill to Junipero Serra Boulevard.

Ride in the Rain



FEBRUARY 2, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up and down Hwy 84 to San Gregorio; south to Pescadero, up Pescadero Road; Ray up Hwy 84; Jobst up Alpine, down dirt Alpine

WEATHER: Cloudy in hills; then rain in San Gregorio, then sun; finally, clouds and more rain

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - 2 flats

Today was like many days in the Bay Area in February — wet and blustery. Jobst and I headed west toward the Santa Cruz Mountains, bound for the vast blue Pacific, where Jobst wanted to see whales, even if it might rain.

Always looking for road gifts, Jobst spotted on the roadside a giant bottle/can opener that looked like it was made for someone 20 feet tall. Jobst also found three pennies in the road, all of which he scooped up and spent in Loma Mar.

There was some high adventure on this ride, as there is on every Jobst Ride. On the way down Highway 84, we



encountered several riders. Jobst rode ahead to keep up with the leader. I hung back. Near the bottom of 84, I had

my first flat — glass. Jobst waited in La Honda, which is where the first rain drops hit us. Soon, it was pouring, so we stopped under a redwood to stay dry. Jobst said, “Why don’t you put on your jacket?” I had forgotten my nylon jacket, so I slipped it on and off we went. The rain started in earnest three miles from San Gregorio. Fortunately, I stayed relatively dry but Jobst was getting soaked. He wore a long-sleeve jersey and knickers. At San Gregorio, we stood around and got warm by the pot-belly stove. The place was crowded with locals, mostly farmers and country folk (yuppies in jeans). Jobst commented that it won’t be long before the *San Francisco Chronicle* discovers this “quaint” place and gives it a big write-up so all the yuppies can invade.

The general store has a variety of goods, from tools to clothing, to books. Jobst scouted about in the rear of the store, looking for useful items he might someday need. He found a bottle of castor oil, which he wanted because it is a good lubricant.

Three people arrived soon after us. We passed them earlier near La Honda as they fixed a flat. The woman stood by the fire as her jeans started to steam. So did Jobst’s knickers. The riders tried to find a ride back to La Honda.

“At San Gregorio we stood around and got warm by the pot-belly stove.”

Other people sat at the bar drinking beer, even though it was still morning. The store is festooned with old photos, beer signs and interesting brick-a-brack. They had a map of the northern hemisphere, which had been turned upside down. Jobst noted that seeing things from a different perspective can be enlightening.

Other patrons enjoyed breakfast as a harried waitress in jeans scurried about. Service didn’t look all that great, but it’s all part of being in a folksy country store on the Pacific Coast, only 20 miles from a place where space shuttles, satellites, and personal computers are designed and manufactured. The variety of life within cycling distance of Palo Alto never ceases to amaze.

We headed to the ocean when the rain stopped. The waves crashed ashore, beaches littered with wood and logs. Steam burned off the wet road. On the way up the first hill on Hwy 1, I noticed the amazing texture of the roadside cutaway, which had exposed some soft brown sandstone. It was already weathered into an infinite variety of unique notches. The smooth, wet rock glistened in the sunlight. Nature’s artwork is vastly superior to anything man produces.

We stopped at a turnout, where Jobst wanted to look for whales. He was engaged in a conversation with a VW van driver when I arrived. The driver was visiting from Montana. His son lived in the Bay Area and loaned him his car. The elderly man’s wife followed with a small, furry dog, which she cradled like a child in her arms. We didn’t see any whale spouts, nor did we see the long oil slick that had coated hundreds of ocean birds in the past day. The slick came from a passing ship, which was illegally dumping close to shore. We stopped again to look for whales, and I noticed I had a flat as air hissed out. I patched the tube rather than replacing it. Once again, we were off, this time stopping at a marsh near the road. We listened to tiny but noisy marsh wrens. Their tails stuck straight up in the air. Jobst also pointed to a small western grebe and some coots. We rode farther along before turning left onto Pescadero Road. We saw three large white swans. Jobst and I had seen them a couple months previously in a nearby marsh. We were both surprised that nobody had killed them, especially when people kill pelicans by cutting off their pouches.

We continued west, climbing now. Jobst spotted a swallow, a couple weeks earlier than you’d expect to see one around here. I looked for a noisy bullfrog on the side of the road, but didn’t see it. In Loma Mar, we stopped for some food and rest and to say hello to the owner, Roger.

As I walked in, I asked for a Big Mac, an order of fries and a shake. As we were leaving, Roger promised to have it ready the next time I came back. We sat on the front porch watching customers come and go, as Jobst made his always insightful comments about life in these parts and the people who live here. We saw an owner of the MJB Ranch come inside, and we would later pass by his house. We would also pass Jill and Fid’s place on the other side of the road, but they weren’t anywhere to be seen.

We climbed to the top of Pescadero Road, and then rushed down to the fork at the bottom. I went to La Honda and Jobst went up Alpine Road. I had enough work for the day, so I took the easier route. The rain chased me down Hwy 84, but that was the last damp moment of an otherwise enjoyable day in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Spring Fever



FEBRUARY 23, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, down Old La Honda Road, Hwy 84 to Pescadero Road, Loma Mar, Cloverdale Road to Hwy 1, north on Hwy 1 to San Gregorio, Stage Road, Hwy 1, Tunitas Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road

WEATHER: Valley fog, then sunny and breezy, warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

After a week of deadly rains that brought flooding to the Sacramento Delta and Russian and Napa rivers, the sun came out. At least it did after the valley fog burned off. Unseasonably warm weather regenerated our spirits as we headed into the Santa Cruz Mountains. I thought it might be foggy on the coast, but it turned out to be beautifully clear and warm.

We rode through downtown Palo Alto on University Avenue. Jobst pointed to the newly painted awning over a storefront. He said the gray was just as ugly as the previous yellow. Then Jobst showed me that the ice cream store had gone out of business. The new paint job on Palo Alto Bicycles doesn't look that good, either. I think it should have more color, but it may be that way due to city restrictions. Riding over the bumpy Palm Drive, Jobst commented that the



Jobst Brandt poses on Old La Honda Road as fog boils over the hill, Feb. 23, 1986.

road was never leveled or paved properly. They just put down asphalt on the bumpy road, and it shows even today. He chastised the people who put up lights on the bike/pedestrian path, saying the light should be directed at the ground instead of diffused.

We didn't see any coyotes this morning in the open field next to San Francisquito Creek, across from Stanford Shopping Center. The field is marked for a new housing project for Stanford, but it got a last-minute reprieve when archaeologists discovered an Indian burial ground near the creek. It won't last long. The empty field is too close to civilization.

Near the turnoff to Old La Honda Road, Jobst showed me a house with a pond out front. The pond had a concrete spillway/road that had flooded from the recent heavy rains. There is a duck crossing sign (yellow diamond shape) near the spillway. We saw and listened to a song sparrow in a nearby tree. Ducks floated in the pond. The house has a beautiful garden with a gazebo. Jobst then rode farther south on Portola Road and showed me turkey vultures resting in an orchard near the roadway. There must have been a dozen

of the large black birds. Jobst had seen them a few days earlier, drying their outstretched wings in the sun after the heavy rains. We rode within 20 feet of the big birds.

We then headed up Old La Honda. It was extremely slippery as the climbing started. My rear wheel slipped twice, which I immediately (jokingly) blamed on my Avocet FasGrip smooth tires.

Near Eric Heiden's house, we saw Palo Alto Bicycles repair shop manager Dave Prion with a blonde woman. They appeared to be walking to Eric's house. We said hello and went on our way. Within a mile of the top, we began to break through the fog. The sun filtered through the mist, casting long beams of light through the redwoods. I thought I had stumbled across a setting for an Ansel Adams photograph.

We crossed Skyline Boulevard and began our descent on Old La Honda, which was in excellent condition — not a bit muddy. On a straightaway, we heard some equestrians call out in distress, asking us to stop. They were riding horses that were easily spooked. We had to dismount and walk toward them. Even then, one horse was frightened. Jobst took a picture of the two women as fog drifted over a green hillside in the distance. We talked about the problem with bike and equestrian encounters and how equestrians did not appreciate bikes on trails. The women were friendly and sympathized with the problem.

We sped down Old La Honda to Hwy 84 and, as we rode past the red barn, we noticed it needed a new coat of paint. Jobst gets irritated with this barn because he says it's painted the wrong color for a red barn.



Jobst Brandt looks for whale spouts from Pigeon Point Lighthouse off Hwy 1.

Nothing new was happening in La Honda. We rode up Haskins Hill at a quick pace and then descended to Loma Mar. I hit the second corner at 35 mph, and the first at 30 mph. Roger greeted us at the Loma Mar store, as usual. Jobst had to borrow some money because he forgot his. I bought a bottle of fruit juice and a Snickers. We talked to a county ranger about the condition of the Haul Road. He said there had been a couple of washouts. Jobst gets upset about this because the railroad was able to keep it open without any problem. The county put in culverts that were too small for the debris that would plug them.

We rode down Cloverdale Road, a wide boulevard in the middle of nowhere. Jobst remembers when it was a narrow, patch-quilt road. There had been plans to build houses here, and that's why the road was widened. When we reached the Pacific, we saw a half-dozen mountain bike riders headed out. They said they were going up Butano Fire Road and down Gazos Creek Road. They seemed like friendly people, and said that they always slowed for hikers.

Heading north on Hwy 1, Jobst looked for whale spouts on the horizon but didn't see any. We took Bean Hollow Road to reach Pescadero Road. It's tattered and narrow. We saw a group of cyclists at the entrance to a large greenhouse. Jobst said that from the top of Skyline you can see the greenhouses. "It looks like the ocean, but it's not." We stopped at the Pescadero Bridge on Hwy 1 to inspect the muddy water. A couple of western grebes floated around,

diving for fish. We also saw a harbor seal frolicking. As we stood on the bridge, we saw a motorcycle rider get rear-ended by a car. The cyclist was literally pushed off his bike, although he was not badly hurt because he was going so slowly. We rode across the bridge and stopped to talk to two women who were bird watching with a monocular. They were looking at least grebes, cinnamon teals, and pied-billed grebes. Jobst looked through the monocular to find three whistling swans he had noticed for the past couple months. Farther along at Jobst's favorite spot, we saw some marsh wrens chirping away, their grasses almost under water. We saw many ruddy ducks, with their comical blue beaks and red feathers.

In San Gregorio, we saw a handful of cyclists who had all the right equipment. One of them was riding Avocet FasGrips. On Hwy 1, we sped down the hill; Jobst got behind a large mobile home and hit 47 mph before reaching Tunitas Creek Bridge. On the ride up Tunitas Creek Road, we saw an entire hillside slipping away. The creek was amazingly clear after the heavy rains. We stopped at the watering hole where Native Sons Road takes off at Mitchell Creek and drank out of the stream. The water was cold and clean. I realized then that I had left my bag with patch kit and screwdriver at the store. I'll probably never see it again, even though I had a business card with my address inside. To top things off, I broke a rear spoke as we began the long climb to Skyline. That was the second spoke I had broken on that wheel.

Loma Prieta Road After the Fire



MARCH 2, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard to Summit Road, Loma Prieta Road to Soda Springs Road, Alma Bridge Road up Old Santa Cruz Hwy and Mountain Charlie Road, up Summit Road and Skyline Boulevard, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cool and clear; then warm and slight breeze

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Jobst hadn't been up Loma Prieta in a long while, so he decided that would be our destination. Last summer, a fire devastated the mountain from Lexington Reservoir to the summit; we wanted to find out how bad the damage was.

While riding along Alpine Road, Jobst noted that spraying had not been carried out everywhere. However, in some spots the crews had even sprayed along the horse trail. The ride turned into a hike on Alpine Road. There was mud at the gate, so we had to carry our bikes across. Then we discovered there was a washout, caused by the creek only 100 yards from the gate. Jobst pointed to what had once been a concrete bridge, now in the bottom of a chasm. He figures a culvert plugged up, causing water to back up and then spill over, taking the bridge with it [the bridge was still there, just covered with mud].

When we reached the mudslide area where problems have occurred in the past, we found that it was wiped out, too,



forcing us to crawl over mud and through bushes to the other side. In the process, we had to deal with some poison oak. I get itchy thinking about it. The next bad spot was Mud Turn, but Jobst rode around it. I walked. At another landslide, we found continuing road degradation. Jobst said that the culverts are becoming blocked, causing water to wash over the road. We saw two other places up the road that had deep ruts.

On Skyline, we rode over green hills to the fire station, where we stopped briefly for water. We continued at a steady pace on Summit Road. I found a dime along the road. We stopped at the house of Steve Wozniak to take photos of his llamas, TV dish, and solar heater. The llamas munched away at the grass. His gray wood house has a mail box that says "Candy and Woz." [He moved out long ago] There is a tall gate with several yellow diamond road signs, a koala and kangaroo printed on them.



A huge fire devastated the hills around Lexington Reservoir in 1985. We checked out the area by taking Loma Prieta Road in March 1986.

After crossing Hwy 17, we noticed a large church had been built. I reached 45 mph on the steep descent to Old Santa Cruz Highway. At the store, we saw several cyclists. A motorcycle rider missing two front teeth, tattered pants and a scraggly beard, went in the store and bought a beer, then motored away. "That guy is a mess," Jobst railed. After a 15-minute break (we got there at 11:15 a.m.), we headed up Mt. Bache Road. As we got higher, we began to see the fire devastation. Flames had crossed the road in places and burned some houses. Amazingly, some of the trees were green, and there was grass growing. Jobst pointed to what had been a chestnut orchard. Nearby, we saw a massive house, recently finished. Construction continues unabated here. The one-mile hill is really only 0.8 miles, according to my Avocet cyclometer. Jobst had measured it by car. We saw a mountain bike rider coming down at high speed.

At the top, we met up with a macho truck and its driver. The guy asked us if we were going on the private road, and Jobst said we were. End of conversation. Looking north, we saw scorched ground and the remnants of bushes that were also blackened. But the countryside to the east of Loma Prieta Road had been spared. We saw a couple bulldozers

parked, and Jobst thought they might be county vehicles, although they weren't marked as such. We stopped to watch a Bewick's wren frolicking in the burned bushes. I took another photo of Jobst, and then we headed up the Dirty Bump. The road was in good shape. A gate had been installed at the end of the paved road to keep out motorcycle riders. We were passed by two cars on the way to the next gate higher up. At that gate, we met up with another landowner who was waiting by his car. He wore blue slacks and a white shirt. He had pasty white skin behind black-rim glasses. He said, "Where do you think you're going?"

"On this road," Jobst responded in his deep baritone.

"No you're not," the man said. "This is a private road."

"No it isn't!" Jobst said in an irritated voice. He pointed to the side of the road, "This is private and this is private but the road is the county's."

"No it's not," the owner barked. "We've tried to give it to the county but they won't take it. We've had trouble out here lately."

Jobst shot back. "We don't pollute, we don't carry guns, and we don't start fires. You've had trouble with motorcycle riders and trucks, but not bicycles. We're just out here for a bike ride."

"This is a private road. No it isn't!"

With that, the landowner started walking to his car. "All right then. I'm calling the sheriff."

"Go ahead," Jobst countered. We rode through the gate and were on our way. We didn't stop at the watering hole as is our custom. Jobst seemed to be in a hurry.

The road was in good shape, but the land around it had been bulldozed in many places, and there were a lot of new roads. The amount of building going on here is remarkable, considering how remote this place is. But the houses are not palatial estates. They are more like trailers and prefab houses. Instead of well-tended yards, we saw debris in the form of lumber and steel pipes, everywhere.

Farther along, we were passed by two more cars, something that never happened several years ago. We passed a house flying a large black flag with a white skull and crossbones. What kind of people live up here? I don't think I want to know them. As we were leaving the last gate on the dirt road, another landowner showed up in his blue Mustang with his wife. As he got out of his car, he smiled, in a sinister way, and asked us if we belonged here.

Jobst replied, "Sure." The landowner said that this was a private road and, once again, told us that they had been having trouble up here. "After seeing your neighbors, I think it's coming from them," Jobst said. "When people fly flags with a skull and crossbones I'd wonder about them."

A few more words were exchanged (his wife tried to disarm the confrontation before we left). The portly landowner wore clunky hiking boots with green laces, a white T-shirt and shorts. We then turned north and rode to the U.S. government radar facility, now abandoned. It's off limits to the public. There are "no trespassing" signs everywhere, and a locked gate. We got through the gate and rode across the base, even passing a car with a woman driver, who did not stop us.

After a climb of about a half-mile, we took a left turn at a turnout and got onto a dirt road that took us to Soda Springs Road. It was in much better shape than I remembered it in past years. We were still riding through fire-ravaged land, and would do so until reaching Soda Springs Road pavement. It's about 5.5 miles down to Alma Bridge Road.

Jobst suggested we ride up Mountain Charlie, so we followed Alma Bridge Road around the reservoir to reach Old Santa Cruz Highway, passing Holy City on the way (only a single long empty building). Jobst stopped for water at a spring, but did not drink here. He drank water near the roadside farther up (in the culvert). I didn't think it safe, so I didn't drink.

We finally reached Mountain Charlie Road, stopping at the junction to see a historical landmark for the town of Patchen. Mountain Charlie Road is steep here, taking us to Summit Road next to the Hwy 17 overpass. Jobst showed me where Summit Road had once passed. Now there's a chasm that is Hwy 17. Road crews dug a deep, deep hole rather than put in a bridge. "We used to have to cross the road here and dodge cars," Jobst said. "Then they built the bridge." On Summit Road, we passed a swamp/lake next to the road.

We stopped for water and then blasted off for Page Mill Road. I reached home at 4:15 p.m., riding 99.6 miles.

A DAY TO MEET FRIENDS



APRIL 20, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine, down Tarwater Trail, Haul Road, Pescadero Road, Cloverdale Road, Hwy 1 to Santa Cruz, Water Street to Market Street, left on Branciforte Road, to Scotts Valley on Glen Canyon Road, Glenwood Highway, Mountain Charlie Road, Summit Road, Skyline Boulevard, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Warm and sunny, then hot and sunny

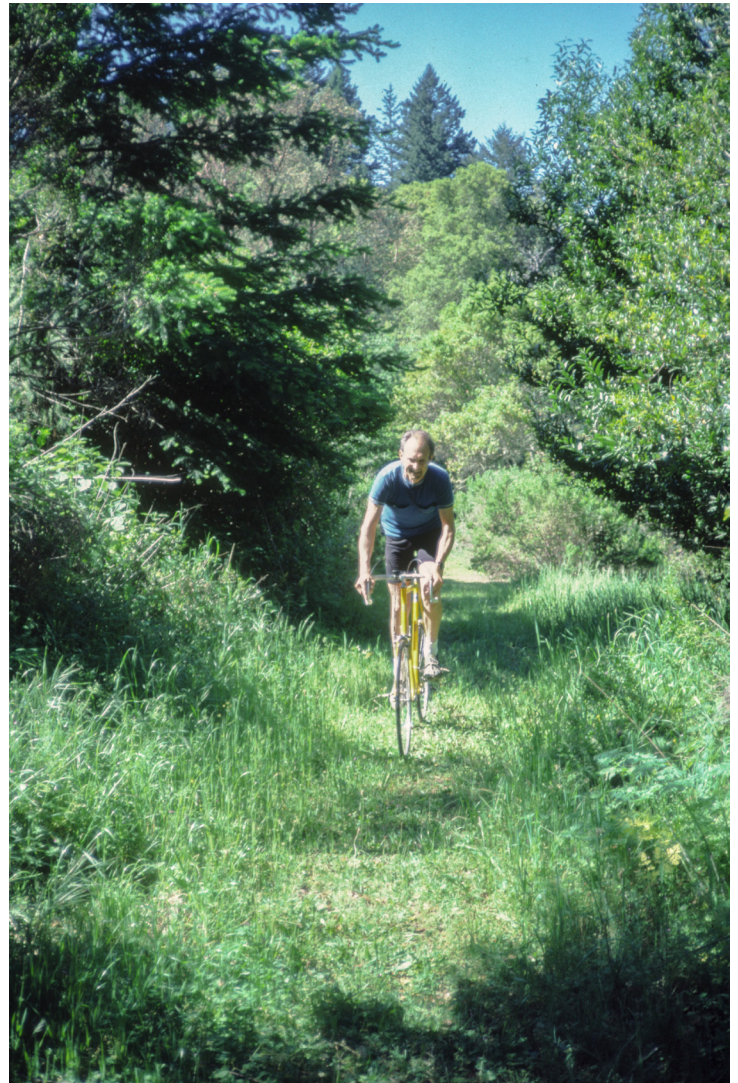
TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - rear flat; Jobst - rear flat

Having volunteered Saturday to clear a new trail in Castle Rock State Park for Sempervirens Fund, I knew I'd be tired if I went for a long ride. Sunday morning dawned bright and cloudless. No fog. Jobst and I headed up Alpine Road at a casual pace. We saw many cyclists out riding at 8:15 a.m. At the Oak Ridge Apartments in Palo Alto, off Sand Hill Road, Jobst stopped to show me a flowering tulip tree. The leaves are unique. The central vein does not end at the leaf tip; rather, there is a tip on each side of the vein, which joins in the middle.

We reached Alpine Road and discovered we could have ridden down the side trail, bypassing the gate. The canyon is still cutting across the road, but now the creek has been covered by logs and some wire mesh to allow crossing. The landslide is undisturbed, but hikers have managed to make a tenuous path across it. I had to grab onto a tree root to get across the last hurdle. The rest of the road is satisfactory, but the upper slide continues eating away at the road, and near the top there is a deep rut in the road. We stopped here for water, which is filled with iron, and tastes like it, too.

Along the way, Jobst pointed out the sounds of the titmouse, the olive-sided flycatcher, and the grosbeak. The flycatcher makes a sound like "McMinville." The titmouse has a high-pitched song like the flycatcher's.

At Page Mill Road, two riders went whizzing past. I stopped to clean my cleats. Jobst waited at Skyline Boulevard. We headed down Alpine Road at a good pace, taking a left at the Honor Camp entrance. We took a left again a mile down at Tarwater Trail entrance, which is now overgrown with grass. There was



Jobst Brandt heads down upper Tarwater Trail through an open grassy area on a beautiful April day in 1986.

a sign for no horses, because the trail is still soft. The winter rains did slight damage to the trail, but it was still damp. We stopped to admire an old-growth redwood a mile down the trail.



Jobst Brandt checks out the miniature train roundhouse in Swanton in 1986, owned by the late Al Smith, whose father helped establish Orchard Supply Hardware. It's still in operation.

At the bottom of the trail, we found the dirt road to be in excellent shape, having been rolled and graveled. The pontoon bridge over Pescadero Creek was undisturbed. Once onto the Haul Road, we discovered that it too was in good shape, having been repaired after the recent floods. We came across Jay Thorwaldson, a former writer at the *Times Tribune* newspaper, who was riding his white horse and wearing a leather hat.

He said he had bought the horse from a woman recently because it was jumpy. It would get jumpy when it wanted to go home. It knew that the owner would take it back when it started doing so. Thorwaldson was heading south. He said he's still working at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation.

We reached Loma Mar at about 10:30, after 29.8 miles of riding. I had a candy bar and some Orangina. Jobst had two cans of Mountain Dew. Roger worked the counter. We headed down Pescadero Road and turned left at the cutoff past Pescadero High School. Jobst pointed to the hillside and showed where the road used to go up past the Cevaso Ranch. A new road had to be built when the area started growing with houses up in the hills. Now there is an automatic gate at the bottom of the road. On Cloverdale, we came across about a dozen mountain bike riders going the other way, certainly on their way up Butano Fire Road. The smell of mushrooms was rank in the air. Jobst said, "You can tell which way the wind is blowing." On the Coast Highway, we had gone only a quarter mile when a yellow Chevy stopped on the side of the road and out came a friend of Jobst, Dave Mulkey. He had a noticeable limp in the left leg. As Jobst and Mulkey talked, I did not realize that this was the same person I had ridden with up Mt. Hamilton several years ago. His face was puffy and he had put on a lot of weight. He didn't look like a bike racer. He said he was living in San Francisco, trimming trees. He was on his way to Santa Cruz to see his son and ex-wife. He told a woeful story. Mulkey's limp was the result of a terrible car accident, one in which he apparently fell asleep at the wheel. He smashed his left femur, some ribs, an elbow, and cracked his skull. The doctors put a steel rod in his leg, and then removed it. He said his hip was not injured in the accident, but had been damaged by the second operation. He said he is in constant pain, but he can still ride his bicycle.

We said goodbye and headed south on busy Hwy 1. The traffic was as bad as I had ever seen it. Shortly, Jobst got a flat tire. We stopped on the side of the road at what is now Cascade Ranch State Park. The recent large land acquisition will preserve much of the coastline and hills around historic Cascade Ranch.

Jobst showed me the ranch when we passed by. The old trees visible in a drawing are now only stumps. We turned left onto Swanton Road, where there is now a nice new sign. The climb is not all that hard, and the views of the Pacific are wonderful. Descending into the glen, we saw several riders climbing out. The Swanton Corn Roast site is being readied. At the miniature train station, we stopped, but nobody was around and there was no sign of activity. A roundhouse had been installed since I was there last. We rode further and got water out of Big Creek. Nearby, laborers harvested strawberries in a large field. Jobst noticed the railroad bridge over Big Creek was down, and he said it didn't

look good for the model train people.

As we climbed out of the valley, a fire engine went blasting past. On a nearby telephone line, a hawk landed with a gopher in its talons. We were riding past Davenport when Tom Sullivan yelled at us. Jobst turned around and began a conversation with the former bike mechanic at Palo Alto Bicycles. He was with his girlfriend, Cathy, in her car. He cradled a Budweiser in his right hand and, as always, had that infectious smile. Tom said he is working at a shop in Santa Cruz as a mechanic and enjoying himself. “No traffic, man.”

Jobst pestered Tom about the Avocet tires and cyclometer. Tom said customers don’t trust treadless tires, but they do like the Avocet cyclometer, except that it doesn’t have cadence. Tom introduced Cathy when she came over. She was in her late 20s, brunette, medium build. We said goodbye after 10 minutes and continued our journey. By now, it was hot. In Santa Cruz, we ran into bumper-to-bumper traffic on Hwy 1. Jobst stopped at the first bike shop he came to and looked inside. An aluminum, American one-speed, built in the 1930s, hung from the ceiling. About this time, Tom Holmes rolled up and, as is his trademark, was shirtless. Lately, we haven’t seen him on Jobst rides. He joined us.

We headed to Natural Bridges State Beach and lighthouse, overlooking the ocean. Hordes of sun-worshippers were out in force on the scenic West Cliff Drive; it was hard to make headway with all the people. They were on foot, on rollerskates, skateboards, and bicycles. Trading off between the sidewalk and the road, we managed to reach the lighthouse. Jobst walked beyond the fence to take pictures of sea lions on a rock in the ocean. There must have been several dozen of the barking beasts. When we reached the Santa Cruz Pier, we looked out at a beach covered with people, the Santa Boardwalk Theme Park in the background. This was the day every sun-worshiper dreams of. But Beach Street in front of the amusement park was jammed with cars inching along on the sizzling pavement. It must have been pure hell for anyone trying to find a parking spot. We wormed our way past, stopped at the roller coaster to check it out. Jobst noted that the roller coaster is not built using nails. Everything is bolted together.

We took Riverside Avenue over the San Lorenzo River to Togo’s (Barson and Ocean Street) for a sandwich. Jobst had a huge pastrami sandwich, while I had the small turkey and cheese. We ate on a quiet stairway behind the store. When we left, we had to ride on the sidewalk up Ocean Street before we could cross at a stoplight on Broadway. Then we were able to get out of town quickly by taking Water Street, turning left onto Market Street, which becomes Branciforte Drive.



Santa Cruz pier with the Boardwalk behind me in 1986.

Instead of heading to Granite Creek Road to get to Scotts Valley, we turned left on Glen Canyon Road and took it to Scotts Valley Drive, turning right to reach Glenwood Highway. Glen Canyon has moderate traffic, moderate hills, and moderate road width. It’s a good country road, lined with country estates. On Glen Canyon, I came across Bob Patrie, who I had met last year on a mountain bike ride at Henry Coe State Park. He moved to Scotts Valley about six months ago, and was out for a bike ride. Bob said his company’s (MIPS) new scientific computer is coming out in June.

In Scotts Valley, we stopped at the new grocery store in a shopping center. It’s called Zanotto’s. Jobst said he used to come through here and stop at a roadside delicatessen that had a store featuring plastic dinosaurs. Jobst was not feeling well, so we lounged around outside and talked about the world, how the population is growing rapidly everywhere. Jobst is extremely concerned that people do not realize growth is going on everywhere. “They only see things

growing where they live, and don't realize it's happening all over."

We headed up Glenwood Canyon after getting water at a gas station. In the shade of the redwoods, we were refreshed by the cool air. Mountain Charlie Road was also cool, and has a lot of shade. But in the sun it was still hot. I noticed I had a flat halfway up the road, and stopped to replace the tube. When we reached Mountain Charlie's house, we turned left on Riva Ridge Road instead of going straight. Unfortunately, this took us to a steep hill on Hutchinson Road that was much steeper than going straight and climbing Summit Road. Jobst said he had taken it once with Jim and hadn't liked it. Now he was quite certain that this was not the way to go. The road took us through some exclusive housing developments. On Summit Road, Tom Holmes mysteriously disappeared.

The climb on Summit Road becomes easier and easier, the more times I do it. There are only a couple of hard hills, and some of them are short. Once on Skyline Boulevard, Jobst became weary. He doesn't do well in the heat. I was reaching down for my water bottle when his front wheel drifted into mine, and there was a grinding of metal. Fortunately, we were going slowly and I was able to control the bike, even with one hand holding onto the water bottle. Jobst apologized and then sprinted ahead when we reached the last climb to the summit. At Saratoga Gap, Jobst wanted to buy some soda, but they were out. We found another vendor at Page Mill and Skyline and had a root beer. The man working the stand was a computer person who had lost his job a year ago, and was consulting and trying to make ends meet. Then it was down Page Mill Road and home, 119.3 miles, finishing at 6 p.m.

Rain in the Redwoods



MAY 4, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Bill Henner, Ray Hosler, Bill Robertson

ROUTE: Up Page Mill Road, southeast on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, up Hwy 236, down North Escape Road to Big Basin State Park, Hwy 236 to Boulder Creek, up Bear Creek Road, down Bear Creek Road, Hwy 17 to Los Gatos.

WEATHER: Cool and clear, then cool and cloudy, then wet and cool, then cool and clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

This being the traditional ride to see the Cat's Hill race in Los Gatos, we headed to Big Basin State Park for a long loop. But we had rain. I blame it on the recent eruption of an Alaskan volcano, and radiation from the Soviets' Chernobyl nuclear reactor.

On this Sunday, we met Bill Henner at Arastradero Road and Page Mill Road. Bill was staying at Bud Hoffacker's house off Cañada Road. Henner used to ride frequently with Jobst. Today he is a commodities dealer in foreign currency in Chicago. This was his vacation. While waiting for Bill, Jim Chaskins, owner of Joselyn's Bike Shop, rode by with two friends, on his Masi Technium frame. He had new Look pedals, as well.

During the climb past the Modern House on Page Mill Road,



Racers head up the steep Nicholson Avenue at the 1986 Cat's Hill race. Jobst Brandt photo

Robertson led the way. At Skyline Boulevard, the road was wet, and rain threatened. We reached Hwy 9 without incident and headed down into the rain. I said to Jobst, "And you never ride in the rain." Jobst replied, "That's right. I don't ride in the rain. But I do ride into the rain."

In Big Basin at the campgrounds, we saw runners milling about after a 10-K race sponsored by the Sempervirens Fund. Friends Rich Benyo and Rhonda Provost ran the race on trails and said they had a good time. We continued, without stopping at the store, bound for Boulder Creek. In Boulder Creek, we had a bite to eat and then headed uphill. The weather was improving. Henner lagged behind. He said he hadn't ridden hills in many months. Chicago, he said, is not the best place to ride a bike.

We headed down Bear Creek Road, which I found quite unappealing, with many off-camber corners. It was also wet in places. On Hwy 17, we got across OK and then started our perilous descent to the left-hand exit to Los Gatos. The road was filled with cars moving at 55-65 mph. It wasn't bad where there was shoulder, but at one narrow place we had a retaining wall on our right, which forced us into the right lane of traffic. It was raining again, and I felt uncomfortable. As it turned out, Jobst and Robertson didn't take the left exit. Robertson convinced Jobst there was a right exit a short distance down the freeway, but there wasn't [there is where the freeway officially begins].

Henner and I made the turn without incident during a break in the traffic. We didn't even have to slow down. In town, we watched the Cat's Hill Criterium. I saw triathlete Jennifer Hinshaw, who I interviewed for *Bicycling Magazine*, Sterling McBride, Doug Gilmore of Avocet, and many others. Mark Caldwell won the 1-2 category race by edging out Gavin Chilcott at the line in a photo finish.

We left for home at 5:15 p.m. On the way, we took the left turn and got onto Stevens Creek Boulevard. Jobst seemed to prefer this direction. But Jobst ran a red light at Hwy 280 and Foothill Expressway and was nabbed by a sheriff. I stopped for an orange at the nearby market. Jobst said that the cop asked who won the bike race. Henner and Robertson left earlier. And so ended another Jobst Ride.

Mountain Bikers Explore Henry Coe Park



MAY 11, 1986

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, Dave Prion, Clay Riley, Dave, Mark Pischell, Mark, Jacob, Paul, Rod Kendrick

ROUTE: Henry Coe State Park headquarters, down Manzanita Road. China Hole trail up to Mahoney Ridge. Mahoney to Coit and Kelly Lake, Pacheco Spring, Mississippi Lake on County Line Road, Bear Mountain to East Fork Coyote Creek, up Miller Field to Jackass Peak, down to Poverty Flat, up to headquarters

WEATHER: Cool and clear then clear, mild and breezy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

When Dave Prion asked me to go to Henry Coe State Park, I told him it would be great if we could ride to Mississippi Lake. He agreed. I cautioned him it would take all day, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., as it turned out. We left from park headquarters, where Clay and Rod spent the night. A pancake breakfast had been planned that day in celebration of Mother's Day, so we had to park in the outer lot. After meeting two other riders, who had to be back at 1 p.m., we headed off at a blistering pace. Immediately, I didn't feel comfortable on the mountain bike. I hadn't done any riding in eight months on a mountain bike, so I felt awkward. I was quickly off the back, to the point I didn't see anyone. I knew we were taking the China Hole trail, which two riders wanted to do.

On the descent, one rider took a spill and was banged up. It's no wonder; the trail down to China Hole is narrow with lots of tight turns. I found the push up the hill to be pleasant, through oaks in the shade. Wildflowers bloomed in profusion and a cool breeze made riding comfortable. At Mahoney Ridge, we parlayed and settled on Mississippi Lake. I took another photo or two and we headed off. The pace was still fast, but not quite so fast that I couldn't stay in touch. At Kelly Lake, we stopped and made a bike pile while I took a picture. No wild boars this time or any wildlife for that matter, which I saw on a previous ride.



That bike pile is mostly Ritchey mountain bikes. Riders pose for a photo at Kelly Lake in Henry Coe Park.

We pushed onward to Pacheco Springs, where, I told everyone, we could get water. When we arrived, everything was as I had remembered it, but there was no water. The spring was not yielding. Mark found a water tank, low to the ground and near the creek. He found a faucet handle and opened it. Out gushed clear water! A few seconds later, it turned brown, then clear after another 30 seconds. Some riders filled their bottles before it quit running. The next water would be out of Mississippi Lake.

We rode at a good pace to Mississippi, with Paul bringing up the rear now. Mark took a spill and cut his right hand; I loaned him my right glove. I reminded everyone that if they got hurt, it was a long way to help. At Mississippi Lake, we broke out the food and relaxed. Dave jumped into the cold lake water and swam briefly. Everyone else sat around talking stories about Jobst and friends. Some riders drank out of Mississippi Lake, including Dave, a frame builder working for Tom Ritchey. I didn't take water, hoping the creek would be running at the bottom of Bear Mountain. We rode around Mississippi Lake, which was quite nice; we ran across two backpackers.

It was about two miles on rolling terrain to Bear Mountain and a locked gate. From Bear Mountain, we descended a steep, rough road to East Fork Coyote Creek. The water ran strong! We drank our fill and headed along the creek, getting feet and bikes soaked. There was a nice cooling breeze coming through the canyon. We passed a hunting lodge, and after another mile we reached Shaffer's Horse Corral and campground. I thought we were supposed to walk up the hill here, so up we went. I wasn't real sure, and the terrain didn't look right. There were too many trees and I didn't remember the fence. But we went anyway. Sure enough, we needed to go another couple hundred yards along the creek before climbing up to the road on Jackass Peak. It was a long walk, but we eventually found the road. The grass was high, wildflowers everywhere. We rolled into Poverty Flat, got water and began the final long grind up to headquarters, passing a half-dozen backpackers who had camped at Poverty Flat. After a long struggle, we got to the top and took our fill of cold spring water near the gate entrance. Water never tasted so good.

Gazos Creek Road Survives the Winter



MAY 18, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Olaf Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine, Pescadero Road, Cloverdale Road, Gazos Creek Road, Hwy 236, Hwy 9, Skyline Boulevard, Page Mill Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

The day began with soggy skies in the mountains, but this soon burned off. Jobst had a big bowl of hot oats for breakfast as he sat at the crowded table littered with books, newspapers, and magazines. The old kitchen has a gas stove and is unkempt, but for Jobst function is all that matters. Cleanliness, he claims, is a social disease that is an unnecessary distraction from more important matters.

I read him a letter from a student at San Luis Obispo. The student was upset by my column attacking the assembly bill that gives local authorities control over where bicycles can be ridden. Olaf didn't have much to say this morning. He looked at some photos of rock climbing that he took at Mt. Diablo. Outside, I saw a crude sign that read: "Olaf for Mayor." Jobst said Jan put it up. Jobst, you see, has a penchant for tearing down "vote for so and so" signs. He thinks they are visual litter that have no place. They're also apparently not legal to put up on public places like light poles, but politicians do it anyway. Today, for example, Jobst tore down a sign on Page Mill Road and tossed it into the bushes.

We headed up Alpine Road, where conditions at the slide have improved. It's possible to walk around the slide and avoid poison oak. We saw a cyclist's gear at the south end of the slide. On the other end, we saw the rider with his bike. Jobst yelled at him, asking why he left his gear behind. The rider said it was too difficult to get over the steep trail. The rider returned for his panniers.



Olaf Brandt and his father cross Corte Madera Creek on Alpine Road. The bridge was there all along, but buried in mud.

I took a photo of the slide as Jobst marched up the steep spot without hesitation. The rider, who was headed for San Diego, had an old Viscount with almost all new equipment. He had even replaced the aluminum fork [known for breaking]. When he told us he was going down Hwy 9 to Santa Cruz, Jobst told him to take Alpine Road, Pescadero



After diligent trail work, we got this slide so we could carry our bikes through the first big slide back in 1986.

It's much bigger now but still not completed. In Loma Mar, we had our usual snack. Jobst started a conversation with a man who owned an old Harley Davidson dirt bike. We headed off down the road under sunny skies and ideal temperatures for riding.

Jobst told me about the cyclocross race they had at Butano State Park one year. Laurence Malone and Joe Ryan won the race, which went up Gazos Creek, Johansen Road and down Butano Fire Road. Jim, who laid out the course, was the only one who got lost, so I am told. John Porcella crashed badly early in the race on dirt Cloverdale. As we rode along Gazos Creek, at the base we saw bike tracks. Jobst speculated they were fresh and left by a rider on a 10-speed. We came across some hikers, and one of them, who was an HP employee, Jobst knew. They couldn't believe what we were doing, and said we were brave. They also confirmed that there was a rider about a half hour ahead of us.

Gazos Creek Road was in good shape after a winter of heavy rains. I hustled hard to make it without stopping [I can't believe I made it!] Had the road been any looser, I couldn't have made it. In several places, it took complete concentration and maximum effort to ride without stopping.

Jobst lagged behind a short distance, and I later learned that he is still feeling the effects of a cold. At the top of the hard stuff, we stopped where there had once been a ranger station. One night, in a storm, some motorcyclists burned it down when they lit a tire with an old Coleman lantern. Now there is only a concrete foundation. Jobst looked for water in a metal tank, but it was dirty and meant for horses.

We turned left and headed down to Big Basin park headquarters. We could have turned off a few feet earlier and climbed again up Johansen's road or turned right and taken the Chalks fire road on an exposed ridge to the ocean. The road down wasn't much better than the road up. It was sandy and bumpy the entire distance of 6.5 miles. We stopped for water at a fast-running spring. In the park, we bought some food. As we rode up the service road, we came across two women who were lost. Jobst gave directions.

Road, Hwy 1 instead. We continued on our way, handling mud corner with no problems. Near the top, Jobst stopped for some water. "The iron in here is great," he said. The trickle of a stream hardly looked appealing, but Jobst didn't mind.

Olaf decided he wanted to turn around at Skyline, so we continued down the road without him, passing Charlie Kempner, Avocet sales, who was on the way up. At the base of Alpine, we stopped to see how work was progressing on the swimming pool along the creek.



Jobst Brandt drinks from a spring and headwaters of Waddell Creek on Gazos Creek Road on our May 18, 1986, ride.

At this time it was hot in the sun, but when we got to Hwy 236 there was a cool breeze. Jobst stopped for water at the sharp turn. I hustled up Hwy 9, feeling strong after drinking a Coke. It usually has a dramatic effect on me, if I drink it later in the day. In the morning, it isn't as noticeable. We stopped at the fire station for water and met three riders. One was from San Jose area and had an Avocet jersey and an old Raleigh International, the same bike I had dreamed of owning in 1971. It was in great condition. As he left, he said, "I keep trying to remind myself this is supposed to be fun." The young rider had narrow Avocet smooth tires, but the other two riders did not. We also saw a rider with Specialized smooth tires at Loma Mar.

The ride down Page Mill had many cars, but it went smoothly as we headed home with a cool breeze at our backs and a beautiful 85 miles behind us.

Lady Bugs Everywhere



MAY 25, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Olaf Brandt, Jean Higgins, Mike Higgins

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard to Summit Road, Highland Road to Corralitos Canyon, up Mt. Rosalia, down to Aptos through Forest of Nisene Marks on Aptos Creek Fire Road, up Mtn. Charlie, Summit Road, Skyline, Page Mill Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Mike and Jean - broken spoke; chain problems

On this lovely spring day, Mike and Jean decided to join us for a ride to the Forest of Nisene Marks state park on their red Ritchey tandem, complete with 40-spoke wheels and rear disk brake. They live in Menlo Park. Jean works as an admin in Jobst's division at Hewlett Packard. Mike is a computer programmer for a medical company. We rode up Alpine Road at a moderate pace until reaching dirt Alpine. With some difficulty, Mike and Jobst wrestled the bike over the lower washouts as we made our way up the quiet, wooded road. Alpine Road in the spring is ever so nice, with bird songs in the air and views of the San Francisco skyline far to the north. I was trying out my new Adidas shoes. I'm satisfied with their performance, especially because the cleats don't clog with dirt. But the heel cup is a bit loose.

We stopped for water at the CDF fire station. On a level stretch of Skyline, past Castle Rock State Park, we stopped for Mike to fix his chain. Jobst rode to an overlook, where we had one of the most majestic views of the Santa Cruz Mountains I've ever witnessed. Someone dumped a couch here, so we sat down to take in the view of the Pacific Ocean and Monterey Peninsula. [the couch is but a memory and the location is overgrown].

The ride along Summit Road revealed apple orchards with ripening fruit and llamas munching brown grass on a hillside next to Steve Wozniak's house. Jobst pointed out the house to Mike and Jean.

At Summit Store, we had a bite to eat and watched a lady feed her two dogs an ice cream cone. I had a can of juice, a peach, and a candy bar. On Highland Road, we passed several locations where the road had slid out from the winter rain. We stopped for water at a nicely flowing stream. As we rode further into the forest, we passed Jennifer Hinshaw and her boyfriend going the other way. She waved and smiled. As we passed a secluded glen with redwoods and a small stream, there appeared a mass of bugs in the air. At first, I thought that they were bees, but when I looked down at my clothes, I saw lady bugs. For a mile, we rode through air thick with flying lady bugs. This prompted me to tell Mike and Jean about the time I saw a tree stump in Tunitas Creek covered with lady bugs. Mike said that he knew the tree stump. Jobst said there must have been millions of lady bugs. "We may never see this many bugs again in our lives," he concluded [he was right].

On Mt. Rosalia, we encountered two mountain bike riders unloading bikes from their car. There was also a dirt bike motorcycle rider buzzing around. I had never seen so many vehicles parked along the road. The dirt road was in good shape in most places, with only a few loose spots. I had forgotten how far it was down the road. We came to a dried lake halfway down, where we stopped for a rest and to wait for Mike and Jean. We watched the trees, which were filled with a variety of twittering birds, mostly chickadees. It was truly a peaceful moment. As we got lower, the





road became looser; a tractor was parked on the roadside. It had been leveling the road. From the past winter, mountain bike tires had left ruts everywhere. We passed several groups, including hikers and mountain bike riders.

Finally, I reached the first creek crossing. The bridge had been wiped out, so I tried to ride across without touching, unsuccessfully. We filled our water bottles and headed to the next stream crossing, where there were two other mountain bike riders. I again failed to make the crossing on bike. Jobst didn't even try. The creek bed has been widened considerably here, and visibility is good both directions.

At Aptos, we had lunch at a delicatessen near Safeway. Then we headed up Mountain Charlie road via Branciforte Drive and through Scotts Valley. In Scotts Valley, we stopped at Zanotto's for a bite to eat.

On the climb up Mountain Charlie Road, I felt lightheaded. Halfway up I came across Bob Patrie. This was the second time in as many trips here that I had seen him. We were both surprised. Bob had done the Davis Double the previous week, so he must be in good shape. We stopped for water at the ancient steel pipe on the roadside. A cold stream of water issued forth.

We waited five minutes for Mike and Jean to appear. They decided to head down past Lexington Reservoir and through the valley. We headed back the way we came. Near the summit of Skyline, we passed a rock band practicing in the woods.

It was a pleasant, cool evening to be riding on Skyline, and I had never seen the valley air so crystal clear at this time of year.

I could see everything from Page Mill Road in vivid detail. I sensed that this would be one of the finest days ever in all my years riding in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Sierra Ride



MAY 31 - JUNE 1, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Bill Robertson, Gary Erickson

ROUTE: Day 1) From Sonora, over Sonora Pass on Hwy 108, south on Hwy 395, up Monitor Pass to Markleeville. Day 2) Up Ebbetts Pass and Pacific Grade, down Hwy 4. Left on Parrotts Ferry Road to Columbia. Hwy 49 into Sonora. (217 miles)

WEATHER: Saturday hot and clear, then cloudy and windy on Monitor Pass. Sunday clear and warm.

TIRE/MECHANICAL: NONE

Driving to Sonora from the Bay Area, I am reminded why I do this trip every year, as hard as it is. The setting sun turned the sky a brilliant orange, the dry grass a golden brown. Giant oaks cloaked the hillsides, sentinels in the growing darkness.

On this Friday night, we secured a room at the Sonora Gold Lodge on W. Stockton Street in Sonora, across the street from the Mother Lode Fairgrounds. After the usual fitful sleep, we started the day at 5:20 a.m. with breakfast. We purchased food the previous day for a quick get-away at 6 a.m. Under clear skies, we rode through Sonora and headed north on Hwy 108 [Mono Way, predating the bypass] a two-lane road with a decent shoulder. Traffic can be heavy most any day of the week, even early morning.

Sparks fly

Several miles outside Sonora (1,785 ft, 544 m), we heard a strange sound



At Strawberry Store, Gary Erickson, Bill Robertson, Ray Hosler, Jobst Brandt.

behind us, growing louder by the second. It reminded me of a truck racing its engine. Nobody looked back. Suddenly, a pickup blasted by, its right-rear wheel, minus a tire, throwing out sparks. The truck spun around in the oncoming lane, taking out three mailboxes. Two teenage girls tumbled out, drunk. They laughed and looked terrified. That was one heck of a graduation party. On reflection, we should have stopped and grabbed the keys.

As we climbed the two-mile bump before Mi-Wuk Village (4,687 ft, 1,428 m), starting at Soulsbyville Road, Jobst found a nice pair of needle-nose pliers. Jobst has a house full of road booty — tools and work gloves mostly.

Nearing Mi-Wuk Village, the terrain becomes decidedly mountain forest and you know you're in the High Sierra. The grade never goes much above five percent — long climbs broken by occasional descents.

One of my favorite stretches comes about two miles before Cold Springs, where the Sierra peaks come into view and you pass an old ski resort on your right. In the distance, you see your destination and wonder, "Can I do this?"

Temperatures continued climbing as the altitude passed 5,000 feet. Jobst had to stop for something to drink. It was a hot day, not to Jobst's liking.

We finally reached Pinecrest Lake Road and began a one-mile descent to Strawberry (5,738 ft, 1,749 m), our first traditional stop. We crossed the South Fork of the American River and dismounted for some food in the barn-red Strawberry Store. The well-groomed lawn and fully stocked country store offers a place to relax after 30 miles of riding, and plenty of climbing. We lounged on the long bench in the shade and listened to the roar of the creek filled with snowmelt.

We continued up the road, passing 200-foot-tall Sugar Pines. Their cones can grow up to two feet in length. We saw quite few on the roadside. I imagine that if one of those fell and conked you on the head, you'd feel it.

There's a fairly stiff climb leaving Strawberry, but in a couple miles the road levels out and it's fairly easy going, with not so much traffic. To the left, we could see a massive valley cut by the Middle

Fork of the Stanislaus River, dammed at Donnell and Beardsley reservoirs. This stretch is a beautiful alpine setting with outcroppings of shiny white granite and tall pines. It led to our second stop at Donnell Overlook, which can't be missed. We rode our bikes down the twisty, bumpy paved trail to a level view area, with steel rail separating us from a 1,300-foot drop to Donnell Reservoir. Floating debris looked like Lincoln Logs. With the snow-covered High Sierra in



Gary Erickson and Bill Robertson ride through an avalanche on the final climb to Sonora Pass.

the distance, we watched white-throated swifts dart back and forth along the cliffs below.

Jobst lagged the group as we followed the Middle Fork of the Stanislaus River up the gently sloping valley to Sonora Pass. We passed a huge yellow sign that warned against trucks and campers using the road. It said 26 percent grade.

Sonora Pass

At Kennedy Meadows, the road suddenly jerks up, granite walls on the left, and a more distant river below on the right. Up ahead, we saw "The Window," a place where engineers blasted a path through the granite. It's 20 percent most of the way to The Window, where it lets up to 14 percent.



So I could take a nice photo, Gary Erickson climbs the eastern side of Sonora Pass at the steep lower stretch with grades up to 20 percent.

I concentrated and pushed the pedals with all my strength. Past The Window, the road twists upward, where it's easier, but still darn steep. In another mile, just when you think this can't be that bad, Sonora Pass gets serious.

Deadman Creek on the right roars non-stop. This year we saw something completely different. The road cut through a 20-foot snow wall just before the Golden Stairs, the long, steep part of Sonora Pass with stretches of

18 percent.

I stopped to take a photo of Bill and Gary. An avalanche created the snow wall. Refreshed, I made it up the Golden Stairs without having to stand out of the saddle. Usually it's a struggle at 3 mph in this section, and it requires intense concentration to keep moving.

Beyond 9,000 feet, the road eases up to the summit (9,624 ft, 2,933 m). I followed Gary and Jobst, and Bill came along five minutes later. At the summit, we met a guy who had been in a bicycle accident. He was waiting in a truck for a friend who was skiing down the mountain. The snow nearly covered the summit sign.

We headed down, starting with a steep 20 percent incline, followed by a sharp but short climb. Your momentum easily carries you over the hill, but even then braking is required for the ensuing sharp left turn.

The rest of the descent through scattered aspen and granite goes in a flash, with another steep 20 percent section just before Pickel Meadows. A store off the right side of the road had just closed permanently. We used to stop and buy food here. Across the road, U.S. Marines often practiced rappelling on a cliff. Their Mountain Warfare Training Center is several miles farther on.

As we broke out into the wide open expanses of the eastern Sierra, I was reminded of growing up in Wyoming and Colorado. We rolled along through the flat scrub brush, following the West Walker River to Highway 395. On this occasion we saw yellow headed blackbirds in a marsh.

We turned north on 395, a busy highway with a wide shoulder in most sections. With the Walker River on our right, we sped downhill toward our next stop in Walker. Just the day before, a bus carrying gamblers had crashed here, killing 19. All that was visible was a long skid mark leading into the river, where many passengers drowned.

In Walker, we stopped for lunch at the Basque Restaurant [closed now]. In the backyard, they raised ducks and

chickens for the next meal. I felt great, as did Gary and Bill, but Jobst felt miserable.

Monitor Pass

After lunch, we continued north toward Monitor Pass, turning left for the start of a long climb. It was hot here, and the tailwind made it more so. What I like about Monitor is the sweeping vistas. There's nary a tree along the road. We inched our way up the pass at about 5 mph. Jobst suffered terribly. It was not his day.

We stopped for water at the creek in the sweeping right turn, nestled in a woody enclave. Jobst seemed to recover somewhat after rest and water. As we climbed beyond the halfway point, the weather changed dramatically. The wind picked up and it cooled off as a thunderstorm blew through. Jobst recovered, but Bill wasn't feeling great as we neared Monitor summit (8,314 ft, 2,534 m), so I waited. At the summit, a refreshing breeze cooled us off, but it wasn't cold and the rain passed.

We flew down the west slope with its long straightaways and gentle curves. Speeds can top 50 mph here. At the bottom, we turned right onto Hwy 89 and followed the Walker River into Markleeville, another five miles. Although the road was wet, it had stopped raining and we had a nice tailwind, arriving around 6 p.m.

Markleeville isn't much to see, just a dozen or so buildings. We found a room at Toll House, one of several hotels. Dining at the Wolf Creek Restaurant, Jobst regaled us with stories of rides gone by. By 8:30 we sacked out. Riding 125 miles with more than 12,000 feet of climbing will do that to a person.

Next day, we had a hearty breakfast at the J Marklee Toll Station, and headed back the way we came on Hwy 89 about 8:30.

As we rode into a headwind past the Monitor Pass turnoff, a car came up along us and its driver yelled, "Get off the road!" Jobst rode alongside the driver, who happened to be a deputy sheriff. After a few words with Jobst, he backed off and just told us to ride single file.

Ebbetts Pass

Fortunately, Ebbetts Pass takes a while to start climbing, giving us a chance to stretch our muscles for the 14 percent grades ahead. It's a glorious ride to Ebbetts, with steep rock walls on both sides, and lush green meadows. Only the occasional car passes by in the morning.

Jobst pointed out "Cadillac bend" as the climb took on a more serious grade midway up the pass. He told us how the road got its name. Many years ago, a Cadillac crashed off the road, and its carcass could be seen for years before it was removed. One of the key landmarks on the way up is Silver Falls and Kinney Lake.

We enjoyed a dry road and warm weather to the summit of Ebbetts Pass (8,730 ft, 2,661 m), where there's a cattle guard and a sign for cyclists taking photos. The pass was named after Major John Ebbett in 1853. Although it showed promise as a route for the transcontinental railroad, it did not come to pass. A stage route did go through here starting in 1864. This is easily the least impressive summit, with no views to speak of.

We headed down swiftly on the twisty road, which is fairly narrow in sections, so caution is advised. At the bottom, we entered as remote a valley as you could ask for in the Sierra. Mokelumne River flows through verdant, marshy meadows.

Immediately after leaving the valley, there's some steep climbing leading to Pacific Grade. You'll confront some super-steep sections of well over 20 percent, but they're short. Nevertheless, it's a challenge. Often, there's a fair amount of snowmelt crossing this section of road that will most assuredly lead to road grime. Once at the Pacific Grade summit (8,050 ft, 2,454 m), an anti-climactic event, we headed down, passing Alpine Lake on our left. It was not frozen this year.

There's a brief climb before descending on the wide Hwy 4 to Bear Valley, our traditional lunch stop. Jobst had recovered by this point, and it was a good thing, as we drafted him down the mountains at speeds up to 48 mph. Before we knew it, we were riding through the baking hot Sierra foothills. We stopped briefly in Murphys for a drink and then headed out, turning left onto Parrotts Ferry Road. The new road was a nice change from the bumpy old road.

We crossed the sagging Parrotts Ferry Bridge over New Melones Reservoir, which is formed by the Stanislaus River. Completed in 1979, the 640-foot span (195 m) is one of the longest pre-stressed concrete beam bridges in the U.S. One of the earliest bridges to use a special lightweight concrete, the central span has sagged nearly two feet in the

middle. A brace was added, and the sagging stopped.

I blasted up the last 1,000-foot climb in the shimmering heat. The others stopped at a Foster's Freeze in Columbia. Jobst, Bill, and Gary arrived at the hotel a half-hour later, stopping a deputy sheriff to report the previous day's hair-raising incident.

Great Bike Adventure



JUNE 8, 1986

RIDERS: Ray Hosler

ROUTE: El Camino Real to San Mateo, Airport Boulevard to Old Bayshore, 3rd Avenue to San Francisco. Union to Divisadero to Geary, Great Highway to Skyline to Cañada Road to Whiskey Hill to Sand Hill

WEATHER: Cool and clear, then clear and mild, then hot and clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Flat in San Mateo; flat on Skyline Blvd

Rising at 5 a.m. was half the battle to ride to San Francisco by 8 a.m. for the start of the American Youth Hostel Great Bike Adventure. Skies were clear and it was mild compared to the past week, when it was foggy and cloudy. I left at 5:40 a.m., light enough to see. Breezing down El Camino Real, I managed a steady 18-20 mph with few red lights. I wore a light nylon jacket, which became clammy after a while, but it was still cold so I left it on.



Thousands of cyclists turned out for the Great Bike Adventure, sponsored by the American Youth Hostels of San Francisco.

lined street in Burlingame. I was amazed by the tall eucalyptus and elms. I felt like I was back East, not on the peninsula. In Millbrae, I almost missed San Mateo Avenue, which was the city's main street, now blocked off from traffic. But I looked at my map at the right time. I became uncertain as I started heading toward Hwy 101. Eventually, I found my way to Old Bayshore, which is littered with glass and debris. The area is desolate, not the place to be on a lonely Friday night. Once on Third Street, I was in Hunter's Point. Tucked away in the industrial heart of San Francisco, it

The ride went smoothly until I discovered I had a flat at an underpass in San Mateo. I stopped at the roadside and fixed it without any problem, although my pump was clogged with oil. A bum came by and I thought he might give me trouble, but he let me be. Back on the road, I began my voyage north, a trip that San Francisco residents took by coach and train in the late 1800s.

El Camino turned into a lovely tree-

lacks charm. When I reached the outskirts of San Francisco, about 36 miles into the ride, I felt more relaxed, knowing I would not miss much of the Bike Adventure. I rode to Broadway and Polk and waited for the riders. In about five minutes they arrived, all 10,000 of them. Riders of all ages and sizes and abilities, riding new bikes, old bikes, one speeds, 10 speeds, three speeds, mountain bikes, racing bikes, touring bikes.

Len Wallach, author of *The Human Race: Bay to Breakers*, led the way, bullhorn in hand. He told everyone to funnel down to one lane onto Broadway, but with cars parked and in the way riders became jammed together, and several fell down in the crush. Nobody was hurt, except a guy who fell on the rear wheel of another guy and made it look like a pretzel. I helped him with loosening his brake so he could continue.

I didn't see too many riders dressed up in loud outfits, common in the Bay to Breakers run, but I think people were not sure what to expect for this first annual affair. Now they know it's more of a party than anything else. I joined up in Broadway Tunnel and had the opportunity to hear hundreds of voices bouncing off the walls. We rode down Broadway and then up the Embarcadero Freeway where we had spectacular views of the concrete jungle. I stopped to take pictures and marvel at all the bikes. Never have I seen so many bikes in one location joined together in celebration of this 100-year-old machine. The ride on the Embarcadero was one of the more pleasant portions because I rode unencumbered. But when we got onto Interstate 280, there was a massive traffic jam. Cyclists had to funnel down onto a side street, and then come back up a freeway ramp to head north on 280. With such a crush, dozens of riders leaped the divider and cut off the ramps. As they did so, riders heading north yelled "Cheater! Cheater!" It was all quite humorous seeing this mass of lemmings pedaling to nowhere. Standing on the freeway, I marveled at the situation. Here were thousands of people cycling on this monument to the motor vehicle. I saw the future, a science fiction world where there are no motor vehicles for private citizens. I also saw overpopulation in its fullest. This was 10,000 people, and San Francisco alone has 700,000. The thought of that many people riding bikes was staggering. We ran into another log jam getting onto Columbus, which turned into a slow ride uphill. On the sidewalk, a man holding the Bible belted out the word of the Lord, urging everyone in attendance to repent and find Jesus Christ. I would not have believed it if I hadn't seen it myself. Only in San Francisco. Nobody paid him any attention.

We came to the last big hill on Bay Street, which was steep enough to cause some people to walk. Then we

"When we got onto Interstate 280 there was a massive traffic jam."

made a right into the Marina and it was over. Here was the AYH San Francisco, with a view of the Golden Gate Bridge in all its glory to the west. It's truly a spectacular location from which to view the bay and city. Thousands of people crowded around the drink stands like parched cattle at a watering hole. I managed to get my hands on a drink, and who do I encounter but Dick Covert, attorney at law. He introduced me to his son Dave, who looked out of shape. They had done the ride, and Dick seemed to enjoy it, but I'm not sure about his son. We talked about the trial and it sounds like they'll settle out of court [I was an expert witness]. I worked my way over to the VIP press tent and met some of the AYH people, Barbara, Roger, Len, Marge from Macy's, and so on. I met Clyde, who had a recumbent and a bizarre circus bike with a tiny front wheel. Then who comes along but Otmar Ebenhoech on his tandem. It's not like any tandem, but a recumbent where the rear rider sits facing back! He used a large aluminum 2x4 beam for the frame. It weighs 80 pounds. I rode it and had a good ride on the back.

Around 12 p.m. I left for home, taking Union and then going up Divisadero, an incredibly steep road. I rode down the hill and took a right onto Geary. Riding through the tunnel was scary because cars didn't use their lights, and it was narrow. Otherwise, the road is quite wide, but there's a lot of traffic and sideways parking, which I do not like. After what seemed forever, I finally reached the Pacific Ocean, where the cool breeze refreshed me. I passed the Dutch windmill and then took the Great Highway, where they're still working on the billion-dollar water treatment plant.

Once on Skyline, I could relax, but there is a ton of glass on the road and as always seems to happen, I flatted here. I had to patch the tube, which was cut near the stem by a big sliver of glass. That fixed, I continued on, taking Interstate 280 for a short stretch. When I got to the golf course turnoff, I went straight, thinking I could cross 280 later on. But after 1.5 to 2 miles I realized there was a big canyon in the way, so I had to turn around. I made my way to Cañada Road, where it was hot and breezy. I stopped for water at the Water Temple. Then it was home with a quick pull from a strong rider. At mile 96, the ride finally ended. [I don't believe that ride was held again.]

Butano Ridge Trail to Dearborn Park



JUNE 15, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard south, down Hwy 9, Hwy 236, up China Grade, Gate 12 road to Butano Ridge Trail, down logging road to Dearborn Park, Pescadero Road, Wurr Road, Haul Road, up Portola Park Road and Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cloudy and foggy, then clear and warm with a cool, refreshing breeze

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Having talked with Roger at Loma Mar Store, Jobst had a plan. We were going to find a new road, one that branched off from Butano Ridge Trail and went to Dearborn Park Road.

I met Jobst at his place. He wasn't even out of bed, but he quickly got dressed and started breakfast. I took a look at his Rollei cameras. He explained why the electronic light meter isn't any good. I wasn't convinced that it would be all that hard to work. I was glad I purchased the black model [I returned it for a refund without using it, opting for the Contax T]. I oiled my chain and then we headed out into the cool morning air. As usual, we headed up Hawthorne and then right on Alma Street, crossing El Camino and jumping our bikes over the high sidewalk curb entering Stanford Shopping Center.

As we rolled along on Sand Hill Road, Jobst pointed to a large open field on our right where an Indian excavation is underway. "They're going to build right here," he said. It is indeed a sad thought, because this field is one of the remaining open spaces so close to town. Jobst can remember times in his childhood when the country wasn't so far away. It's the same everywhere as our population mushrooms uncontrollably. My previous home in Littleton, Colorado, which was once the edge of civilization, is now surrounded by housing developments for miles around.



“It was so bumpy on the Butano Ridge Trail downhills that I had a hard time focusing. I had to aim and hope for the best.”



Jobst said he found a dead kingfisher at the bridge. Not happy with the thought, he gave the bird a decent burial by tossing it into San Francisquito Creek. It was at the creek this bird got its food. When we reached the intersection at Alpine Road, I waited for the left-turn light, but it was a long wait. Jobst rode through the red light. As we pressed, on Jobst pointed to the blooming yellow Scotch Broom, which doesn't have leaves like the Western Broom. We came across a large group of riders dressed like Italian racers; they were headed the opposite direction. I often wonder how far they ride and why they wear all the fancy garb.

On Alpine Road, Jobst told me he met up with the fellow who almost lost his bike in the snow on Ebbetts Pass. Jobst adroitly snatched the bike as it slipped into the abyss. The guy lives nearby. He runs now and doesn't cycle much. We stopped to see a black-headed grosbeak. On Alpine Road, at the creek crossing with wood slats, a mountain bike rider headed across. He told us there were more bad road sections farther on, although there is only one place to dismount and that's at the landslide.

On Skyline, the fog was still thick. We reached Hwy 9 and headed down into the redwood forest, the fog rap-

idly burning off. On Hwy 236, we pushed hard at one point before the descent to China Grade. Butano Ridge Trail was dry and loose, but I was able to ride all but one place. It was so bumpy on the descents that I had a hard time focusing. Everything was a blur, so I had to aim and hope for the best.

Jobst took two photos at my favorite location, the second gate near where the Wurr Road comes in. From here, you can see the Pacific and Pescadero far to the northwest. We found the logging road without any problem after descending a steep hill that was loose. The logging road (about 2 miles) was in good shape and all downhill to Dearborn Park. This is a picturesque valley with some beautiful old white-frame houses.

In Loma Mar, we stopped and talked with Roger. He said people want to widen Pescadero Road (moan) and that there is a petition to ban bike racing on the road. Roger said he was against it because the inconvenience is a minor one that takes place only once a year on Sunday morning for a stretch of road between Pescadero and Loma Mar.

We took the Haul Road, which was in excellent shape. Crossing the bridge on Wurr Road, I asked Jobst about the great fall in which Ted Mock, Tom Ritchey and he went down. Jobst said he hit his chin and was knocked out. He broke a rib. It was a winter day and the bridge was slippery. Roger came to the rescue in the town fire truck.

On the Haul Road, we met a nice elderly couple who were bird watching. They had a map and binoculars. The man used to be a truck driver to La Honda. We had a nice talk and then proceeded on the road. It seems the road is no steeper going to Portola State Park than it is coming back. We saw two young hikers near the park entrance and stopped to talk about bike parts. We noticed many signs in the park that prohibited bikes. On the bridge over Pescadero Creek, we saw many fingerling trout, but no crawdads. We left the park on the old road, which is now off limits to bikes. The ride out of the park is as steep as anything I'd care to experience. But at a gentle pace and a cool breeze, it was quite pleasant.

On Alpine Road, traffic was unusually heavy. In the Tulgey Woods, Jobst started reciting Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*, word for word. We had an uneventful ride down Page Mill Road as the Bay Area glowed in all its splendor — clear skies and endless visibility.

[This was our last ride before Jobst and I headed off for his annual Alps tour. Jobst broke his leg on Tende Pass six days into our ride, so I carried on alone.]

Romancing the Moon



AUGUST 19, 1986

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, Josh Klein, Nancy Laurents, Sterling McBride, Dave McLaughlin, Clay Riley

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, southeast on Skyline Boulevard to Windy Hill, down Windy Hill and home on Portola Road.

WEATHER: Sultry warm

Just when I thought I had lost it, there it was. My love affair with the bike found a new romance.

We met on a warm summer night under the light of a full moon. We rendezvoused on Skyline Boulevard, a ribbon of pavement perched on the crest of the Coast Range running from San Francisco to San Jose. From atop this ridge you can see the Pacific Ocean and to the east there's Santa Clara Valley. In the distance, on a clear day you'll see the Sierra Nevada. I've ridden on Skyline at sunrise and at sunset, in the fog and clouds, on clear and on smoggy days, but never at night.



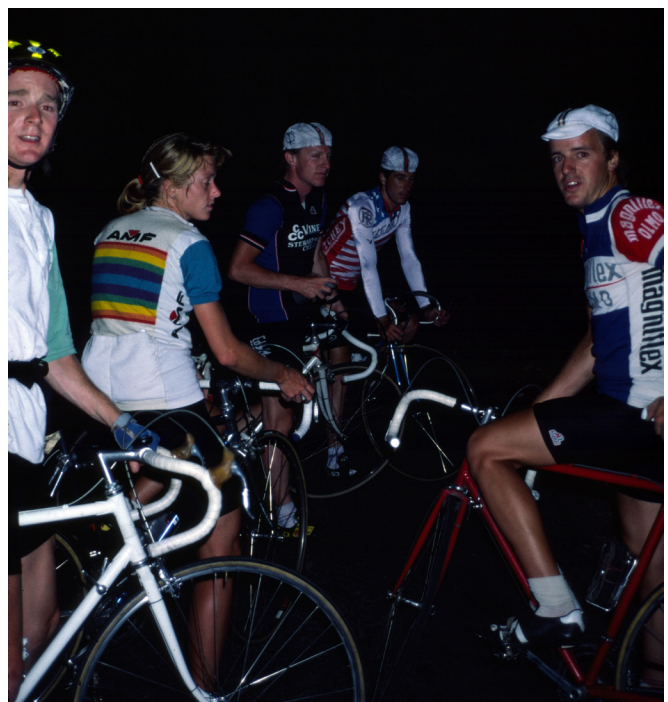
Sterling McBride, Dave McLaughlin, Ray Hosler, Clay Riley, back, and Josh Klein enjoy a moment on the moonlight ride atop Windy Hill.

We started from Palo Alto, riding past high-powered venture capital firms on Sand Hill Road, and then into the rural setting of Portola Valley. One of the darkest roads to Skyline is Old La Honda, a 1,200-foot climb. The moon shone fitfully through breaks in a canopy of redwoods and tan oak. Under the white light of the moon, with our colorful cycling garb, we looked like ghosts drifting through the trees. In this Stygian darkness I saw monsters — behind a tree, ahead in the middle of the road. But they let us pass with nary a boo to be heard. The headless rider must be right around the bend.

Alone in the night, we enthused about the ride. “Hey, I wonder if our eyes glow in the dark like deer when we see car lights,” said Dave. “This reminds me of a dream I had,” another rider chimed. “Or is this a dream?” “Watch out for bug lamps,” Sterling yelled. “Don’t be drawn in by the light!” The one-liners continued as we made our way up the mountain, bike lights showing the way. “On your left. Watch out for the hole. Which one? The one I just rode through.” Bump! “You found it!” The climb had never gone so fast, or so it seemed. Night riding creates a sensation of speed. As we climbed, someone asked the inevitable, “Has anyone ever fixed a flat in the dark?”

From the bald top of Windy Hill, we looked down on the valley bathed in the glow of incandescent light. To the north, the skyscrapers of San Francisco glowed like inverted chandeliers. Mt. Diablo loomed in the east, an ink-black spot. The still, warm air cast a surreal quality over the scene and I couldn’t help but think life is still a mystery. With the flash of my camera, I captured another memorable event on film, evidence photos for the grandchildren I suppose. Six people on top of a mountain under a full moon smiled for the tiny black box. The fun wasn’t over, not with a ride down Windy Hill.

We found our way, some riding, some walking, some falling down. Where the trail goes is anyone’s guess tonight. “Head for that grove of trees. Watch out. There’s a barbed wire fence. Nancy, where are you?” Crash! Josh is down. At the bottom of the hill on Portola Road we’re all accounted for. Once underway, we’re Flying Dutchmen speeding through the night, headed for home under the light of a romancing moon.



Gazos Creek Road in September



SEPTEMBER 28, 1986

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Page Mill Road, Skyline Boulevard south, down Hwy 9, Hwy 236 to China Grade. North to Johansen Road, down Gazos Creek Road, Cloverdale Road, up Pescadero Road, up Hwy 84, down Hwy 84.

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

WEATHER: Cool and clear, then warm and clear

On a beautifully clear day, Jim and I headed into the mountains, as we have done so many times before. Jobst was missing though, still recovering from his broken leg after a fall in the Alps on Tende Pass. This occasion was a ride to Gazos Creek, a logging road that leads from Big Basin State Park. Many years ago, Jobst said, he drove his car over this road into the park. Now it is closed to car and motorcycle traffic and used only by logging trucks.



Jim Westby rides on Hwy 236 with Eagle Rock in the background.

We took Page Mill Road at a good pace. Everywhere on the road we saw painted signs telling bikes to go away. This kind of graffiti isn't good. It proves there is strong sentiment against us.

On Skyline, we headed south at a friendly pace, much easier than when Jobst was along grinding up those

grades in some huge gear. After stopping for water at the fire station, we went down Hwy 9, reaching speeds of 38 mph. On Hwy 236, we passed “Keith’s Corner” where there are mail boxes. I have heard that Keith is suing the truck driver who hit him. The driver pulled out too far from the lane as the riders were taking the corner.

On China Grade, I took a picture of Jim with the vast redwood forest, Eagle Rock and the Pacific Ocean in the background. The ground was still wet from recent hard rains. The air was crisp and clean and I felt at peace with the world. After a climb of China Grade, on Johansen Road we found bike tracks and many drainage cuts, which slowed our pace. We had to carefully let the front wheel down and then power over the other side of the rut. This went on until we reached the burned out ranger station at Gazos Creek Road. I took another photo and we proceeded down, down, down. The road had several washouts where we had to pick our way.

It wasn’t as fast as this summer with Jobst,

when we could go full speed. At the bottom, it was dry and the road was smooth, not washboarded as we knew it before. Crossing the bridge, I reminded Jim of the time when it was washed out and we had to ford the creek.



Jim Westby rides on Gazos Creek Road at Sandy Point.

We stopped in Pescadero, where we bought some excellent sandwiches, 50 miles into our ride. We met Jim Hardigan here, who Jim knew from racing days. Jim H. had been to the worlds and he told us all about it. We left together to ride up Pescadero Road.

Then Jim W. and I turned left to head up 84, where we encountered Jan Causey. She is training for the luge and plans to go to Lake Placid this month. On Old La Honda Road, we proceeded at a steady pace upward into the beautiful redwoods. Here is what I imagined Tunitas Creek to be like before it was paved. We rode down Hwy 84 without incident, 83 miles on our cyclometers by ride's end.

Last Chance to Turn Back



OCTOBER 12, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Mike and Jean Higgins, Charlie Kempner

ROUTE: Alpine Road to Skyline, Hwy 9, 236, Last Chance Road, Swanton Road, Hwy 1, Gazos Creek Road, Cloverdale Road, Pescadero Road, Alpine Road, Page Mill Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

This was the first ride I had been on with Jobst since his accident in France on July 11. Jobst has already gone on three Sunday rides, including trails. He appears to be as strong as ever after breaking his leg. We headed out on Alma Street in Palo Alto, our usual route, and crossed El Camino Real. Charlie and I peeled off onto El Camino going north because we saw a cop turning left onto Alma from El Camino. Jobst and Peter charged ahead across El Camino, ignoring the cop. It's illegal to cross here [that has changed].

The cop turned on his lights and stopped Peter, but Jobst rode on. Charlie and I caught up with Peter and listened in.

Cop: "You know you're not supposed to do what you did. I'm not going to give you a ticket but I am going to give you a lecture."

Peter: "Yeah, but officer how would you take that intersection? I've been doing it this way for 20 years. What did we do wrong?"

Cop: "What did you do wrong? You should know! You crossed a divided road, ran a stop light and..."
The conversation carried on way too long.

After the lecture, we continued on our way up Sand Hill Road. We caught up with Jobst, and Mike and Jean, riding their tandem on Alpine Road.

On dirt Alpine the bridge is still missing, but we managed to ride down into the creek and out without stopping [turns out it was just buried in debris]. There's still a washout farther up.



Peter Johnson crosses Waddell Creek in 1986 when Last Chance Road still looked like a road.

At Skyline, Charlie peeled off and went down Alpine while we continued southeast on Skyline into the fog, stopping for water at the fire station before Hwy 9.

In Big Basin State Park, we stopped to eat and discussed the road ahead. Jobst suggested Last Chance Road. After some protest from Jean about riding on dirt, she finally agreed and we were on our way. During their husband-wife discussion, Jobst burst out laughing at the familiar dialogue.

Last Chance had been graded all the way and was in better shape than I've seen it in a long time [it's a trail now, but at least maintained.] I had to walk down the bad stretch that parallels Waddell Creek where we went for a swim a few years back, but Jobst and Peter charged ahead through the loose dirt and rocks. Mike and Jean walked down the hill.

We bumped along over the washboard on Last Chance Road out to the coast, and then headed north without a headwind, so we made good time.

We turned right onto Cloverdale Road, our first time on Cloverdale Road since it was oiled and graveled for the first time all the way to Butano State Park. So ends another dirt road.

At Loma Mar Store, we stopped for a bite to eat and to talk with the owner, Roger. He told us about the time he stopped thieves and held them at gunpoint until the sheriff arrived.

We headed back up Alpine Road, where Jobst caught up with Palo Alto photographer Bill Ziegler riding his bike. It was a lovely fall day in the late afternoon, a great way to end a 93-mile ride.

LAUREL ROAD HAS ITS TUNNELS



OCTOBER 19, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard, Summit Road, San Jose-Soquel Road, Redwood Lodge Road, Laurel Road, Schulties Road, Old Santa Cruz Highway, Alma Bridge Road, Sunnysvale-Saratoga, Bubb Road, Stevens Creek Road, Foothill Expressway

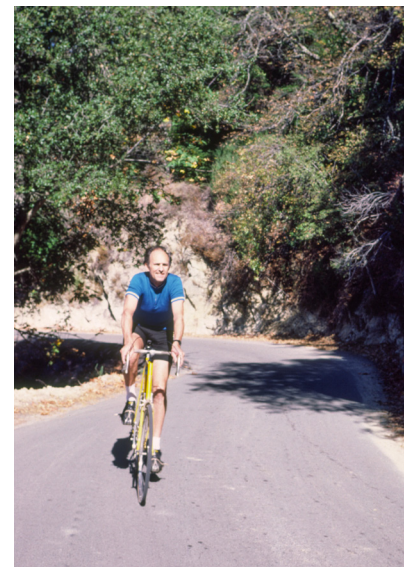
WEATHER: Cold and clear, then warm and sunny

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - flat

After last week's long walk (not the ride), Jobst was still feeling a sore leg, but that wasn't about to stop him from enjoying yet another long day in the saddle. We headed off across El Camino Real, site of last week's confrontation with the police. Jobst and I rode casually to Alpine Road. When we attempted the slide crossing, he went first and didn't make it without putting his foot down. Then I got off to a good start, but on the other side I ran out of gas and fell on my right side, unable to get my foot out of the toe clip. We stopped at the landslide to watch some mountain bike riders give it a shot. None of them made it either.

Alpine Road is a collage of color from falling leaves — reds, golds, and browns. But at the top at Page Mill Road we were disturbed by the sight of yet another driveway and, no doubt, a new house. The ride on Skyline Boulevard was uneventful until we saw a horse lying on its side, covered by a blanket and being tended to by two men with a white truck. The horse had been struck by the truck or another vehicle.

We stopped for a drink at the fire station and then headed off. On Summit Road, I suggested we stop for an apple but there were none this year. We stopped a second time to get a photo of the road. I reminded Jobst that the road might one day



Jobst Brandt rides on Summit Road just before the stop sign for Bear Creek Road.

not be the way it is today. He agreed and said that Skyline Boulevard was once just like Summit Road before widening.

At Summit Store, we stopped for some food and met a man and woman. The woman said she lives on Mt. Madonna Road (old Summit Road), and we got into a conversation about the recent problems on Loma Prieta Road. She said she also had problems with a local landowner toting a shotgun, even though she had a key to the gate. She said she suspected something illegal was going on there, probably having to do with drugs. The lanky man leaned against a post and didn't say much. His blue jeans were tattered and he had a bushy mustache. He chewed on a toothpick and occasionally nodded in agreement to what the woman was saying. The woman sat on the ground next to us playing with two young pups she was trying to give away. She had a ruddy complexion. Her hair was unkempt, but not messy. A mountain woman all the way. I asked the lady if the homeowners on Mt. Madonna Road had anything against bicycles using the road. She said she didn't know of anyone who objected. Her worst fear is seeing people on the road with guns. "You could get shot and nobody would ever know about it. I get scared when I see men with guns out on the road."

We got back on our bikes and rode down toward Soquel. After a couple miles we turned right onto Redwood Lodge Road, which runs into Laurel Road after a couple miles. It dropped quickly until we reached a large landslide that had destroyed the road. I remembered last time I was here that the road was open. We walked our bikes 50 yards and remounted. At the bottom, there is a large pipe under the road and a pond, but we saw no fish. The summer cottage stood where it had been for many years, complete with a swimming pool.

We headed up the road and reached Schulties, where there are a few houses. The real treat though was seeing the old railroad tunnel entrance fifty yards away on a dirt road. The tunnel doors were off and we could see inside where the tunnel once extended for a mile. It was blown shut in 1941 after the railroad shut down. The tunnel had a cave-in only a few yards inside. We turned and headed up the hill, stopping to eat some wild blackberries. Jobst looked for the other tunnel entrance, which he said requires a good climb to get to [I visited by hiking up Burns Creek]. He didn't see where to go, so we continued up the narrow, tree-lined road until we reached Old Santa Cruz Highway. We crested at Summit Road and then headed down, getting caught behind two cars.

We turned right at Aldercroft Heights Road and went around Lexington Reservoir on Alma Bridge Road. Nearly around the lake, we saw four mountain bikers coming out of a fire road entrance. Jobst decided to stop and talk. It turned out that two of the riders were the ones held at gunpoint a few weeks ago up on the same road we have had issues with landowners, Loma Prieta Road. They seemed like nice enough people. They rode aluminum bikes — Cunningshams and Kleins. They were ROMPers, I found out, and they know Jim Hunter.

We parted after a long talk and went up the Novitiate Road (St. Joseph's Hill) at the boat landing. The road had been graded, so we struggled up with a lot of grunting. But we soon ran into a problem. The trail ended at a fence topped with barbed wire. Not to worry. Jobst pulled out his four-inch crescent wrench and set to unthreading bolts holding up the wire. Within a few minutes he had the wire down and we were over the gate. The trail came out in a residential neighborhood. We can no longer ride behind the Novitiate, which offered beautiful views of the valley. The vineyards have also been abandoned. It was here that Jerry Brown, California's governor in the 1970s, studied to be a



Laurel Tunnel reminds us that at one time a train ran between Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz.

priest before entering politics.

Jobst caught his rear wheel on a stick and fell on a hairpin in the trail but he was not hurt, even though he fell on the side with the broken leg. We continued to downtown Los Gatos to look at a car lot with exotic Italian racing cars for sale. There was also a three-wheel tiny car made by Messerschmitt of Germany. It looked like an insect. We crossed the street to visit Velomeister, a nice shop in a junky old brick building. After a brief discussion with the owner, we headed home through Santa Clara Valley. We noticed that Stevens Creek Boulevard is being widened at the short, steep hill near where it joins Stevens Canyon Road. Of course, we stopped at Bicycle Outfitter and looked at the nicest bike shop in the world. I met a guy with a Gordon Martin recumbent. He said he could do 22 miles per hour with little effort.

We headed off northward and stopped at Dave's house on College Avenue. He restores old racing cars of the 1930s to their former glory, making every part shine like new. And so ended another Jobst Ride, after 79 miles.

Flats on Trails



NOVEMBER 9, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Jack Newlin, Bob Walmsley, John Woodfill

ROUTE: Up Alpine, down Alpine, down Tarwater Creek Trail, Haul Road, Wurr Road, Pescadero Road, Hwy 1, up Purisima Creek Road, down Huddart Park power line road

WEATHER: Clear and cold, then clear and warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - 2 flats; Jobst - 3 flats; John - 1 flat

This clear and beautiful Sunday, we had some veterans joining us. Jack Newlin, a Jobst rider from way back, showed up, still riding his ancient British steed, complete with plastic saddle and Universal center-pull brakes. John, a Stanford student who started riding with Jobst in 1984, joined Bob Walmsley, who now works at Hewlett Packard Labs with Jobst.

We headed out a bit late when it was discovered that Bob had a broken rear axle on his Specialized sealed hub. Jobst gave him a new wheel, but it turned out to have a broken spoke, so they had to replace the spoke. Finally under way, we ran into flat problems when I picked up a thorn on Sand Hill Road near the open field. That repaired, we headed up Alpine Road. Here we ran into two riders, one of them George Mount, 6th at the Montreal Olympics road race. With him was Erik Garfinkel's former girlfriend, but I thought



Riders pause at the Tarwater Tree. Jack Newlin, John Woodfill, Bob Walmsley, Peter Johnson, Jobst Brandt.

it was his sister. “Are you Erik’s sister?” I asked. George, who I didn’t recognize because of his beard, broke out into hysterics, slapping his leg and laughing loudly. “No,” she said. “I was his girlfriend until we broke up a few weeks ago.” I told her it was a compliment because they seemed so close. I recognized her because I sold her my Rould French racer a few years ago.

Jobst caught up and recognized George soon enough. George was riding a bike with the name of Gianni Motta, 1966 Giro winner, who I met on Stelvio Pass in 1985. Gianni wasn’t riding when I met him. I told George about how he tried in broken English to tell me some guy named Christopher sold his bikes in the U.S. George told me it was Jack Christopher of Oklahoma. Another mystery solved.

George rode with us up to the dirt Alpine Road gate, and told us he had to wait for Ann. So we went on our way and rode through the big dip. Once again, I was unable to make it over the last few feet. But Peter did it. The sensation is bizarre. When you’re going down, it looks like you’re going to ram the other side of the hill. Then when you’re going up you’re still seeing dirt and never believing you can make it. Then the top appears and it’s too late to begin pedaling, because you’ve lost all momentum. The trick is to pedal all the way down and keep up your momentum.

The ride down Alpine went without incident, Peter and Jobst leading the way. On Tarwater Trail, we had a great descent, stopping at the giant redwood so I could take pictures. Before the Bailey bridge, Jobst had his first flat. I went to the bridge to take photos and saw many fingerling trout in the creek. As John was crossing the bridge, he caught his front wheel in the boards and flatted. We waited at the Old Haul Road, where Jobst saw a beautiful warbler.

Riding down the Haul Road, I got a flat in some gravel. The one-inch tires are to blame. After patching, we continued to Loma Mar for food, with me, Jobst, John, and Peter remaining. The others went up Pescadero Road to get home to see Joe Montana in his first game since back surgery seven weeks ago (Joe had a great game).

After leaving Loma Mar, we went to the ocean to look for the swans, but saw none. We did see marsh hawks and I saw a yellowthroat. Along the coast, we had a headwind, but not that bad. On Verde Road, we had to climb down to the new bridge under construction over Purisima Creek. Jobst didn’t like the idea, but we had no issues. Along Purisima Creek Road, Jobst pointed out the oil well up on a hill.

Once on the trail, we saw six mountain bike riders coming down and eight equestrians, also coming down. The road is in great shape, having been graded and widened. The landslide has been removed and traction is good, just a little muddy at the bottom. On the Huddart Park utility road [Roberts Road], we struggled through deep gravel. It was all I could do to stay upright. At the bottom, Jobst flatted. After a stop at the Woodside Store for water, we headed home, none the worse for wear after 69 miles.

Turkey Day Ride



NOVEMBER 26, 1986

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Marc Brandt, Jan Causey, Erik Garfinkel, Smitty Harwood, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Bill Robertson

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain, California Horse and Hiking Trail to Bear Gulch Road, Alambique Trail in Wunderlich Park to Crossroads, up Skyline Trail back to Bear Gulch, down Skyline Boulevard to Skylonda. Ray down 84, others down Windy Hill

WEATHER: Clear and cold, then clear and warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Marc - 2 flats on Avocet clinchers

Thanksgiving Day is a traditional holiday for many, a time to sit down around the family dinner table and have a feast, giving thanks for the many things we have that make life enjoyable. For Jobst Brandt it is that and more. It is also a chance to go for a bike ride on a Thursday in preparation for the big stuffing later in the day. We were

blessed with the presence of Marc Brandt, who won the 1983 state road race when he was in his prime as a racer. He has had his share of bike riding excitement. Once when riding along the flat part of Hwy 92 approaching Half Moon Bay he got out of the saddle and started sprinting madly to get behind a gravel truck. When he started to sprint, his chain slipped, throwing him onto the road and into the path of another oncoming gravel truck. He was nearly killed when his leg was caught underneath, but all he came out with was a broken ankle. Marc was amazingly lucky. Another time Marc was trying to pull apart a rim. It split apart and flew into his hand, severing a tendon. After a couple years off his bike he has gained weight. He made a point of telling us this several times as we rode along Sand Hill Road.

Jan is training for the luge competition at the 1988 Winter Olympics. Erik still dreams of being a pro bike racer after making it to Europe for some amateur racing. He recently bought a new bike after his other one was stolen, and started training. His life outside of cycling is building contractor. Smitty is another former racer. Smitty turned to photography when he quit racing after a couple years.

Before leaving, we had to take the group photo. Peter was looking at his tire and suddenly he said, "What's this!" A giant black bubble was rising from his tire. An instant later we heard a loud bang like a gunshot. His tube exploded. Jobst and the rest of us started laughing. Avocet tires have a problem with their casings. Jobst gave Peter a new tire and tube and off we went.

We noticed Manzanita Way had finally been repaved. I won't describe what happened to Marc at this point, but it was gross. At the base of Kings Mountain Road near Woodside Store we saw a bright yellow diamond sign with a bicycle on it and below it the words "No Dumping Allow." I wonder if it was planned that way? During the climb we rode at a casual pace. Jobst pointed out the Huddart Park sign. Its bright yellow letters, made of half-inch steel plate, dissuade passersby from shooting them.

We picked up Skyline Trail, which went up steeply for a couple hundred yards and then leveled off. For the rest of its 4.7 kilometers to Bear Gulch Road it rolled along gently. The narrow trail was covered with leaves, so you didn't know what was underneath — rocks, holes or sticks. We passed some second-growth redwoods and Douglas fir.

Several times Marc fell off his bike while riding with his new Look pedals. At one point I fell hard trying to get around a large stick. Jan and Peter caught up when I reached Bear Gulch Road. We rode up Bear Gulch to Skyline and picked up the trail here. The ride down Alambique Trail in Wunderlich Park was much rougher than I imagined it would be. We had to negotiate the badly chopped up trail and thick dust. Halfway down at the Crossroads, Marc flatted again. He had to borrow my glue and patch. Just then an equestrian arrived and warned us not to ride the trail.

We were off and passed two hikers, but they said nothing. For reasons unknown, mostly because none of us knew exactly where we were, we turned back and found our way to Skyline Boulevard, thinking we were headed to Skylonda. We headed down Skyline for a snack at Skylonda. I rode home after that, feeling better after two weeks off the bike with the flu.



Jobst Brandt, Bill Robertson and Marc Brandt find their way on Skyline Trail.



Trailblazing in Pescadero Creek Park



FEBRUARY 8, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine to Camp Pomponio Road, Upper Coyote Ridge Trail, Pomponio Trail north, Haul Road, Memorial Park, Wurr Road, Pescadero Road, Hwy 1, Hwy 84, Stage Road, Hwy 1, Purisima Creek Road, Skyline Boulevard, Kings Mountain Road, home

WEATHER: Cold and cloudy, then partly cloudy and warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

This was the first full Jobst Ride I had done in many weeks. Last week I started with Jobst, riding up Alpine Road in the cold but not frozen mud. We had some rough going, but once past the landslide it was okay. I peeled off at the bottom of Alpine and headed out Hwy 84 to San Gregorio and then up Tunitas Creek Road looking for signs of the suicide bike accident of Stanford professor Alan Cox. But I saw nothing. He ran head-on into a tree and was not wearing a helmet. He usually wore a helmet. Cox was being blamed for serious HR violations. Jobst rode 120 miles that day. My ride was 57 miles.

Today was colder than I thought it should be when we left about 8:20 a.m. The day before temperatures went up to 70 degrees, but today cloud cover kept the weather cool.

We took the trail along San Francisquito Creek and through the back of Oak Creek Apartments for a change of pace. A homeless person slept under an oak tree next to the trail.

At the Alpine Road green gate, Jobst was frustrated by not being able to ride down the side of the hill. Someone dug a trench at the bottom, obviously to keep out motorcycles. There was finally a creek at the washout where once there had been a bridge. It's been a dry winter. We walked our bikes through the trough. Then it was a sticky walk

through the landslide. Mud clung obstinately to our tires. Mud Turn upheld its reputation as I got off and walked. Jobst wanted to ride but was frustrated in his attempt. I said, "Walking is permitted Jobst."

By the time we reached Skyline, it was pleasantly warm. We saw two bikes parked along Skyline Boulevard next to the small lake. Then it was downhill Alpine Rd. At the Alpine Ranch road we climbed a wooden gate. The old white gate had been torn down and was lying on its side near the new unpainted and much lower gate. Jobst was going to show me some new trails he discovered recently and had ridden with Peter Johnson. Instead of the usual ride up at the first junction we stayed on the lower road and continued straight for a quarter-mile, taking a right at the next junction. Below we could see a large ranch house. We skirted the ranch and came to a gate with a sign saying state park land. Once through the gate it began to turn from open spaces to closed in with vegetation thick on both sides. We went through another open gate and were now in park land. Breaking into an opening we saw some picnickers at a bench to

our right. I spotted a beautiful overlook with a park bench and took a picture of Jobst here. Then we headed straight down into some beautiful redwood and Douglas fir forest.

The road was not steep downhill at this point. In another half mile, after a short but steep uphill and downhill we came to a signed trail junction. Towne Trail went to the right. To the left, Canyon Trail took off and went to Tarwater Trail. We stayed straight on Bear Ridge Trail, which was actually a double-track jeep trail. It was in good condition



We crossed Pescadero Creek at Towne Trail.

from rangers using it, and perhaps the honor farm below us. The road became extremely steep downhill for another half mile or so. It finally leveled out when we reached another trail junction. Ahead was a restricted part of the road to the honor farm. Pomponio Trail cut across us. We took the right branch and headed on a single-track through some thick forest. It was all cycling despite the narrow trail. We came to another junction in which we could go straight or stay right. We stayed right and rolled along the delightful Pomponio Trail. "This is where I saw Jim Hunter," Jobst commented.

We took a left, downhill, on Towne Fire Road to Pescadero Creek. I had walked down to the creek back in 1977 or '78 on the road to the right (Jones Gulch) and it was covered with leaves, hardly ever used. Now it was clearly in use. Much to my surprise, the beautiful log bridge I walked over had been destroyed in the 1982 floods. So we rode through the creek. Jobst berated me for getting my foot wet. He half-pedaled across. The traction was good. I took a picture of Jobst crossing the creek. Within another half mile we reached the Memorial Park junction at the Haul Road. We headed up and then down to the park, taking the older high road, which is not so steep as the lower road that rolls along. I rode through a deep puddle of muddy, smelly water next to a horse corral. Jobst knew to ride to the outside. I noticed the sheep at the sheep ranch needed shearing.

"Much to my surprise, the beautiful log bridge I walked over had been destroyed in the 1982 floods."

Roger was working at the Loma Mar store. I had M&Ms, chocolate-covered raisins and Orangina. After a brief rest we headed down Pescadero Road. Jobst said, "Look at my shadow. It's completely behind me. In a few minutes it will be directly in front of me! That means we'll make a 180 degree turn." I didn't believe him, but sure enough once we were crossing Pescadero Creek we had turned 180 degrees!

The new house that was never lived in still stands, empty and forlorn. The shed across the creek is still halfway in the water. We met up with a mountain bike rider about this time and took chase. He was a fit rider and pumping hard. Jobst found out he was a student at UC Santa Cruz majoring in environmental sciences. The bike belonged to his girlfriend and he had no pump or other tools for fixing a flat. He turned left at Cloverdale Road and we continued on our way to the coast.

Riding to the coast, we saw some people birdwatching, looking for the rusty backed blackbird. On the coast we looked for swans, but saw only a hooded merganser and grebes. We stopped at the top of a hill to look for whales, saw none, and talked to some tourists. They didn't know to look for whales.

After a short stop in San Gregorio for drink, we headed up Stage Road. Jobst didn't want to risk riding to the new bridge and finding it still not finished, so we took Hwy 1 all the way to Purisima Creek Road. I was informed that a beautiful old schoolhouse was located in the trees where there is now a ranch house. The school burned down.

The bridge was almost finished and we could have ridden across. We rode over it to check it out. I took a picture of an oil wheel in front of a house and field where horses grazed. I wanted to send it to Bay Area Backroads TV show.

We were greeted by a mud bath at Purisima Creek Road. Dozens of horses had turned the road into a muddy quagmire. We both got covered with mud, but I was worse off because I picked up speed to get through the muddy water holes, whereas Jobst kept a slower pace and wasn't splashed as badly. We saw several equestrians coming down and one going up. Then two motorbikes came along down the road. We stopped for water at the lower spring and then continued up the road. The road didn't improve until we crossed Purisima for the last time.

It was warm out and I sweat profusely riding up the steep hill. Jobst was left behind by a minute or two at the top. We rode quickly down Kings Mountain Road and turned at Manuella Avenue. There Jobst saw a man stuffing a chicken into his car trunk. Jobst said, "Is that your chicken?" The man smiled and said, "Sure." Then Jobst said, "Are those your chickens over there in the coop?" And the man said yes again.

On Manzanita Road Jobst found a poison mushroom and showed it to me. It was shiny yellow and green but looked delicious. And so ended our ride, 71 miles later at 3:15 p.m.

Ward Road Rediscovery



MARCH 1, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard to Hwy 9, down Toll Road, turn around. North on Skyline, left onto Hickory Oaks Trail (Long Ridge). Down School Road to Five Points Road. Turn around. Down Ward Road 1/2 mile before ranger turned us around; north on Skyline, Tarwater Trail, Haul Road, Pescadero Road, Stage Road, Tunitas Creek Road, Kings Mountain Road, home

WEATHER: Cloudy and cool

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

When we started our ride the goal was to find a bike route from Hwy 9 and Skyline to Castle Rock State Park. At the previous day's Chronicle Great Outdoors gathering I met Park Ranger Miles Standish, who told me about the trail that's open to bikes. We headed up Alpine Road. Conditions were fair with a little soft dirt, although it hadn't rained in two weeks. After an uneventful climb, we reached Skyline and headed southeast.

At Hwy 9, Jobst led the way down the Toll Road, which I thought was a mistake. I thought we should be on the paved road I had been on last April for Trail Days. We got to the first junction, which took a left down to a camp four miles away, but that wasn't what we wanted. We rode back up and then got onto a paved road, going through an open electric gate. But upon entering Jobst became suspicious. He didn't believe it was a good idea to take the road because it involved a lot of climbing up to Castle Rock. So we turned around and headed back, looking for Ward Road.

We entered MROSD land at a wooden gate that was signed. Soon we were riding along a ridge with a view of the Santa Cruz Mountains, all the way to Alpine Road and beyond. We followed a mountain bike track to the Ward Road entrance. At this point I was uncertain which way to go. It had been six years since Tom Ritchey and I had descended the road to Pescadero Creek. I remembered enough to get us onto Ward Road beyond the school, but when we reached a fork in the road I couldn't decide. It seemed unfamiliar. I suggested we take a right since I remembered that we stayed right most of the time. This proved a mistake.

We headed down the road and I didn't remember it. I told Jobst, "I don't recall all this vegetation alongside the road. This doesn't look right. But we kept going down. After a mile we reached a place with a view of a canyon and thick woods. Then I knew we were not on the right road. We decided to explore, riding another mile before reaching a gate. Beyond the gate we found an empty shack, passing several bulldozers. A short distance beyond the house we reached another fork and took the right one that headed down. Now we were following a creek. After a short distance we crossed the creek on a rather substantial wooden bridge. On the other side we found a lot of steel beams, the kind that might be used to build a large warehouse. There was other heavy equipment scattered about. We looked around for an extension of the road but it seemed to end right there in the middle of the redwoods.



Jobst Brandt checks out the big slide on Alpine Road, March 1, 1987.



One of our favorite routes used to be Long Ridge, Hickory Oaks Trail. This is how it looked in 1987.

We had no other choice but to head back and try to reach Pescadero Creek or ride back up the steep road. We chose the road. On the way I strained at the cranks to get up. It was one of those inclines where you barely make it with maximum effort. Finally back at the first fork near the top of the hill, we went left, climbing through a fence that said no trespassing and “Dead End Ahead.” Jobst said, “You know that when you see a dead-end road sign it goes somewhere.” Earlier we saw a large red “Beware of Dog” sign on the gates, but we knew it was only a ruse to dissuade trespassers.

Once on the road, we climbed a steep hill and then headed down. I finally remembered this as being Ward Road. We were on a ridge with a view of Oil Creek watershed and Hwy 9. After a half mile of descending, we saw a ranger truck coming up the road. The bearded ranger, who looked like a New Yorker, said, “The road is closed. You’ll have to turn around.” Jobst replied in an innocent voice “Oh, how far ahead?” The ranger responded, “No, you don’t understand. This road is private. The landowner doesn’t want anyone here. But if you come back in August it will be open. The land was purchased.”

We turned around after talking to the ranger some more and headed up to Skyline. We stopped at Alpine Road for a soda and then headed down Tarwater Trail.

Haul Road had recently been graded but was in good shape. At Loma



Upper Tarwater Trail on March 8, 1987.

Mar store while sitting there on the front porch taking in the view, several cyclists passed by. Jobst looked at them and said, "It's amazing, but bike riders rarely stop here."

The empty house on the creek still stands empty, mute testimony to the folly of building a house so close to a creek. The shed that fell into the creek remains there.

We headed up Stage Road and then Hwy 1 on to Tunitas Creek Road, clocking 44 mph on the descent to the bridge. At the end of the ride we had 91 miles on our cyclometers.

East Bay Exploring



MARCH 8, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Willow Road to Dumbarton Bridge, Coyote Hills, Alameda Creek Trail, Niles Canyon, Calaveras Road, Felter Road, Sierra Road, Old Piedmont Road, McKee Road, E. Julian Street, Coleman Avenue, the Alameda, Mary Avenue, Evelyn Avenue, Central Expressway, Middlefield Road, home

WEATHER: Cloudy, showery, then warm and partly cloudy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - rear flat on Dumbarton Bridge, Jobst - flat shortly thereafter and then another on Hwy 84

With the rain threatening to spoil a ride in the Santa Cruz Mountains, Jobst opted to go with me to the East Bay where it promised to be drier. We left under soggy conditions for Dumbarton Bridge. Jobst commented on the railroad tracks as he tried to bring down the gate by placing his bike over both rails, but it



You can't beat the view of Santa Clara Valley from Sierra Road, March 8, 1987.



Light rail ties remain beneath The Alameda near Santa Clara University. They were exposed in 1987.

wouldn't reach. He said the gate would be activated if he could have made the connection. We saw lots of shorebirds — willets, stilts, avocets, sandpipers, poking around in the salt ponds owned by Cargill. On Dumbarton Bridge we cursed the retaining wall that forced bikes to ride down a narrow, glass-littered causeway. On the way down I flatted and patched the tube on the other side. We saw a cormorant flying low over the water. At the former site of the Dumbarton toll booths we took a left into some pine trees where there is a foot path that took us to a trailer home and an open lot. We crossed the lot and climbed a fence to reach a pedestrian bridge over the new Dumbarton toll booths. The bridge will someday link Coyote Hills park with the National Wildlife Refuge near the old toll booths. But for now it is closed to the public.

We circled around a large open quarry and headed along the edge of the hills with spectacular views of the Bay and San Francisco. On the dirt road, Jobst discovered he had a front flat. He had the new Avocet K(evlar) tire in the rear that's supposed to stop glass penetration. Jobst got to work fixing the tube. We continued and soon reached the Alameda Creek Floodway path, which had recently been paved. We saw a variety of shorebirds and ducks — scopes, great blue herons, shovelers, ruddy ducks. The creek harbors a wealth of wildlife and it's a marvel to see a recreation path run its entire length of eight miles from Niles Canyon to the Bay. We had an uninterrupted ride under major roads like 680, 880 and lesser roads. It's a flat, straight shot to the canyon. At one point we noticed a movable dam operated by a man in a small building. The dam was down this day. Jobst stopped at a railroad bridge to see the site of a former switching tower. It had been torn down, but when Jobst was young he remembered coming here.

Jobst showed me where, on Dec. 14, 1969, six Boy Scouts and their scout master were crossing a railroad bridge when a freight train came by. The scout master fell to his death and three boys were injured. Jobst said they would have been fine if they would just hang onto railroad ties extending over the edge.

Jobst showed me railroad tracks leading into the canyon, being renovated by a local railroad group. One of the tracks is still used and for the first time I saw a train traveling down the canyon, its wheels squealing around a turn before it headed into a tunnel. We rode through Sunol and found a sleepy town with a new food store. On Calaveras Road

we noticed the CHP checking out something. Then we saw an East Bay water truck and a helicopter flying overhead. Maybe they were searching for a missing person.

The road is now in good shape, landslides repaired. Higher up we noticed extensive amounts of garbage on the hillside. Jobst railed about this and the fact that someone is spraying herbicides along the road. He showed me where it washes down into gullies, killing plant life and eventually winding up in our water supply.

Instead of heading down Calaveras, we turned left onto Felter Road and rode higher and higher. The road climbed steeply for the first two miles, leveled out briefly and then climbed again until we reached a massive canyon, home of Alum Rock Park. The road hugged the hillside and it seemed that at any moment it might fall into the gorge below. From up here we could see all of San Jose and much of San Francisco Bay.

We headed steeply down Sierra Road and before we knew it we were on Old Piedmont. We had something to eat at Lucky and then went to downtown San Jose to see how they're doing on the new rapid transit light rail. Downtown San Jose is like a ghost town, completely torn up. Old buildings stand empty as many will fall to the wrecking ball. We took the Coleman Avenue train overpass and Jobst showed me the College Station train platform, mentioned in Jack London's novel *Call of the Wild*. Jobst got off here in high school to attend Bellarmine. It's still there, but the old dorms are being torn down. Every day he took a train from his home in Palo Alto to this school. He told me how one time he hopped on a train that took him to Pacheco Pass with his brother Klaus and then they jumped off and caught a train back down.

We continued north on the Alameda where, at Santa Clara University, the street is being rerouted around the main campus. Jobst noticed a cut in the road and pointed out the railroad ties that once served the light rail running between San Jose and Santa Clara. Above the redwood ties was a layer of concrete and then three layers of asphalt. It was like an archaeological dig, testimony to a time when railroads ruled. Jobst told me about El Camino and how he used to ride to work on it daily. We rode through Sunnyvale past the train tracks on Mary where a police officer driving a car only days before was killed by a train. After 75 miles I arrived home and called it a day.

Gazos Creek Road Tree Fall



MARCH 29, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, southeast on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, Hwy 236, up China Grade, down Johansen Road, down Gazos Creek Road, Cloverdale Road, Pescadero Road, Wurr Road, Haul Road, up Tarwater Creek Trail, up Alpine Road, down Alpine Road

WEATHER: Warm, sunny and mild

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

When a giant redwood dies, the forest hears its mournful cry, a shattering, cracking, crashing ending with a resounding thud. In the days of the loggers in the late 1800s that was an all too common sound. Today with the loggers gone, old trees still give up their grip, falling to floods and erosion. On Gazos Creek Road we saw one such redwood sprawled out in death across the road. Its insides lay split like board wood, fresh and clean from its recent demise. I was surprised by how evenly the wood split, as though it were suggesting it be made into two-by-fours. We clambered over the tree and continued on our way, leaving the fallen comrade to the elements.

Earlier that morning we left from Jobst's house at the usual time, after Peter Johnson failed to show. This was the first day all year I was able to ride in a short-sleeve jersey without feeling cold. Jobst was recovering from a lingering cold and said he felt weak. Nonetheless we headed out at a brisk pace up Alpine. At the appointed time on Alpine we saw a large contingent of early morning cyclists making a tour of the loop, dressed in the latest clothes and sporting all the new equipment.

On Alpine Road, Jobst proudly displayed the previous day's work on resurrecting the road where it slid away.



He cut a bench into the landslide and now we can ride through a place that at one time we had to walk over. However, he was unable to do anything further ahead where there's a chasm. He wants to build a crude bridge. Meanwhile, Jobst chopped steps into the place where we walk around and trimmed back the poison oak. Fortunately for Jobst, he is immune to poison oak.

The rest of Alpine Road is in fair shape and we could ride the remaining two miles to Page Mill Road. At the top we were

passed by a cyclist who would later play a part in our day's ride. We headed south on Skyline noticing many hikers in the Christmas tree farm. Farther along we noticed the same cyclist who passed us earlier. Jobst started pushing the pace and we gained but then we noticed the rider quickened his pace and we had to ride all out. Jobst and I traded off to catch the guy a mile or so along the way. He slowed considerably after we caught him. The bearded rider wore shorts with a hole in them, and looked young and strong on his nice-looking Fuji. He also had a rear view mirror attached to his helmet, which is why his pace quickened. When Jobst invited the rider to follow us, he said he would if he didn't have "a wife, a dog and a house to take care of."

As we headed west and he went east, he gave the last excuse. "I'd join you guys but my wife is pregnant."

"After a while, you've heard all the excuses," Jobst said. On Hwy 9, I managed to stay with Jobst fairly well, but only with effort. On Hwy 236 we noticed a lot of controlled burns taking place. On Johansen we saw an unusual sight for this location — four hikers. Johansen is in good enough shape, but it has many drainage berms that require caution, otherwise you might tweak your frame. On Gazos Creek Road we saw mountain bike tracks. The road hadn't been driven on in some time. Jobst thinks the county doesn't maintain the road, but it's up to the logging companies. Once past the downed redwood, we headed to the remains of the old log dam on Gazos Creek. It's still visible even 80 years after it no longer has a purpose in logging operations. I took photos.

We rode up Cloverdale on the new asphalt, the section from Butano State Park having been paved for the first time. At Pescadero High School we saw two radio-controlled airplanes doing some amazing stunts. Onward to Loma Mar, where we met Mike and Jean Higgins. They were going up Tunitas Creek Road. We chatted for a while before separating.



Beginning the steep descent of Gazos Creek Road from Sandy Point.



On the ride up the Haul Road, we saw smooth tire tracks and Jobst speculated it was Tom Ritchey. The tracks were also visible on Tarwater Trail. The real highlight of this ride came at the Bailey Bridge over Pescadero Creek. Here for the first time we saw a fish. But this wasn't some fingerling. It was a trout almost a foot long. We were both shocked to see such a large fish here. The creek was fished out years ago.

This was my first time climbing Tarwater Trail and I was surprised how easy it was. It's much easier than Purisima Creek Road. We stopped for a photo of the old-growth redwood. At the trailhead, we talked with four or five hikers who wanted to explore

Butano Ridge. Then we headed up Camp Pomponio Road, which is steep but I was feeling strong. Jobst was not. We finished our ride up Alpine Road with views of verdant hillsides, a blue ocean and redwood forests. The air was fresh and the warm sun invigorating. Then it was down Alpine Road helter-skelter. We saw a mountain bike rider coming up and heard others on the trails paralleling the road. After stopping in to see how the sale was going at Palo Alto Bicycles, we headed home with 82 miles on our Avocet cyclometers.

Whitehouse Canyon Road Gets My Vote



APRIL 12, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine and Portola Road to Portola State Park, up to Gate 10 and Gate 12 at China Grade, Johansen Road to Gazos Creek Road, down Whitehouse Canyon Road, Hwy 1 to Swanton Road, up Last Chance Road to Big Basin State Park, up Hwy 236 and Hwy 9, Skyline Boulevard, down Charcoal Road to Stevens Canyon Road, up Stevens Canyon Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Clear and warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

One of the finest spring days in a long time gave reason for an epic ride with lots of dirt. We headed up Alpine Road, where Jobst had hacked out a path across the landslide. This was easy enough to negotiate, but we still need to get through another obstacle a few yards north. After a fast descent down Portola Road we entered the park at the main entrance and crossed the wooden bridge over Pescadero Creek.

We passed the Iverson Cabin on the way out the back entrance and turned south on the Haul Road. We saw a smooth tire track. Past the orange gate on lumber company land we noticed nobody had been here in a long time, at least since the last rain. We headed up the dirt road improved by the oil drilling company that used it a few years ago



A sign on Whitehouse Canyon Road gives directions to points of interest.

and left it in good shape. The road is showing signs of decay however with washouts and plant growth. Pampas grows abundantly in some spots. At Gate 10 I waited a few minutes for Jobst, who's getting a lot slower these days. Then we made our way to China Grade. Johansen was a lot easier this time than a few weeks ago and I rode up the steep bump. On Gazos Creek Road Jobst told me the story of how the ranger station burned. Some motorcyclists took shelter from a storm and tried to light a Coleman lantern inside. It caught fire.

We took Whitehouse Canyon Road, a first for me. It follows the chinks, an outcropping of brilliant white shale. The road is smooth and fast. From up here we could see the entire Gazos Creek drainage to the north all the way to the ocean. It's a magnificent sight. Farther down we saw the Monterey peninsula. After that we headed into the redwoods, passing several houses farther down where logging had been going on. The ride out to the ocean was as bumpy as anything I've ever experienced. I felt like a paint can in a shaker. My hands and arms became numb.

Once on Hwy 1, we had a tailwind to Swanton turnoff and then climbed through the lovely Monterey pines up to the ridge overlooking the ocean. This is one of my favorite roads on the coast. The air is always fresh and clean. We took Last Chance Road from here. It was dry but bumpy the entire way. We saw a couple of cars but weren't hassled. At the meadow where the road turns to a trail there's a large garage with abandoned vehicles. This is where aging hippy VW buses come to die. We passed a man and woman equestrian. Jobst said the horses heard our bikes long before they saw us. Once riding along West Waddell Creek, we walked up the creek washouts that had been



roads. A skinny-dipping woman sat on a sunny rock next to the creek singing arias.

Just then the horse people caught up and they said they knew the woman, who lives nearby. After walking some more, we were able to ride most of the rest of the way to Big Basin State Park headquarters. We bought food and drink at the store and then headed up the maintenance road to Hwy 236. At this point, Jobst stopped to dislodge a stick that caught in his crank sprockets. It was jammed so tight he needed a tool to get it out.

At Skyline we decided to try Charcoal Road down to Stevens Canyon. It was steep and rocky until we reached a turnoff, which took us down some more to another left turn. From here we picked up a single-track that took us to the bottom of the canyon through some spectacular forest scenery. The trail was as narrow as any I've been on. I had to dismount three times and walk on the steep ride out of Stevens Canyon. We passed numerous hikers and several mountain bike riders coming down the hill. Once on Page Mill Road, we raced down and got home about 5 p.m. after 91 miles.

Mount Hamilton Wildflowers



APRIL 26, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Mt. Hamilton loop

WEATHER: Warm and sunny

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

After writing a *San Francisco Chronicle* column about the joys of cycling over Mt. Hamilton in the spring, I decided it was time to give it a try. When I suggested the ride to Jobst, he wasn't so sure; he asked me when the annual century ride was held and when I told him that Saturday his eyes brightened and he said "Of course. We always do the ride the day after the century!" The morning was warm from the start, so I wore just my new Avocet Silkskin jersey. This was also my first long ride on the Italian Palo Alto frame. It wasn't all that good downhill and the toe clip overlap was bothersome when getting started. I'm glad I won't have this frame for long while my new frame is being built by Dale Saso. My old Colnago broke, after being repaired in 1981 following my near-fatal accident.

This would be a great day for bird watching as it was not windy. Despite the dry spring, the wildflower display was second only to 1983. Near the top of Mt. Hamilton, I blasted away from Jobst. We were greeted by a swarm of black gnats so thick that they coated my legs and arms. I could not look up for fear of getting them in my eyes. At the top I suggested to Jobst that I was "nattily" attired. We saw Sheriff Dolfin, who enjoys painting over the Mt. Hamilton bike race numbers Jobst painted on the road for 10, 5, 3 kilometers to go. After filling my water bottle from the faucet at the observatory lunch room, we headed down the backside. Fortunately the road was not freshly graveled, as it was last year.

We stopped at the watering hole, where Jobst took his fill. I would have nothing to do with it because it wasn't running fast. We saw two people get out of a car and mount their bicycles to ride down to Isabel Creek. On the way to the Junction store, Jobst sighted two Lewis woodpeckers. I suggested to Jobst that we try the "country" store beyond San Anton Junction bar. He agreed, so we went there. The place was a big disappointment. Its owners smoked inside the trailer. It was a depressing scene and I wanted out of there as quickly as possible. Outside on the porch, we talked with three young women. One was named Mindy. Mindy said she attends a one-room school at San Antonio Junction with 20 or so students. She offered to give us a cat. Their father or grandfather was out in the yard fussing around while smoking a cigarette. There is only the barest indication of a yard. Rose bushes grow on the side of the trailer. The old



man yelled at the girls from time to time for no apparent reason. Then the mother came outside and told the girls to “quit bothering the men.”

In an attempt to leave an impression on the girls, Jobst said in a deep and firm voice, “You don’t ever want to smoke cigarettes. It’s an addiction. Smokers can’t stop smoking even if they wanted to. They have to have a cigarette and when they can’t get one they get nervous. Don’t smoke cigarettes.” Jobst said that some of the most memorable moments in his life came when he met someone from outside his family who had some suggestion on how to live.



We headed up the hill. At Arroyo Mocho we saw a Santa Cruz Audubon club outing. We stopped and chatted. Later, on Mines Road before the long descent, we saw a black bird with a crown and white under its wings. It was the rare Phainopepla, a beautiful bird with shiny wing feathers.

In Livermore, we stopped at Lucky Supermarket for a snack but because of the heat neither of us was hungry.

We headed out Hwy 84 and over the Vallecitos bump, passing some BMX racers at a track on the way. The ride up Calaveras Road went pleasantly. We stopped for some creek water. Jobst had to crawl through a new barbed wire fence but he wasn't about to let anything stop him from his traditional drink. On the way down to Felter Road, we had to stop for a motorcycle-car accident. And so ended the ride at 99.6 miles, just a 0.1 less than last year's total on the Avocet cyclometer.

WRIGHTS TUNNEL LEADS TO LOS GATOS



MAY 2, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, John Woodfill

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard, Summit Road to Summit Store, Morrill Road, through San Jose water department land, Los Gatos, home via Saratoga-Sunnyvale, Stelling, Rainbow, Bubbs, Foothill Boulevard

WEATHER: Sunny and cool, then sunny and warm

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Because the Mayor's Cup bike race was on Sunday in San Francisco, Cat's Hill moved its race to a Saturday. We headed out under clear skies but it was cool. I got cold on Skyline. Peter managed to make it to the ride, but he was in sad shape. His business has taken all his spare time. John is going to ride with Jobst in Europe this summer. We rode up Alpine Road on the newly repaired slide. I had no trouble negotiating the trail, although the lower cut is much more difficult to get through than the part we worked on. On the way up I saw a cottontail jump across the road.



John Woodfill, Jobst Brandt and Peter Johnson check out Wrights Tunnel on the way to Los Gatos.



Racers at Cat's Hill power up the steep hill on Nicholson Avenue in downtown Los Gatos.

On Thursday I saw a bobcat and a deer when I went up.

At the first parking lot past the first climb on Skyline we came upon four women who said they were lost. They had a bad map of Montebello. They thought they were coming out much farther north than they were. We told them to go back. Then we saw a motorcycle caravan of British bikes and later we saw a banner at a house on Mountain Charlie Road where they started from. The ride down to Old Santa Cruz Highway went quickly as I hit 46 mph. At the Summit Store we rested briefly and Jobst had his traditional quart of orange juice, which, as is his custom, he guzzled. Then he started into his usual tirade against the people who live in the Santa Cruz Mountains and commute to work in Silicon Valley.

We headed back west on Summit Road and soon turned right down Morrill Road, which I had only been up once. The road went through some redwoods that burned in the Lexington Reservoir fire two years ago. It was eerie riding through burned trees. At the bottom we stopped to take pictures of the Wrights train tunnel and wonder what it was like a century ago when this was a tourist resort, Wrights Station. Now there is a rusty old bridge, the train tunnel was blown shut in 1941 and the train bridges are gone. Even the railroad ties have been torn out. We headed over the bridge and took a quick left onto San Jose water department land. On a Saturday I believed we would surely be caught so we agreed beforehand that I would identify myself as Don McBride. If we were separated and names asked there would be no confusion.

It turned out I didn't have to use the name, but it was a close call. After riding up a couple steep hills on loose rock, we descended to where Jack London used to hide away in hunting cabins. There was a sign, but it's gone now. We then turned left and headed down a road. But at the next intersection Jobst suddenly turned around and told us to get out of here fast. He saw the water department truck coming. Quickly we turned around, fumbling with our pedals as we tried to get cleated shoes into toe clips. Jobst raced down the paved road until we came to a tall gate with barbed wire on top. I thought we were done for. But we took a trail that paralleled the fence and it got us out. But there was a price to pay. We had to walk through poison oak. Try as I might, I could not get through without touching the deadly plant. Right now I can feel the itching on my legs. I hosed down at Los Gatos, but I'm sure it was too late.

We took another left at Aldercroft Heights Road. Then it was a short climb to the road behind Lexington Reservoir. I took Los Gatos Creek Trail, but Jobst, Peter and John took the Novitiate Hill road.

Cat's Hill didn't have the crowds of last year because of the Saturday event, but it didn't lack for good riders — Davis Phinney, Jeff Pierce, Tom Broznowski, Gavin Chilcott, Tom Prehn, etc. Jim Sullivan was there; he looked healthy after his successful heart operation. After the races I headed home alone, after 70 miles.

Sierra Ride Wet & Warm



MAY 9-10, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Day 1 - Sonora over Sonora Pass, north to Lee Vining on Hwy 395. Day 2 - Tioga Pass through Yosemite National Park, Wards Ferry Road back to Sonora

WEATHER: Rain on Day 1, but still warm. Day 2 warm and beautiful

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

The Sierra Ride was early this year because there wasn't any snow in the passes. We stayed at the Sierra Gold Hotel in Sonora and left at 6:30 a.m., 30 minutes later than usual. I beat Jobst out the door. He's getting older now and doesn't rush as much as he used to.

Under clear skies we headed to Sonora Pass. Jim lagged behind, but not by much. When we reached Strawberry it was warm but clouding up. Jobst sped up before the descent to Strawberry but it was nothing like the old days when he'd drop a bunch of panting riders trying to hang on to his wheel. Like an aging wind-up toy, Jobst pointed himself in the general direction of Sonora Pass and headed out slowly to his next stop, Donnell's Vista Overlook. The reservoir is really low. Then it was the nice downhill to Dardanelle where we stopped only briefly for victuals. Jobst stopped at the bridge to look for the dipper, but didn't see one. By now it was clouding up and we wondered if we'd get rained on.

At the Window we stopped to take photos. In years past Jobst never stopped here because he was too busy beating off contenders like Ritchey and Robertson. Finally we have photos of the Window. Past the Window it started sprinkling and we heard the roll of thunder. Then it started raining heavily, but it wasn't a real cold rain so we continued, not even stopping to put on our jackets. I was soaked within a few minutes, wearing only Avocet shorts and a Silkskin jersey with a polypropylene undershirt. Jobst and Jim were dropped at this time so I pushed the pace. At the Golden



Jim Westby and Jobst Brandt ride past Donnell Overlook on May 9, 1987.

Stairs it started raining some more. Once past the 9,000 foot sign I stopped to put on my rain jacket. But who do I see charging up the pass? Jobst! He passed me without slowing down, bent on being the first to the summit. I put on my jacket on and chased, but it was no use.



Jobst Brandt rides up The Window on the 1987 tour. It's much steeper than it looks here.

He had a good lead. I kept him in sight the whole way. At the summit we saw guys skiing down the last snowbank and there was a man smoking a cigar. Jim followed in about five minutes. The east side was dry and warm, but the Leavitt Meadows store was closed.

On Hwy 395, we headed south to Bridgeport. At Devils Gate we had more rain and wind. Jim and I rode



It's a steady climb up the eastern side of Tioga Pass. We had perfect weather.

together, with Jobst far ahead. At Bridgeport we went inside and had a warm meal while Jobst sat outside at the Taco stand (where we had dinner) and had a burger. He left for Lee Vining without saying goodbye. Jim and I rode together for a while until I pulled ahead to reach Conway Summit. No Jobst in sight. At this point the weather was beautiful and Mono Lake seemed as big as ever. We stayed at Murphys Hotel for \$25 and had dinner at Nicelys. I had fried chicken and so did Jobst. Jim had pork chops.

Next morning we had breakfast at Nicelys and headed up Tioga Pass at 7:30 a.m. It was no contest. I dominated the entire way. I stopped to take Jobst's picture halfway up and then rode ahead.

My speed was usually 7.5 mph. At the summit, Ranger Ferdinand yelled at me to get in line behind the cars. Jobst followed in about five minutes and then Jim in another five or so. The ride down to Tuolumne Meadows wasn't nearly as cold as the last time I rode down here. Yosemite is a grind in either direction. We stopped at the giant Sequoia for a picture while Jobst patched a tube. Jim and I rode to the nearby tree where you can ride through the trunk, and took a picture. The dogwoods were in bloom and the temperature was warm by now.

We flew down to Groveland and grabbed a bite to eat at the first burger stand. Jim and I had fried-turkey sandwiches and root beer floats and Jobst had a burger. Then we took a right at Deer Flat Road, which took us to Wards Ferry Road. At the bottom it was stinking hot, but I didn't mind the heat. After some more photos I rode ahead of Jobst and Jim. Then who comes along in a VW Rabbit but Peter and Jan! They spent the weekend gambling at Tahoe and drove over Tioga, getting caught in a hailstorm. And so we finished our ride where we started, all of us none the worse for wear. However, late that night I woke up with a low fever and sour stomach. Yes, food poisoning. Jim had it too and no doubt we got it at Groveland since we had the same food. This goes down as the earliest and wettest Sierra Ride on record. Of course, Jobst rode here in April 1972 and got snowed on all the way through Yosemite to Tioga Pass.



Whitehouse Canyon Road Uphill



MAY 17, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, down Alpine, Tarwater Trail, Pomponio Trail, Haul Road, Memorial Park, Wurr Road,

Cloverdale Road, Hwy 1, up Whitehouse Canyon Road, Gazos Creek Road, up Hwy 236, Hwy 9, Skyline, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cool and foggy all day

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Only a week after the Sierra Ride, Jobst was up for more long riding. We headed out under gray skies in cold weather, unusual for this time of year. But our goal was to find a new road into Pescadero Creek County Park beginning from the trailhead at Tarwater Trail. He jumped the gate and at first everything went smoothly. The road was in good shape. But soon the road became less obvious, more overgrown with brush.

As we descended to Evans Creek it became apparent nobody had been here for a long time. At Evans Creek we found a wooden bridge but kept to the right hoping to find a way down. But the logging road dead-ended. We crossed the bridge and tried the other road but it too was overgrown completely. That meant going back up the hill a few hundred yards and trying the right fork that went uphill. What a disaster. It was covered with poison oak as thick as I've ever been through. It was everywhere and I had to struggle to make progress through the grease brush and poison oak.

After what seemed an eternity, we finally hit the crest of the hill. I was behind and unable to find Jobst and Peter, and here was a junction. I went left for a brief time and saw no evidence of their tracks. When I went right I found a trail and tracks so I continued, backtracking toward the trailhead. Pretty soon I caught up and we followed an old trail marked with pink ribbon. We took it back to the trailhead. Now we know what's down that trail.

Then it was north on Tarwater Trail, which I had never ridden. At the bottom we crossed the bridge over Pescadero Creek at the honor farm and took a quick right onto Pomponio Trail. It rolled uphill for a while and then descended to Pescadero Creek. Here we stopped and washed our legs to get off the poison oak oil. The water wasn't all that cold. We sat by the creek with our feet in the water, talking and enjoying the quiet solitude of a redwood forest.

On the way to Wurr Road, we saw several mountain bikes, no doubt having read my previous week's *Chronicle* bike column on the Haul Road. At Loma Mar we had a bite to eat and then headed toward the ocean, seeing a beautiful Wilson's warbler on the way. Riding up the rocky Whitehouse Canyon Road we passed a Cadillac and that was the last vehicle we saw. The climb isn't steep, very gradual all the way to Gazos Creek. We came across four young mountain bike riders on the chalk ridge. They asked directions. Gazos Creek Road was sandy. We surmised there had been a ride and tie horse race recently. At the park we saw three other cyclists also getting a bite to eat. Off we went again up Hwy 236 and Hwy 9. Ride distance 93 miles.



Gazos Creek Road at its sandiest in 1988.

A Trail with a View



AUGUST 2, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Brian Cox, Jeff Vance

ROUTE: Sand Hill Road, Manzanita Road, Kings Mountain Road, down Tunitas Creek Road, right and down Borden Hatch Mill Trail, Purisima Creek Road, Hwy 1, Stage Road, Pescadero Road, Haul Road, Hwy 9, Redwood Gulch Road, Stevens Canyon Road, Foothill Expressway, home

WEATHER: Warm and clear, then foggy and cool, then clear and hot

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jobst - flat at end of ride

On his second weekend after a 1,800-mile, 18-day bike trip through the Alps, Jobst was off on another ride in search of yet another new trail. You'd think we had thoroughly explored the Santa Cruz Mountains, yet it seems we keep finding new roads. The loggers were busy over the past century.

Jeff, who helped us build the Alpine Road landslide trail, showed up with mountain bike riding companion Brian, but they were on road bikes. The bearded duo are always seeking out new trails where no bike has gone before. Jeff and Brian kept up a steady dialogue of places they've ridden as we passed Huddart Park. As Jobst always does, he pointed out the letters on the sign. "No bullet holes here. The signs are made of half-inch thick iron plate," he explained. Jeff told me he had ridden up the Edgewood Road trail that cuts a swathe up the mountain to Skyline. He said it was steep and not worth riding, but he found several interesting trails nearby.

At Skyline we headed down Tunitas Creek Road. It was already hot, the first heat wave we've had this summer.



Grabtown Gulch Trail where it joins Purisima Creek Road. The Borden Hatch Mill Trail is just a short distance farther west on Purisima Creek Road.

Jobst wanted to explore a logging road he saw on our previous ride into the Purisima Creek basin. It branched left after a quarter-mile off Tunitas Creek Road. We merrily began our ride as the road went fairly level. But pretty soon the road got rocky and climbed steadily, forcing us to dismount, something Jobst is loathe to do. The road continued climbing through sparse pine and oak until it plateaued at an open area with a sweeping view of the Pacific and Half Moon Bay.

The fog lay like a white blanket over the ocean, its edges half-covering the town. From here we could see at least three other trails that Jeff and Brian had ridden, including Harkins and Perimeter Trail. Jobst took several photos, while I wished I had brought my camera.

At this point we knew it was going to be one steep descent into Purisima Creek and we were right. From the beginning the road was unrideable, even for Jobst. In his younger years he may have given it a try but age and injury are showing. At times we were practically sliding down the hill after we got off the rocky part into the trees. Jeff and Brian said that on their mountain bikes they could ride it, but even they admitted in places there would be no margin for error. Down, down, down. I wondered if it would ever end. Eventually we came to a rideable part and sped along to Purisima Creek Road.

We stopped for water at the creek and continued another half-mile to the parking lot. Jobst was at his vituperative best as he pointed to yet another new “country home” on Purisima Road. “Why would anybody want to live way out here?” Jobst fumed. We were greeted by a cool layer of fog on the coast. Hawks perched nearby in tall eucalyptus. At the duck pond Jobst saw a pied-billed grebe, which ducked down under the water to look for food as we passed. Earlier, on Purisima we saw a young wren hopping around in the bush; it looked like a small mouse.

At San Gregorio Store we had food and drink and picked up another rider, Jim Westby. He’s racing this year and plans to attend the world championships in Austria later this month. On Stage Road, Jobst pointed to where Bill Robertson had his first crash, at a sweeping turn. Bill just got back from a Europe trip with Lindsay Crawford. They had rain all but one or two days and at one point had to walk through a landslide with mud up to their knees. A few days later that same landslide wiped out a town.

Loma Mar is a store and gas station deep in the redwoods. Jobst has been coming here for 30 years and in that time he has come to know store owner Roger quite well. He sends him post cards every year when he travels to Europe.



Roger’s arm was still in a cast after he took a bad fall in a baseball game. When I saw him I challenged him to an arm-

wrestling match. He demurred.

After some Popsicles and Orangina, we headed out Wurr Road, past the sheep ranch, the apple orchard and the hippy hangout to get to the Haul Road. On the way we tried to save a snake, but it looked like its time was up. A truck ran over its tail, doing enough damage to put it out of action. Later we saw a beautiful red, black and white King snake, which, alas, had also died under the weight of a one-ton car.

The heat began to get to us on the Haul Road, normally as frigid a place as you could ask for deep in the redwoods. Now the trail was a bit dusty. We passed about six hikers on the trail, some of whom had been camping overnight. At the gate on Santa Cruz Lumber Company private property we quickly got our bikes over and continued on our way. Jobst has ridden this road for many years and only recently have landowners become hostile. Today would be no exception.

We stopped for water beyond a large gate. It was only a trickle and I was concerned about drinking it for fear of picking up giardia or some other nasty bug. Jobst liked to call it "gardenias." Once beyond yet another gate we rode past the old lumber mill and were immediately accosted. "Come back here!" a man yelled. We kept riding. The man ran to his truck and started the engine. We knew it was hopeless to try to get away because it was uphill for two miles to Hwy 9, but we kept riding anyway. He caught up quickly, so we stopped in the shade. "You passed private property signs when you came in here. You know that. We're asking that you don't come through here again." The man was a lot nicer than others we encountered on our rides. He patiently explained that they've had problems here (don't they all?) and that they have to keep people out. "Mountain bikers come down the hill from Gate 10 at 20-30 mph, out of control. We're afraid they might hit one of our trucks and then we'd have a lawsuit. People are so lawsuit happy today."

We listened politely and although Jobst put up his usual defense, "we're not motorcycles, we don't carry guns, we don't drink, we don't start fires, we don't litter, we're just out here to enjoy the scenery," the man was unable to say anything positive. We left on amicable terms. We hope next time we don't run into the same guy [it was my last time].

On Hwy 9 we suffered through the intense heat as we made our way up to Skyline and a quenching soda. It's a good thing there's someone there selling hot dogs and soda or we would be one thirsty bunch. Jobst, always thinking of ways to enjoy his ride, said he was going down Hwy 9 instead of the usual Skyline. He wanted to soak his feet in Stevens Creek. We rode down to Redwood Gulch Road on the steep, winding road. At Stevens Creek we dismounted and took off our shoes to soak our hot feet in the cool waters under shade trees. It was an idyllic setting and a welcome relief. As we sat there talking, I set about building a dam and soon the water level had risen dramatically.

We rode on Foothill Expressway at a good pace, finishing the ride at Jobst's house 84 miles later. He took a watermelon out of the refrigerator and we gorged ourselves.

Fire Trucks on Ward Road



AUGUST 30, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, Jeff Vance

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard south, hiking trail before Ward Road, Peters Creek Road, Ward Road, Haul Road, Wurr Road, Pescadero Road, Stage Road, Hwy 1, Purisima Creek Road, Harkins Fire Road, Skyline southeast, Kings Mountain Road, to party

WEATHER: Sunny and hot, then mild and sunny, then some fog on coast, then hot and sunny

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Ward Road has eluded Jobst for many years, but today would be his chance to ride down to the Haul Road all the way on dirt [he may have done it with someone else]. I had explored the road only once with Tom Ritchey in 1980 and I could not recall how it went. But Jeff and Brian had ridden it recently on mountain bikes, several times. The ride up Alpine Road was hot and dusty. We passed two joggers near the landslide. The land-

slide is holding up well, but for how much longer? A heavy rain will wipe out our trail work. I showed Jeff and Brian the way we used to ride up Alpine Road when I sprinted hard for a few seconds. It's hard to believe we blasted. I'll never forget wishing the pace wasn't so fast. Now it isn't. I don't think I could keep it up, although Jobst was in his 40s when he rode hard. I'm only 35 and already too slow to think of hard rides Jobst was doing when he was my age. We saw a mountain bike or two coming down Alpine Road.

At the top we headed south on Skyline, planning to ride some trails to Doherty Ridge or Ward Road. We took the trailhead that quickly goes around a hill and goes level to Peters Creek Road junction. Here we could have gone to Doherty Ridge or up the hill to Ward Road. We chose Ward. Farther back at another junction we had a choice to head left or right. We chose right and rode up Peters Creek Road, which wasn't steep. I was surprised to learn about this road. Jeff showed us the lake on the left at the top of the hill, with a beautiful view of the foggy Pacific to our right. We proceeded to the first Ward Road gate. Now it says entry by permission only, without all the no trespassing



Brian Cox and Jeff Vance take a break on Peters Creek Road.

signs. I guess they're making progress. We continued down Ward Road. It was loose in places, but rideable. We came to a crucial junction past the summer houses [torn down], a junction I know I would have missed had I been without Jeff and Brian. We took the right fork, which looked to be much less traveled than the left. They said the left fork had only recently become heavily traveled. They don't know where it goes.

At this point the terrain changes from out in the open, dry brown grass, to forest, mostly Douglas fir and madrone. The road rolled a bit and then descended steeply. It leveled and then the road cut through a lot of red shale and loose rock. Beyond here we encountered a state forest fire truck. The bright red truck with engine running was parked across the road at a curve, blocking our path. Jobst halted and peered around a corner. He saw three rangers, one of them looking at the truck. Jobst didn't want us to go blasting past them, fearing that we might be arrested. So we waited and waited.

During that time, we discussed various possibilities. Go blasting past, cut down a steep, loose hillside, bypassing the truck, go back up the hill and wait or hope they'd divert their attention. This all seemed sort of silly, being out in the woods miles from civilization, thinking we might get arrested by forest service employees, when we were on state land anyway.

Finally we headed up the hill to wait and hope the truck continued down. But as we were walking away the rangers returned to the truck, saw us, and waved a friendly wave. So we headed down and talked briefly. They were checking out the road wondering where the left fork went. We didn't know either, but we surmised it went to the Santa Cruz Lumber Company sawmill. The truck headed down the road and Brian and I followed. We caught up and passed them. They had to slow down to get around a tree across the road.

We rode through Pescadero Creek, which was just a trickle, before grunting up to the Haul Road, in good shape although a bit dusty. We saw only two hikers, and a snake with a red bottom and dark brown top, ring around



We wait for the fire truck to make a move on Ward Road.

the neck [Monterey ring-necked snake]. We continued to Wurr Road, which had recently been repaved. We stopped at the apple orchard and munched down a couple.

At Loma Mar store Roger said he didn't know about the road work until after it was done. Roger wasn't out of his arm cast. Tuesday he said they may remove it and give him a brace. We sat outside in the ideal weather and talked about a variety of subjects. Jobst wondered if the ad on the bulletin board would work. They were selling a car and each week they'd knock off \$25 until an offer was made. Nice gimmick. After eating our fill, we headed to the Pacific Ocean, bypassing Pescadero. On Stage Road we noticed the burned down modern house next to the white one at the end of the long stretch of road with the giant eucalyptus. It was still a shambles. At San Gregorio Store we stopped for more drink and commented on all the different bikes, vertical dropouts, etc. Then we headed up newly paved Stage Road and north on foggy Hwy 1.

During the descent to Tunitas Creek, Jobst recorded 47.5 mph. On the ride to Purisima Canyon I noticed the oil wells were in working condition but not pumping. What will come of the off-shore oil drilling? We passed the horse stables, Rancho Cañada or something like that. Every year I see another new house in Purisima Canyon. At the bottom of Purisima Road we turned left at the first bridge and then took the right fork up Harkins Fire Road. The left branch goes up a trail called Whittemore Gulch.

Harkins is legal for bikes, so we took it. It started okay but soon became steep. We passed two equestrians coming down. I stopped for both and waited until they passed. The road climbed up an exposed ridge but it wasn't all that hot because of the cool fog below us. It contrasted nicely with the brown, dry terrain



Walking is necessary on parts of Harkins Fire Road.

and cypress. The road got so steep in three places that we walked. But it wasn't that bad because traction was good the entire way. At the top we came to a junction. The trail became single-track to the left, but we headed straight on the private road. At a gate we got onto another more substantial road with houses. A guy came outside and told us this was a private road and to go away. So we did.

Comstock Road was steep and narrow, a real grind; fortunately traction was excellent. At the summit we headed southeast on Skyline and then east down Kings Mountain Road to Huddart Park for the company picnic put on by Avocet/Palo Alto Bicycles. I noticed a fair number of children. One little girl was busily collecting pine cones and putting them in a hollow redwood tree trunk, just like a squirrel gathering acorn nuts for the winter.

We met two mountain bike riders who had just gotten tickets in Wunderlich Park. They were seen at the bottom at the main entrance and apparently someone called the sheriff because he was waiting at Skyline when they arrived. The riders work as mechanics at Velo Shop in San Carlos. They said they normally ride at night with halogen lights. "We saw a mountain lion at Wunderlich Park one night," said one rider. "He stood this tall," as he motioned with his hand. I arrived home at 6:30 p.m. with 76 miles on my cyclometer.

Doherty Ridge and Five Points



SEPTEMBER 13, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, John Woodfill

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road; southeast on Skyline Boulevard, Open space trail west to Long Ridge Road, Doherty Ridge to Five Points, northwest on logging roads to Portola Road, Haul Road, Pomponio Trail, Loma Mar, up Pescadero Road, down Old Stage Road Trail to Hwy 84, up Hwy 84, up Old La Honda, down Windy Hill

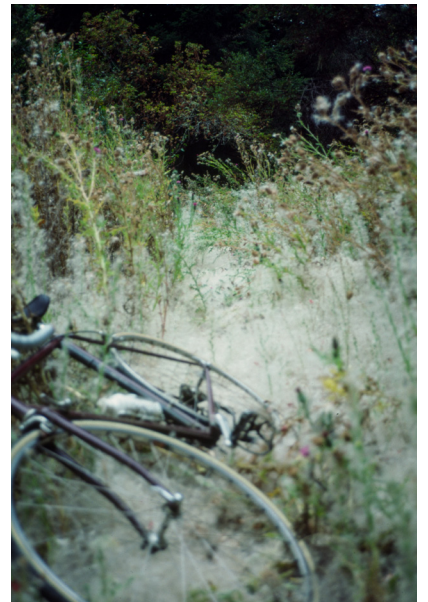
WEATHER: Cloudy and foggy, then cloudy and light rain, then partly cloudy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None.

Although I was not feeling well, I knew I had to make it on this Jobst Ride. Next week I would be riding through the Colorado Rockies, 120 miles in one day and I needed a long ride. My stomach was the only part of me that disagreed. Jobst has been seeing more riders of late; Jeff and Brian and John Woodfill. Despite his advancing years, 53 now, Jobst continues to ride as far as ever, but not so fast. This year Jobst has concentrated on finding new roads and trails with Brian and Jeff.

Riding up Alpine we noticed the paved portion had been rolled and oiled. This year we have seen more road work than all the past five years together. Just this summer, three dirt roads were oiled and graveled for the first time in their history: Cloverdale, Old La Honda (west) and Wurr Road. They were the last roads in San Mateo County to be paved, at least those open to cars that went somewhere [Higgins-Purisima and Lobitos Creek roads came later].

On Alpine at the slide Jobst ridiculed me once again for the work we did this spring. The ditch we filled in with a layer of dirt is becoming harder to ride. A crown of hard dirt is all that's left. But I criticized Jobst for his work on the lower



part of the slide where you have to make two hard twists against a ledge with a 50-foot drop. Every time I ride through there I imagine the nightmare fall into the abyss.

We continued up Alpine Road; although dusty, it's rideable the rest of the way. We passed one mountain biker going up and one going down. At Skyline we rode through thin fog and clouds to the open space district trail going to Peters Creek Road. It's single-track the whole way, crossing a small, nearly dry creek. Instead of taking the road, this time we headed south to Ward Road on the trail covered with brush and stinging nettles. We arrived at Ward Road where there is a small lake and the hippy school.



Peters Creek Bridge not far from Portola Park Road.

strength. It used to be covered with debris and leaves.

On the Haul Road we ran into Dave McLaughlin, "Fast Freddy" Markham, and Robert, who works for Tom Ritchey. Mac and friends were enjoying themselves immensely. It was ironic that I would ride down Windy Hill this day and see Mac at the same time. They had just done the Butano Ridge loop and were heading back up Tarwater Trail.

On Ward Road we continued north until crossing a gate and riding to Long Ridge Road, which is paved and private. We headed downhill west and it soon turned to gravel. We took another hard left at Doherty Ridge and rode another mile until reaching Five Points with its confusing signs pointing in every direction. Hard to believe they have street signs out here in the woods. We headed right on Doherty Ridge, which soon petered out to a logging road that hadn't been used in years. Jobst led the way (he had been here once before) and soon we were crashing through low brush and trees. The road was rocky but all downhill.

Everywhere we saw this plant with white seeds that looked like cotton. At one point it was so thick it covered the entire road and looked like a sea of cotton candy. I stopped to take a photo. Downward we continued until finally we reached Peters Creek. On the way I saw a dead doe on the trail, its eyes glazed over. I wondered how it died. It's not often that we see dead animals in the forest. Usually all we see are deer, newts, birds and banana slugs. I took several photos at the large wooden bridge.

Then we climbed up the road for a half mile until we reached Portola Road at a bend in the road, known as Crocker's Curve. We descended to Portola State Park and rode through. I managed to ride up to the Haul Road on the steep stretch past Iverson's Cabin despite my weakened condition, which says more for the road's condition than my

This was the first time I had encountered Fred Markham, who is the world's fastest human on a bike. He traveled 65.4 mph last year on a bike with a plastic shell over it. The record took place in the Sierra at the Nevada/California border.

Jobst did all the talking as we stood there. We were heading to a new series of trails and roads in the park, so on we went. We crossed Pescadero Creek by riding through it and I made it without getting my feet wet (keeping the pedals level and half-cranking across). But Jobst had to bellow, "You got your feet wet Ray!" I protested and showed him my dry feet.

At the creek, Jobst snooped around looking for fish and crawdads. Soon he found some crawdads and picked one up. "That's about as big as they get," he said as he dangled the 10-inch crustacean in his hand, its claws snapping. Jobst tossed the crawdad aside and we continued up the hill looking for more trails. We would soon be rewarded by more fire roads and trails.

We rode to Loma Mar store and noticed Roger had his cast off. It was starting to sprinkle. I felt better after downing a Mountain Dew, but there was no way I was going to continue the ride to the ocean. Jobst agreed to head back on Pescadero Road. At the top of Haskins Hill we took a fire road (Old Stage Road) that drops steeply through Sam McDonald Park. I was surprised we could ride safely most of the way.

We rode up Old La Honda on the new pavement. It's nicer than dirt, but paved roads also draw more cars. We headed down Windy Hill from Skyline. It's so steep and gnarly that I felt like I was going to go over the bars any second. Although the ride was only 60 miles, it felt like 100.

Mt. Hamilton's Own Little Hell



OCTOBER 4, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Jeff Justice, Charlie Kempner, Joanne Klebe, Ted Mock, Joe Terhar, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Mt. Hamilton loop

WEATHER: Hot, then extremely hot (record high 96 degrees in San Jose; 86 for high on Mt. Hamilton summit)

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Joanne - click shift out of adjustment

Sometimes a course of action takes on a life of its own. Pretty soon you are knee-deep in alligators and there's no turning back. It's like being stuck in quicksand and you're in the middle of the bog. Do you turn back or try to make it to the other side? Jim, Palo Alto Bicycles mail order manager, suggested the 100-mile Mt. Hamilton ride earlier in the week and we all agreed it would be a good idea. So plans were made. However, Jim said, "We



Ted Mock, Jim Westby and Joanne Klebe rest at the Mt. Hamilton summit before heading to Livermore.

won't go if it's hot."

We all met at the Safeway [now Ocean Supermarket] parking lot that fateful Sunday morning and it was hot early. The bank thermometer read 78 degrees at 8:30 a.m. The day before in Livermore it had been 109 degrees. So why did we do the ride? I don't have an answer. Once committed it seemed as though there was a need to finish, no matter what the price or discomfort. And discomfort there was. I have never been so hot climbing to the top of the 4,000-foot mountain. It never cooled off. It only got hotter.



Lick Observatory comes into view a few miles below the summit.

Mock, the professional photographer who used to ride with Jobst, was feeling low. He hadn't ridden his bike much in the past two years and it was beginning to show. Ted has hit his head three times in cycling accidents with cars, twice needing surgery. Joanne, fellow mail order worker, was having no problems and Jim seemed OK too. This would be Jeff's longest bike ride.

At 45 miles we reached the Junction, a bar with two gas pumps in the middle of nowhere. We went into the air-

Jobst tired early on the climb and it was left to me and Joe to set the pace. Joe is an automaton. He puts his head down and rides. Back in the pack, Jobst was about to be caught by Jeff, who picks up our packages for UPS. Jeff is a triathlete who likes to train. He eats the right foods and exercises non-stop, which is what triathletes do. As he caught Jobst, he had to make a pit stop and that was the last he saw of Jobst. Charlie works for Avocet and hasn't been doing much riding. He turned back. It would be a wise decision. Near the top I stopped to take pictures and waited about 10 minutes before everyone arrived in a tight group. I got a good shot of everyone with the white dome observatory in the background. At the summit we doused ourselves in water at the observatory house and contemplated our next move. Some wanted to go on and others wanted to turn back. I said I would turn back only if everyone else wanted to. As it turned out there were some crazies among us, namely Jim.

Jobst had ridden up to the observatory, so we didn't see him or Joe, but it turned out Jobst had decided to turn back. He doesn't do well in the heat and he was already suffering. He would ride down the hill and visit one of his brothers, who lives nearby. Joe caught up to us as we descended the backside of Mt. Hamilton, a desolate place with only a few ranches and one store until Livermore, 50 miles away. The descent was hot. The creeks were dry and we'd ride through pockets of oven-hot air from time to time.

At the bottom of the hill we formed up and rode together. At this point Ted

conditioned bar and immediately downed some soda. That was about all they had. I ate a couple of fig bars. We sat next to bar patrons, mostly local ranchers. We had two more tough climbs before the road leveled out as we followed Arroyo Mocho Creek into Livermore. There was a slight breeze, which made riding in the 100-degree heat tolerable.

In Livermore we stopped at a Lucky grocery store on Hwy 84 and purchased more pop, ice and Gatorade. Jeff was about to have heat stroke and he needed ice badly. Jim looked emaciated and his face was covered with a thick layer of white salt. I was feeling fine and so were Joanne and Joe. Ted looked weak and tired. We sat out in front of the Lucky, putting ice on our heads, down our backs and in our shorts. We looked like derelicts or a lost safari. I wondered how much longer it would be before the store manager came out and asked us to move along. There wasn't any ice at first, but a bagger took pity on us and went back and found a torn bag of ice and gave it to us. By now it was 3 p.m. and the hottest part of the day. San Francisco sweltered in record 100 degree heat. When Jim got up he nearly fainted and had to sit down. He had taken a muscle relaxant for a cramp in his leg and that may have contributed to his wooziness. Jeff, Ted and Joe left us to our fate. After 10 minutes Joanne and I decided to head back to Jim's truck and come back for him. Jim gave me the keys. We rode off, another 25 miles and 2000 feet of climbing to go.

Calaveras Road wasn't so bad because most of the ride was in the shade and the sun didn't shine on the road. It was now only 90 degrees. Joanne got goofy, laughing at everything I said. With a mile to go we saw Joe, Jeff and Ted. They must have crawled home. We all ran to the Safeway in Milpitas and bought more drinks. Jeff was lying down in the front in his car, exhausted. The bank thermometer read 99 degrees and the air was so polluted it looked like there was a forest fire raging.

We drove back to pick up Jim, but he had started riding and was only a few miles away. Rather than a nice spring ride with wildflowers, we saw tarweed and 100-degree temperatures.

Olmo Fire Road a Gravelly Experience



OCTOBER 11, 1987

RIDERS: Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, Jeff Vance

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline, down Hwy 9, Hwy 236 to China Grade, down Butano Fire Road, Olmo Fire Road, Cloverdale Road, Pescadero Road, Haul Road, Shaw Flat Trail, Pomponio Trail, up Tarwater Trail, Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jeff - slow leak in rear

Today we wanted to explore a new trail, although Jobst had been there in the past year, alone. We started under clear skies and brisk temperatures. I wore my Avocet long-sleeve polypro jersey but later it would prove to be too warm as the temperature quickly rose into the high 60s. Jobst didn't come along this Sunday. He went instead to Laguna Seca to take in a car race with Peter Johnson. We decided to meet at his house anyway, where he was eating breakfast. Jobst tended his ancient waffle maker. Olaf, his youngest son (attending UC Berkeley) sat at the small table eating a waffle. The waffle maker is a heavy black iron contraption with two sides. Jobst religiously watched it over a gas burner on the oven, turning it time to time for even heating. To find out if it's hot enough, he'd take a few drops of water and fling them onto the skillet, where immediately they bubbled and evaporated. When it did that, he knew the skillet was hot enough. After the usual discussion about life in general we left Jobst and Olaf to their breakfast and headed out.

At the bottom of Alpine Road, Jeff ran over a squirrel that dashed into the road. I was behind and I knocked the dazed squirrel as well. It scurried off the road but I'm afraid the squirrel was roadkill. Jobst says when you run over a squirrel you usually break his back.

Alpine Road is finally completely paved up to the green gate, where it's still dirt and untouched by county work crews for the past five years.

This summer San Mateo County has been paving like crazy. Several dirt roads have been tarred and graveled. Alpine Road is dusty since it hasn't rained in months. Passing Rapley Road, Jeff and Brian said they went up that way recently and believe it is as steep as any road they have ever ridden up. We didn't see anyone on Alpine Road, nor did we catch a glimpse of deer or bobcats.



Brian Cox and Jeff Vance reconnoiter on Olmo Fire Road in Butano State Park.



Ups and downs on Olmo Fire Road.

At Skyline we rode without incident to Hwy 9 and began the six-mile descent to Hwy 236. On Hwy 236, Jeff said we should take the "shortcut" to China Grade. I asked him what he meant and then he showed me the trail. It was the Skyline to the Sea. I didn't realize it stayed so close to Hwy 236 here. We got on the trail and immediately I knew this wasn't going to work. It was thick with dust, steep, and too close to the road. "What's the point?" I asked. We could see the road. They agreed and we got back on the pavement.

On China Grade we passed the trailhead where Skyline to the Sea intersects and rode without cars to Butano Fire Road. We started a nice descent with clouds on the horizon over the Pacific. Those were the clouds that were supposed to drop rain on us today, but they didn't make it. Butano hadn't changed since I was here last, about a year ago. We sped down the fire road through thick dust and reached Olmo Fire Road just beyond the first gate. This fire road is open to bikes. We started down and immediately discovered it's technical with dust and thick gravel on the steep downhill. It was everything we could do to keep from falling. But the view from the ridge was awesome. We saw the entire Gazos Creek drainage and redwoods. On the opposite ridge we saw Whitehouse Canyon Road. After stopping for photos we continued our descent, passing two mountain bike riders going up. We had to walk in two places because the road got so steep, but after that it was all downhill to a service road in Butano State Park.

I suggested we find the park headquarters, which I believed to be further in the park. Unfortunately it was

uphill, but we started climbing anyway. We also wanted to get water there. After a half-mile climb we reached a campground, but no headquarters. It was back down the hill. We headed down through the redwoods following a creek with a complex system of wooden sluices, whose purpose was mystery to me. We found the headquarters, a small building that was closed so we went further to a campground and found water.



Brian Cox and Jeff Vance cross Pescadero Creek near Shaw Flat in Pescadero Creek Park.

Riding on Cloverdale Road, an agricultural valley that grows vegetables and flowers, I was stung on the forehead by a bee. Fortunately I didn't swell up like the time when I was stung between the eyes. We noticed as we passed Butano Ridge Fire Road that its access point had been paved partway up the hill from the electronic gate. More paving, but this time private landowners. The road in front of Pescadero High School was recently paved.

We stopped at Loma Mar for a Mountain Dew and some candy. Roger said his broken arm is much better now, but still sore when he rides his horse. His daughter worked the register. As we sat outside admiring the redwoods, Bill Ziegler arrived. He's a chemist turned photographer. We chewed the fat for a while until along comes Keith Vierra, bike racer who lives a block from me. Keith used to go with us on Jobst rides, but now he stays on paved roads and trains all the time. Age 32, he doesn't have much racing left. He works part time for Federal Express. After a few more minutes of talk we headed off and Keith continued up Pescadero Road while we turned onto Wurr Road, recently paved. The poor sheep in the valley nearby still haven't been shorn and I'm beginning to wonder if they'll ever get cut. Roger said a

woman who works in the valley at a hospital owns the ranch and hasn't had time to have it done. Past the sheep ranch we saw the apple orchard, which this year hadn't been picked. We often stop here in the fall for apples and blackberries. Then we passed the dirt road that takes us to Wurr Road cutoff, an abandoned road that used to bring us down from Butano Ridge Trail. Jeff and Brian recently bushwhacked their way down, and they said it's no longer worth riding.

We then took off onto the Haul Road. After a couple miles I asked Jeff if there was any other way to get to Tarwater Creek Trail than the usual route. At that moment he said, "Sure, follow me." Jeff and Brian have spent a lot of time on the single track trails and know their way around Pescadero Creek County Park. We got onto Shaw Flat Trail and soon we were crossing Pescadero Creek on a plank. The creek had a big pool that I said probably held a lot of trout. Brian said a while back they saw a guy with a string of fish, which was illegal in the park. Too bad.

We climbed up from Pescadero Creek and soon reached the flat where we stopped and I took a photo of the beautiful redwoods looking down at the creek. Then we headed past the storage shed and soon reached a junction. Jeff was kind of lost and I said "wait a minute, we're going in a circle. We need to go west, not back toward the creek." After several minutes of debate we decided to go back and take the confusing Pomponio Trail. It was with considerable trepidation that we rode on Pomponio because as we had discovered all trails in the park are called by this name and it leads to mass confusion. But I was relatively certain, as certain as anyone who is on Pomponio Trail, which direction to go, so we headed off. The trail is dusty since it hasn't rained here in months. After a couple of miles of single-track we came to the Honor Farm Road and I knew exactly where we were. We linked up to Tarwater Trail. We climbed and stopped at the giant old-growth redwood where I had my picture taken.

It was a hard grind up Alpine Road, with one section of 20 percent. I detected Jeff's slow leak in the rear tire, so he stopped to pump it up at the top of Alpine Road. We rode down Page Mill Road, but Brian decided to go down Alpine Road. We finished with 80 miles on our cyclometers.

Agony on the Olmo



NOVEMBER 15, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Brian Cox, Jeff Vance

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Page Mill Road, southeast on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, Hwy 236, up China Grade, down Butano Fire Road, down Olmo Fire Road, Gazos Trail, down Goat Hill Trail to Butano State Park entrance, Cloverdale Road north to Pescadero Road, east on Pescadero, down Old Stage Road in Sam McDonald Park, up Hwy 84, up Old La Honda Road, down Old La Honda, Portola Road, Sand Hill Road, home

WEATHER: Cold and clear, then cool to warm and clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

This ride was inspired by a particularly poor ad for an Italian racing bike called the Olmo. It sells the bike racer as the sufferer of all kinds of hardships, thus the "agony of the Olmo." Well, we suffered but it wasn't on the Olmo bike. It was on Olmo Fire Road. I arrived at the appointed hour at Jobst's house to find him discussing current affairs with Jeff. I asked Jobst to borrow his spoke wrench because I had a slight wobble. I told Jobst it was only one spoke causing the problem. He requested to have a look at the wheel. I turned it over to the expert and soon he was plucking spokes like a musician tuning a Stradivarius. He hooked up a tensiometer to the spokes and found that they were loose. So he started tightening a half-turn for each spoke. Then he found out the right-side spokes were too short because they didn't turn freely. But soon he had the wheel spinning true. About then Brian showed up.

We headed up Alpine Road at a steady pace, riding through the Stanford Shopping Center parking lot. Recently the local city governments have been pushing for having Sand Hill Road go around the parking lot and it looks like they'll finally get their wish. On dirt Alpine I was concerned about mud but instead we found good traction. We passed several runners going the other direction. On Skyline, Jeff wondered about a road on Long Ridge and where it went.

We decided we'd let him find out for us some other day. Riding down Hwy 9, Jobst got ahead of us, using his consummate skill at descending. He tucks and lets it roll, his massive frame cutting through the air like an eagle. On Hwy 236 we regrouped and rode at a leisurely pace until shortly before the summit where, as is his custom, Jobst speeds up. Jeff



Jobst Brandt, Jeff Vance and Brian Cox prepare for the ride down Butano Fire Road.

wanted to find out where the Skyline to Sea trail connected to China Grade, but that had to wait.

A short distance from China Grade, Jobst dismounted with Brian and started assaulting a shortcut hewed out of tree roots that went straight up to China Grade from 236. Jeff and I blasted around the corner to see if we could beat them to China Grade, but Jobst was first by a wide margin.

The dirt part of China Grade had some mud holes but it wasn't

as bad as I thought it might be with the rains of late. We stopped for a picture at Butano Fire Road near the Boy Scout camp. Then we rocketed down the bumpy fire road bouncing along like wagons out of control. Jobst decided to take Olmo Fire Road, so we plummeted down the steep trail and then climbed to an overlook that showed Big Basin. Two places on Olmo are so steep that dismounting and walking a short distance is required. Thus the Agony of the Olmo.

After the three hard climbs up Olmo we came to a narrow trail called Gazos. We decided to take it and soon were slithering along down the grassy, leaf-covered trail. At one point we came to a magnificent vista with a panorama of the Pacific and the town of Pescadero. I have never seen it from this angle before. Then it was downward until we crossed Olmo again and then we took Goat Hill Trail down to the Butano park service road. From there it was down into the bowels of the park where there's an extensive irrigation flume. We passed several large groups of young hikers.

On Cloverdale Road we faced some light headwinds, seeing a redtail and sparrow hawk perched on a nearby phone line. Approaching Loma Mar on Pescadero Road, we passed a gaggle of riders, most of them racers or former racers. At Loma Mar we didn't see Roger but a woman was working with her son and daughter. Jobst and the rest took Jones Gulch and then Alpine Road home while I chose the easier route up Hwy 84, 75 miles total.



GAZOS CREEK CRASH AND BREAK



NOVEMBER 29, 1987

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Jeff Vance

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, up Hwy 236, up China Grade, down Johansen Road, down Gazos Creek Road, Cloverdale Road, up Pescadero Road, up Towne Fire Trail, up Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cold and cloudy, then partly cloudy and brisk

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jeff - bottom bracket overhaul, flat; Brian - 2 flats; Jobst - broken frame

This past Thanksgiving week has been an eventful one for Jobst Riders. It all started Thanksgiving day with the traditional Turkey Ride. Peter Johnson showed up out of shape on the “comeback trail.” We headed up Alpine at a snail’s pace and then rode down Stevens Canyon. Lots of mountain bike riders were coming up the road and we saw several hikers out working up an appetite for the big bird. On the pavement in the canyon we were passed by two Klein mountain bike riders and a chase ensued. Then on Friday I rode around Mt. San Bruno, climbing to the 1,300-foot summit on Radio Road. It was a 20-miler, short but interesting as I passed through Colma, one big cemetery plot, complete with a pet cemetery. At the top of the mountain I rode on dirt for a mile or so, but it was hilly and rocky. Both days were mild with cold mornings and warm afternoons.

Today Jeff and Brian showed up. Jobst had plans to ride down Gazos Creek Road. I had overslept because of the cloudy, dark morning, but rushed to Jobst’s only to find Jeff with bike problems. Jobst had to overhaul Jeff’s bottom bracket and adjust the front hub before we could get underway. Then Jobst discovered he had a flat and had to switch to a spare wheel.

Riding up Alpine we passed a man and woman riding mountain bikes with a small dog. We made fun of it, saying it might attack us. The owner joined in and said it eats bike tires. Alpine was soft in spots,

especially at Mud Corner. The idea was to ride over the mountain bike tracks with our smooth tires and obliterate as many as possible. About this time Jeff starts telling his tale of woe. A few days ago he was riding up some road he shouldn’t have been on. He had to jump a high chain-link fence, the kind with the ends sticking out at the top. He got over okay, but while leaping down his arm got speared. He was crucified there momentarily as he unhooked himself. It took 12 stitches to close a deep puncture wound. On the way up I noticed Brian’s rear tire was low and told him he had a flat. At the top he changed tubes and we were on our way. Traffic on Skyline was heavy as people drove into the hills



Peter Johnson negotiates the narrow trail on Alpine Road, Nov. 29, 1987.

to chop down Christmas trees at the tree farms.

Riding down Hwy 9, Jobst led the way as is his custom and we were strung out behind. I've lost all desire trying to stay on his wheel because it's nerve-racking and requires too much effort. On Hwy 236, I downed some Essence bread (sprouted wheat). It didn't do much good though as I was tired from the past week's rides and running.



Riders head down Johansen Road, back when junk trucks littered the area.

Riding up China Grade, we came across a motley group of three riders who looked like street people, only instead of keeping their worldly belongings in a grocery cart they had them in wire baskets over the front wheel. They said they were riding to San Francisco. I'm guessing they were coming from Santa Cruz. Inside their baskets they had an assortment of clothing piled high and they rode beat up mountain bikes. They were quickly behind us as we turned left onto Johansen Road. It was in great shape from the recent rains, but not muddy. It's like riding a bucking bronco down these bumpy roads, or a vibrator bed out of control. You really get hammered. I stopped to take a photo at the overturned car in the middle of the redwood forest as Jobst and crew rode by.

After the first gate the road becomes much less a road. In places it's nearly overgrown with tall weeds. And there are deep cuts to divert runoff and keep the road from washing away. They're like speed bumps, but some are a lot more substantial. Although I didn't see it happen because I was about 15 seconds back, I came upon Jobst brushing dirt



Upper Towne Trail takes off from the summit of Haskins Hill.

off his back and inspecting his bike. He had hit one of these bumps hard and gone over the bars. Fortunately he was unhurt except for a skinned elbow. But his front forks were bent a little and his down tube had a bump indicating it had been damaged. He could ride but it means he'll need a new bike.

Soon we arrived at Gazos Creek Road and the gate, which is easy to get around. From here it was a dash down the bumpy dirt road deep in the redwoods. Jobst blasted off at maximum

speed, with Jeff and Brian right on his tail. I lagged back a ways, despite every effort to go as fast as possible. Riding down the steep road at high speed requires intense concentration because the slightest mistake can mean disaster. The rocky road has numerous small gullies from runoff. To make matters worse, wet leaves covered the lower road. At the bottom we passed through the green gate and noticed a logging operation will begin here soon. The bottom of Gazos Creek is a complete contrast, smooth dirt and flat as it follows the creek. We rolled along effortlessly toward the Pacific. After passing Butano State Park, Jeff got his flat. He rode over a huge piece of glass that sliced his tire badly enough that he needed a boot, which I had to supply. He had unwittingly brought tire boots with the beads still attached. As we waited, Jobst spotted several bluebirds on the telephone wires and a black phoebe.

We rode to Loma Mar without further delays and at a brisk pace. At the store we watched some football with owner Roger, who was watching intently. He's in a football betting pool. Finishing our soda and candy we headed up Pescadero Road. At the top of Haskins Hill we took a right onto Towne Fire Trail even though there is a "no bikes" sign. Brian flattened in the meadow and I had to give my spare tube. Towne Trail is hilly like a roller coaster, but dips down to horse camp and a nice meadow. We climbed out and headed to Alpine Ranch, following a private dirt road to Alpine Road. The views were spectacular. We rode at a casual pace up Alpine and at the usual place in the woods Jobst recited a Lewis Carroll poem, the Jabberwocky. We then blasted down Page Mill Road at breakneck speed, arriving home safely at 3:30 p.m., 81 miles showing on our cyclometers.

Cold Winds Blow on Lobitos Creek Road



DECEMBER 13, 1987

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, Jeff Justice, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Sand Hill Road, Manzanita Road, Cañada Road, up Hwy 92 to Half Moon Bay, Hwy 1 south to Lobitos Creek Road, up Tunitas Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road, home

WEATHER: Cold, clear and windy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - ruined rear rim

A cold, icy windy came out of the Arctic and swept across California, bringing clear skies but frigid weather. Nevertheless, we were determined to ride into the hinterlands. Dressed in wool tights, two long-sleeve jerseys and a windbreaker, I was prepared for a ride to the Pacific with Jim and Jeff the UPS driver. Jeff showed up wearing even more heavy clothing than I had. He wore a balaclava, wool tights and three long-sleeve jerseys. He removed the balaclava shortly as it wasn't that cold. Jim was the polar bear of the group; without gloves his hands soon turned to ice cubes. He didn't have a hat either. We passed a large group of riders on Cañada Road and were then shadowed by a rider wearing a rear view mirror. He would pass us and then we'd catch up. We hadn't seen the last of this interloper.

With skies as clear as they were, we could see for miles and miles. Crystal Springs Reservoir was as blue as I've seen it. Although it was cold it wasn't numbing and the cool air was refreshing. At the top of Hwy 92 we picked up speed and rode down at 40 mph fighting crosswinds on the way. We passed the usual cluster of cars parked next to a mineral spring. People filled their jugs with water. No doubt they believe this water has medicinal value. I told Jim and Jeff that money earmarked for widening Hwy 92 has gone for road widening on Hwy 101 near Menlo Park instead. So we'll have to live with the narrow road and lots of traffic for a few more years.

We rolled into Half Moon Bay, a sleepy coastal town as always. After fighting a strong headwind on Cañada Road, the ride south on Hwy 1 was a breeze. We made 24 mph without any effort. The ocean and sky were almost the same tint of blue. We rode past fields of Brussels sprouts and then who comes along but the shadowy rider we left behind! He sprinted past us and commented on the tailwind.

Jim and I decided it would be nice to ride up Lobitos Creek Road, a dirt road that goes from Hwy 1 to Tunitas Creek Road. Jeff reluctantly agreed, not being used to riding on dirt. But the road was as hard as a rock and you'd never guess it had rained a lot the past couple weeks. Jeff was worried about his Vitus aluminum frame breaking, but we told



Jim Westby and Jeff Justice ride on Lobitos Creek Road before the descent to Tunitas Creek Road.

him they race those bikes in cyclocross. I stopped for a photo. We rode over the ancient Lobitos Creek wooden bridge and headed up the long climb. It was a washboard surface but otherwise fine. At the top we saw a cormorant basking in the middle of a farmer's pond and heard pit bulls tugging at their chains and growling. I took another photo at the top. Then there was a quick descent to Tunitas Creek Road. The road was littered with debris. "You can see the wind really blew here," said Jeff.

Redwood limbs were everywhere on the narrow road next to the burbling brook. We climbed at a casual speed. I told Jeff if he ever needed a drink, Tunitas Creek water is good. Jeff said he didn't trust any water around here. But I told him there was nothing to worry about. Jobst has been drinking it for 30 years with no ill effects [he got sick once from drinking creek water].

Right here is where Tunitas Creek Road gets steep and climbing out of the saddle is standard operating procedure. After a short distance I thought the pace was a bit slow so I said in jest, "Okay, it's time to start sprinting." In the next instant my rear wheel jammed with a twig and I did a slow motion pirouette over the handlebars, landing on my hands. Fortunately I was unhurt but my rear wheel looked like a potato chip. None of us had a spoke wrench, so I had to open my brake quick release and let the wheel wobble. I could still ride without any problem, so off we went. The air turned much colder as we approached the summit at Skyline Boulevard. I got out my windbreaker and rode carefully down Kings Mountain Road. As we rode through Woodside I looked to my left only to see that same rider we passed on Hwy 1! Frozen feet and 53 miles later our ride ended with the warmth of a hot shower.

1988



A Toast to Sonoma County



FEBRUARY 7, 1988

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, Joanne Klebe, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Guerneville toward ocean, up Cazadero Road, down Meyers Grade, Hwy 1 to Coleman Valley Road, Occidental back to Monte Rio and Guerneville along Russian River

WEATHER: Cold and clear, then mild and cool

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

It was Joanne's idea to do this ride. She expressed her interest on Thursday to Jim and me. I was all for it. So we headed out in Jim's truck bright and early and drove to Guerneville. The ride got off to a cold start, literally. Jim's hands were freezing. Then Jim wondered if we were supposed to turn right on Old Cazadero Road. I told him this wasn't the road but that it connected to Cazadero. We decided to check it out. It started okay but after a mile we saw a sign that said not a through road. We had to ask someone about the road. By a stroke of luck we came to a man hiking with his dog. He said that we had to cross Austin Creek and beyond that the road was dirt, muddy now. We decided



Jim Westby and Joanne Klebe climb Coleman Valley Road.



Meyers Grade drops quickly to the Pacific, a must-see vista in Sonoma County.

to turn around. We headed down Russian River Road to the Cazadero Road turnoff, where Austin Creek spills into the river. The road winds gently up to the town of Cazadero. We looked at a store for a bathroom. No bathroom, the owner said. Try the tennis courts. We went there and they were locked. Tried the volunteer fire department. It was locked. Tried the church minister. He didn't have a bathroom. That was it.

The road climbs steeply from Cazadero, for an eternity. But it's a wild, beautiful canyon to our right and the hills show signs of having burned. Fort Ross Road, as it's called, has no traffic. A few houses line the road, but they're not easy to see. I stopped to take a photo of Jim and Joanne. The countryside was quaint, with pine trees, deciduous trees like maple and toyon. The hillsides are a brilliant green and the sky was blue. We finally reached Meyers Grade Road and started down. The vast blue Pacific on our right contrasted with the blue sky and green hills. The road took us quickly down to the rocky ocean shoreline. Gorgeous! Joanne kept saying it reminded her of Scotland, with all the sheep around. We stopped for more photos and thoroughly enjoyed the scenery.

Then we headed south on Hwy 1 with a nice tailwind. Our next stop was Jenner, a wide spot in the road with a few stores, a visitor's center and bathrooms! At the mouth of the Russian River we saw seals lining the shore and in the river itself. Quite a few kayakers worked their way up the river. We had a bite to eat and discussed the ride home. It had to be Coleman Valley Road, a scenic winding road with a fairy tale setting. So we headed down Hwy 1 at a brisk pace. This is the part of Hwy 1 I best remember from my car trip to Oregon so many years ago. It's flat and there are old barns. The ocean is rocky and the waves can be heard crashing ashore. Beaches and coves dot the coast.

At Coleman Valley Road Jim rode right on by, head down. I yelled and they noticed I had turned inland. It was steep and narrow the first mile. We stopped for more photos with spectacular scenery all around, sun at our backs. Several cyclists rode past, including a man and a woman on a tandem. We continued our climb on the flat hilltop where it was windy and a bit cool, although the sun was shining. Serpentine rock outcroppings dotted the grassy landscape and sheep were everywhere, bleating. Lots of baby sheep too.

We dropped into Coleman Valley and then climbed a short hill before the descent to Occidental, where several Italian restaurants are located. We headed downhill on the Bohemian Highway at 20-30 mph to reach Monte Rio, a rowdy town with bars on the Russian River. It was four miles back to Guerneville. The effects of the river's flooding

weren't visible. It was as though the terrible flooding of 1983 had never occurred. Fortunately the truck was where we left it on our return. We loaded up and drove home. Distance: 68.5 miles.

LIKE ANY OTHER SUNDAY



FEBRUARY 14, 1988

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Old La Honda Road, Skyline Boulevard south, down Alpine Road to Portola State Park, Haul Road to Loma Mar, up Pescadero Road, Towne Fire Road through Alpine Ranch, up Alpine, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cold, then cool, then unseasonably warm and sunny

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

Jim and I headed out under clear skies for the Haul Road. I hadn't ridden it for a few months and it would be good to see the road I had written about in my Lonely Tree story. Joanne was supposed to come with us but she didn't feel well. It was cold when we left but it warmed up quickly. We climbed Old La Honda alone at an easy pace. Old La Honda is a beautiful road, 3.4 miles to Skyline. It twists and turns relentlessly. It's fairly steep but never so steep as to be a test. At the summit it was breezy. And what a clear day! San Francisco stuck out like a giant stalagmite to the north. The entire valley was swept clean of smog. And to the west you could see the shining blue Pacific and green hills.

Past the vista point I looked for the spring, found it, and it was still flowing. We rode down Alpine at a brisk pace as I led the way. It was cold in Portola State Park, like an ice box.

We dismounted so we could cross the narrow bridge spanning Peters Creek and headed into the park through the back way. Of course we stopped at Pescadero Creek bridge to look for fish, but saw none. I took Jim's photo at Iverson Cabin. The park rangers have propped one side of the building where it collapsed.

Then we headed to the Haul Road. It was muddy in places and there were ruts made by trucks, but otherwise it was smooth going. We saw one mountain bike rider going the other way. The trail was warm and sunny, with some



Iverson Cabin was located at the south entrance to the Haul Road in Portola State Park. Now it's a pile of rotting lumber with a sign.

toasty pockets of hot air. The two creeks I remember crossing when the road was washed out in 1982 are Rhododendron and Harwood. We rode to Loma Mar and talked to Roger. He has gained some weight since he quit smoking. After a pastry and fruit drink we headed up Pescadero Road. We saw a couple large groups of riders, and then Bob Walmsley. He has a child now and not so much time to ride a bike, but he still gets up to Skyline after work, according to Jobst. We took Towne Fire Trail and Alpine Ranch Road to get to Alpine Road. It's not easier, but definitely more scenic. On our way we saw a woman riding a mountain bike, with shiny pants and panniers. Incongruous. By this time the air was warm and there was a refreshing breeze. Perfect.

We climbed up Alpine Road at an easy pace and then blasted down Page Mill Road. A guy riding ahead of me almost crashed coming out of a corner. He was doing his best but didn't have the experience. We rode through Stanford campus and I showed Jim where I collided with the other rider on Friday. It resulted in a trashed rear wheel, a bent left crank arm and a torn gum hood. Todd straightened the arm, I built a wheel and I'm working on new gum hoods. That ended our 59.4-mile ride.

Mount Diablo Beckons



MARCH 13, 1988

RIDERS: Ray Hosler, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Niles Canyon, Palomares Road, E. Castro Valley Blvd., Crow Canyon Road, San Ramon Valley Boulevard, Diablo Road to Summit via South Gate, down Diablo, Blackhawk Road, Crow Canyon Road, Dougherty Road/Hopyard Road, Stoneridge Drive, Foothill Road, Pleasanton-Sunol Road, Niles Canyon

WEATHER: Cold and clear, then mild and clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jim - flat



Jim and I rode up Mt. Diablo so I could record some rides for the upcoming *Bay Area Bike Rides* tour guide by Chronicle Books. [He appeared in the first edition.] I rode to the summit once before and Jim had been there once or twice. We decided to ride from Niles Canyon, which made for a 79-mile ride. Joanne was supposed to come but she has Raynaud's, which is like frostbite. Her big toes hurt in cold weather.

I noticed a large villa in Palomares Canyon, but the creek it overlooks is trashed. Otherwise it's a pristine canyon. We stopped to take a photo at a new winery called Chouinard. The northern half of Palomares is scenic, with little traffic.

We crossed under Interstate 680 and headed to Crow Canyon Road. There's a lot of development underway and the road is still narrow. Speeds are high, so it wasn't the best road to be on. Along the road I saw a purse and glasses case, so we stopped to see if there was any money. No luck, just a pen, hairbrush and swim card.

Crow Canyon Road isn't all that steep. The summit is unmistakable as it peaks. We headed north on San Ramon Valley Boulevard, which has a wide bike lane the entire length as

it parallels Interstate 680. In Danville we passed the California Pedaler bike shop. I remembered this is where my car broke down (the thermostat died) and I only just managed to have it fixed as it was early evening and all the shops were closing.

Downtown Danville is quaint. We stopped on Diablo Road at a store for something to eat and I noticed a sign that said No Cruising. I took a B&W photo of Jim in front of the sign with Mt. Diablo in the background. Traffic on Diablo Road to the mountain's summit turnoff was heavy and the road is narrow. There's development everywhere you look. We turned off to the summit and the traffic died down but still it was heavier than what we're used to on Mt. Hamilton.

The climb is beautiful, with views of the valley and the Pacific. Unfortunately with the haze we couldn't see as far as possible. The smell of the scrub brush was intoxicating! Lots of sage too. I liked the climb up to the entrance. It reminded me of southern France. At the booth I bought a map of the park and we continued to the intersection where the road from Walnut Creek joins. From here the road got considerably steeper. It was about 7 mph for me much of the way.

Many campsites mark the road along the way. The last 0.2 miles is one way on a narrow road. It's about an 18 percent grade. At the upper parking lot there's an overlook from the stone beacon tower, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1939. I walked up and saw the snowcapped Sierra, where there's a 360-degree view of the Bay Area, better than the view from Mt. Hamilton.

We started down behind two cars but soon passed them. It's a fairly technical descent with no place where you can get going fast. We stopped for more photos at a large rock next to the road. Every time I tried to snap a photo, a car came creeping along and stopped. I had to wave them on.

We rode south on Blackhawk Road, which is lined with exclusive developments and golf courses. I remember racing Tassajara in 1980 and the roads ran through nothing but countryside. Jim flatted and I loaned him my tube; he forgot his patch kit. We came to Tassajara and Blackhawk where we saw about a dozen cyclists riding mountain bikes and going slowly. We went straight for a half mile and turned left onto Dougherty Road, which took us to Pleasanton. No traffic and nothing but green fields with meadowlarks and blackbirds. We passed Santa Rita prison, which used to be an army barracks. I'm told they housed Berkeley protesters during the 1960s.

We crossed over Interstate 580 and turned right at Stoneridge. I couldn't believe all the new buildings cropping up like rock formations. Then we turned left on Foothill Road, which has too much traffic for how narrow it is. We turned left onto Castlewood Drive and crossed a bridge over Arroyo de la Laguna Creek to get to Pleasanton-Sunol Road, our usual route for the Mt. Hamilton loop. It follows the Union Pacific train tracks. It was a straight shot down Hwy 84 to Fat Ed's hamburger place. I noticed an old railroad station being refurbished along the tracks at Mission Boulevard and an old steel mill and a retirement home. Some guy is protesting a bill that would eliminate flowers.



Jim Westby rides by an outcropping during the Mt. Diablo descent.

Back on Ward Road



JULY 17, 1988

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, Bill Robertson, Don Couch, Dan

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, southeast on Skyline Boulevard, Long Ridge, down Ward Road, north on Haul Road, Snag Trail, Jones Gulch to Loma Mar, Stage Road to Coast Highway, up Purisima Creek Road, down Kings Mountain Road

WEATHER: Foggy then sunny and warm

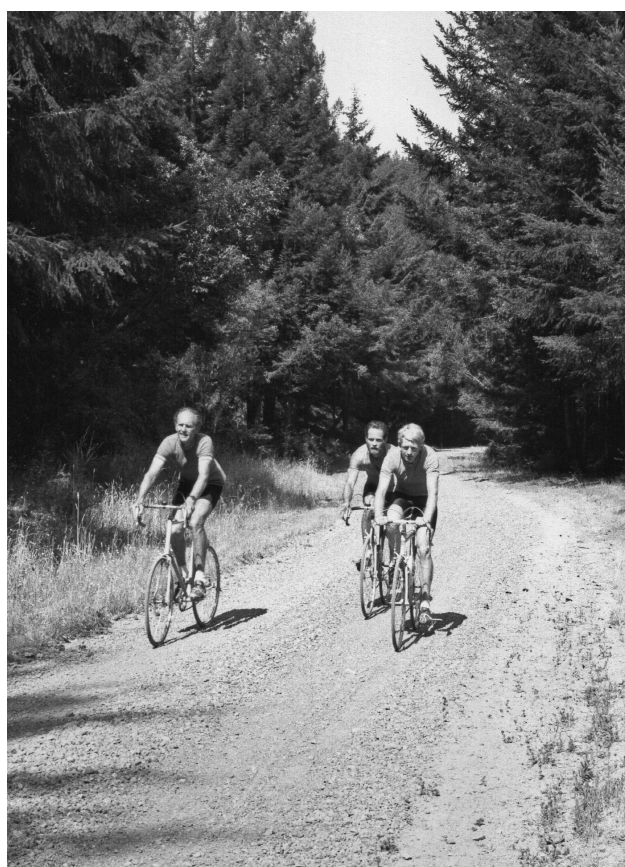
TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

This was my first Jobst ride since last year. I've been doing rides for *Bay Area Bike Rides*. Bill Robertson came along. He rode through the Alps with Jobst in 1975. Don Couch, a musician, was a regular years ago and works at Palo Alto Bicycles. According to Jobst, Don used to join him on rides, but he has health issues. Things did not go well for Don on the ride. He fell twice, at the green gate to dirt Alpine and while crossing the creek. We rode up Alpine at a casual pace. The town of Portola Valley put up an insulting sign that said "All Must Walk" at the narrow trail through the landslide that we built. Jobst thought it was the open space district that put the sign up, but we learned differently later.

At Long Ridge, Dan and Don left us and rode down Highway 9. Bill Robertson continued as we blasted down Ward Road. On the way down we passed a district ranger truck. I thought we'd be told to turn back but he didn't stop us. The Ward Road descent goes for at least four miles to Pescadero Creek. We crossed the creek and continued north on the Haul Road through private property [Santa Cruz Lumber, now called Redtree Properties].

Jobst decided he wanted to explore Snag Trail so we took off down the narrow spoor and carefully forded Pescadero Creek again, tiptoeing over the rocks. Then we got on a fire road that took us to Jones Gulch where we picked up Worley Flat back to the Haul Road. In Loma Mar we said hello to Roger. Bill went home over Haskins Hill and the rest of us headed to Pescadero and Stage Road. On the way we saw a peacock hiding in the bushes near the white house that used to be a dairy farm.

As we entered the Purisima Creek redwoods open space who's there but the ranger we saw earlier! He was cleaning up. He said hi and he asked us where we had ridden. He didn't object to our route but warned us to stay out of Portola Heights where the neighbors don't like hikers or cyclists. On the way up we were pleased to find that the mud holes have finally been filled. The open space district hauled in a ton of gravel and dug drainage ditches. We'll see how the trail holds up this winter. We finished the ride with a quick downhill on Kings Mountain and then ate a cold watermelon at Jobst's house, 80 miles on our cyclometers.



Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox and Bill Robertson take the Haul Road to Loma Mar.

Berry Creek Falls from Above



JULY 31, 1988

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, south on Skyline to Hwy 9, Hwy 236 to Big Basin Park, Gazos Creek Road to Whitehouse Canyon Road, down to Sunset Trail, Berry Creek Trail to Golden Falls, Cascade, Silver, and Berry Creek Falls, Skyline to the Sea Trail, Hwy 1 north to Bean Hollow Road, up Pescadero Road to Loma Mar, Wurr Road, Haul Road, up Bridge Trail and Tarwater Trail, up Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Warm and sunny after morning fog

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat

One of the major attractions deep in the redwoods of Big Basin State Park is a series of waterfalls: Golden, Cascade, Silver, Berry Creek. Reaching them calls for a long hike over a high ridge from park headquarters or a gradual climb from the ocean on an old railroad grade now used as a park service road.

On this day, Jobst and I set off to explore a less traveled route, descending from above on Whitehouse Canyon Road and down a narrow, steep trail. We left under foggy skies to the Santa Cruz Mountains as Jobst has done for the past 30 years. On the way we saw a procession of cars with bicycles attached, going to the Women on a Roll event.



We rappelled down the trail to Silver Creek Falls, hanging on for dear life.

We passed a regular customer of Palo Alto Bicycles riding slowly up Alpine Road, moving about as fast as a snake on a cold rock. He wore heavy clothing and bulky hiking boots, the stuff of slow riders. His sweaty beard dripped like a leaky faucet. I waved and said hi. He recognized me from the shop.

On the way up Alpine Road we noticed the sign “All Must Walk” had been ripped down. We’re not the only ones who objected. Jobst pointed to a bush he said did not belong on the road. Next spring he’ll return and cut it down without prejudice. This is Jobst’s road now. He cares for it. It is his path to adventure in the Santa Cruz Mountains, a trail to Sunday celebrations.

At Big Basin we grabbed a bite to eat (don’t forget to turn in your cans for the nickel deposit) as we’ve done so many times in the past.

Gazos Creek Road started out in good shape, a bit loose but nothing to slow us down. However, conditions took a turn for the worse at the county-maintained portion of road. All those thoughts about my life being on fire, sinking in the quicksand of sorrow, were replaced by a struggle of a different sort.

The dust was at least several inches deep – fine dust through which our tires sank and sucked us down until we could barely move. A tractor had plowed the road and Jobst complained bitterly about such a foolish act. After our bikes had turned to dust, we finally arrived at the aptly named Sandy Point Ranger Station where we met two men dressed like Sunday golfers, white T shirts and shorts. They had inexpensive mountain bikes and looked to be out of shape. They had ridden up Gazos Creek Road and were contemplating their next move. We suggested Whitehouse Canyon Road. They followed.

About 0.3 miles down Whitehouse Canyon we turned off at Anderson Landing Road with a gate and trail sign. It took us steeply down to Sunset Trail Camp, where we discovered the trail was closed. We turned around and headed up a short distance to the main camp where I noticed I had a flat. After making a quick repair, we headed back up the trail to a wood structure.

Berry Creek Falls Trail took off from behind the building – loose and steep. Quickly, we entered the bowels of the canyon. Vegetation changed from chaparral and pine to redwoods. After a few switchbacks we arrived at a massive rusty, golden-hued rock over which the waters of Berry Creek cascaded into a liquid pool. Two men sat at the edge of the pool studying the park map.

Jobst dismounted and walked to get a drink from the cool waters splashing down the rock’s smooth face. This was the stuff of fairy tales, a fern-covered redwood forest, golden waterfalls, a burbling creek and waterfalls — mystical, magical.

We headed down the trail over a series of log steps cut into the narrow, rocky canyon. Huge logs, the remnants of the flood of ‘82-‘83, lay across the canyon like so many matchsticks. To reach Silver Falls we rappelled down a steep, rocky cliff. With our slippery plastic-soled shoes and bike in hand it wasn’t easy. We hung grimly onto the wire cable for support and made our way down.

At Silver Falls I took a photo. We rode the rest of the way down to Berry Creek Falls, passing about a half-dozen hikers. Berry Creek Falls is a 70-foot drop and has an observation platform. From here it was a short distance to the Skyline to the Sea Trail. The road to the ocean had been repaired since the floods of ‘82-‘83.



Jobst Brandt strikes a pose at Silver Creek Falls following a steep hike.

We passed dozens of hikers and cyclists on the old railroad grade. One cyclist, a young boy on a small bike, pedaled merrily along. Jobst said, "He has to come back, you know. Will he make it?"

We reached Highway 1 after four miles and headed north with a strong tailwind. How unusual. Heading south, into the wind, was none other than Erik Garfinkel.

Farther up Highway 1 we saw a Dusty Roads Tour van and then the two mountain bike riders we had seen earlier. We stopped and talked. They said some loggers had told them that they were trespassing on Whitehouse Canyon Road, but let them pass. The riders looked beat and they still had to ride back to park headquarters. We continued north with the tailwind and stopped at the newly renovated Beach House restaurant. We looked around inside and checked out a painting of old Pescadero.

Next we turned right on Bean Hollow Road (old Coast Highway) and headed into Pescadero, where we encountered a heavily loaded British tourist. His red hair gleamed in the afternoon sun. He was heading north to Half Moon Bay on a tour of California.

In Loma Mar we said hello to Roger [former store owner and postmaster] and had a bit to eat before taking the Haul Road. As we headed up Tarwater Trail, I showed Jobst the former mill site and boiler.

Tarwater Trail isn't so bad, but the paved road up to Alpine Road is something else, with some sections as steep as 20 percent. After that grunt work, Alpine Road seemed tame.

Near the Tulgey Woods we joined a cyclist walking his bike. Jobst urged him to remount and ride. "It's not any easier walking. You can do it." The rider finally got started. In the woods Jobst, as is his custom, began reciting Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*. After a fast downhill on Page Mill Road, we finished the ride with 100.5 miles on our cyclometers. This epic Jobst Ride ended at 5:30 p.m.



At 70 feet, Berry Creek Falls is the tallest waterfall in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Shingle Mill Road Shoulders the Blame



AUGUST 28, 1988

RIDERS: Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Mike Johnston, Joanne Klebe, Ted Mock, Joe Terhar

ROUTE: Up Kings Mountain Road, down Tunitas Creek Road, down Shingle Mill Road, Highway 1 south, Stage Road south, up Hwy 84, up Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Foggy early, then sunny and hot

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ted - flat; Joanne - flat

There's nothing more enjoyable than a Sunday ride in company with friends, although it would not be accurate to say "the more the merrier" with regards to bike rides; it's closer to "the more the jerkier." Take this Sunday ride for example. We had two flats, each requiring everyone stop and wait. I bonked, calling for more waiting, and there was one painful separation, Mike's shoulder.

Everything got off to a smooth start from the Stanford Shopping Center. Regulars Joanne, Ted and Joe were joined by me, Gary Holmgren and Mike. Gary recently returned from a long visit in Spain where he studied classical guitar. I noticed his skin has turned white from living in foggy San Francisco. Mike, from Orange County, works at Avocet drumming up sales. His reason for joining us was to test a new Kevlar casing for the Avocet tire.

After passing about 50 million cyclists riding up Sand Hill Road, we wound our way through Woodside and onto Greer road for a rear entrance to Huddart

Park. Even at the early hour picnickers were stoking the fires for an Oscar Mayer afternoon. Midway on the climb the temperature went from cool and comfortable to hot and sweaty. On Skyline, Joe looked like he had sprung a leak, and I squeezed a gallon of sweat from my foam helmet pads. When I asked Joe why his rear sprockets were rusted, Ted



Michael Johnston, Ted Mock, Ray Mengel and Joe Terhar pay their respects to the old-growth redwood stump on Shingle Mill Road.



Michael Johnston weighs his options at San Gregorio store after separating his shoulder. Joanne Klebe offers moral support.

replied, “That’s from the famous Terhar sweat. It eats through metal.”

At the summit I suggested a ride down Shingle Mill Road, an old logging road about two miles down Tunitas Creek Road that parallels Tunitas Creek for about 1.5 miles. I wanted to take photos of riders on top of a redwood stump that was about 15 feet across. Jobst had shown me the stump, and I found a photo of the tree before it was cut down in the late 1800s. After a long discussion we agreed to follow, except Joanne and Gary. Shingle Mill got its name from an old mill that made shingles. Any traces of the mill disappeared long ago, but the road still exists.

Shingle Mill went downhill at a manageable grade, covered with a layer of redwood needles and twigs, otherwise known as wheel benders. Dodging banana slugs, we descended into the moist green depths of the redwoods. The only sound was that of bicycles snapping twigs. After a short time we came to a clearing where I saw the stump.

We clambered up with bikes in tow. I took a photo. Four riders had no problem standing side by side on the huge stump. Surrounded by younger redwoods, the stump served as a sad reminder of previous grandeur. When the picture had been taken and everyone was ready to continue their sojourn, we headed downhill single-file on the bumpy road strewn with rocks that added to the excitement and challenge of the descent. Ray Mengel had no problems with his new Look shoes, which locked his feet in place like ski bindings [Jobst switched to this pedal style in 2000].

After a right turn at a junction, we continued descending through the redwoods. A series of water diversion ditches cut across the road every few hundred yards, sending us airborne momentarily as we flew over them. It was one of these ditches that caused Mike to crash. Joe had stayed behind to help Mike, then left to tell us what happened.

Fortunately Mike recovered sufficiently that he could ride to Tunitas Creek Road. He said his shoulder had separated and he had to pop it back in place. It was sore but he said he could ride. His painful shoulder prevented him from holding the bars most of the time, but he had no problem riding up the steep hill south of Tunitas Creek on Highway 1. At the San Gregorio store we offered sympathy and tried to assess Mike’s ability to continue the ride. But the longer he sat around the stiffer the shoulder got. I called Don McBride, who happened to be at home, and he agreed to drive my car to pick up Mike. We left Mike with enough money to buy some aspirin and said goodbye.

Descending Page Mill Road, our miseries continued. Joanne flatted after riding through a pile of glass that looked like someone had broken a six pack of beer bottles. I patched the flat without removing tire or tube from the rim. After the wheels stopped spinning, 60 miles had passed. Mike and Don arrived home safely.

Hot Ride Down Ward Road



SEPTEMBER 4, 1988

RIDERS: Brian Cox, Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler, Jeff Vance, Carol Nunnally

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, southeast on Skyline, down Ward Road, Haul Road north to Iverson Trail in Portola State Park, up Portola Park Road, up Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Cool and foggy, then hot and clear

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat

Usually there's a hot spell in the month of September that always manages to fall on a weekend when we're out riding our bikes. This was one such weekend. However, it didn't stop us from enjoying a ride into the Pescadero Creek basin where it was delightfully cool. Getting there was the problem. As we climbed Alpine Road the temperature stayed mild until we got to the dirt. Then it suddenly turned hot and it got hotter as we climbed to Page Mill Road. Carol, an HP engineer on leave of absence and Brian's friend, joined us for the ride. The petite red-



On a hot day in September 1988, we took Long Ridge to Ward Road.

head who grew up in Alabama is quiet and unassuming, but when it comes to riding dirt she's an expert.

Jobst, who had three bike computers mounted on his handlebar (2 CatEye and 1 Avocet) noted that their mileages matched exactly. Continuing south, we baked along. Jeff had his mountain bike with a new, longer stem and shortened handlebars. His eight-year-old road bike had broken a few weeks ago, so he was stuck riding the mountain bike. Carol rode a Guerciotti aluminum racer with Dura Ace. Jobst and Jeff decided to try a steep path down to the lake next to the hippy school to reach Ward Road. The path was so steep that Jobst fell off his bike at a log. When the rest of us saw this we decided to ride up Skyline a bit farther and pick up Ward Road from there. We stayed on Ward Road for about a mile, at which time a jeep passed us and churned up a dust storm.

Next we left the road to pick up Hickory Oaks Trail, which took us along a ridge covered with golden wild oats. A sweeping panorama of the Santa Cruz Mountains and the foggy Pacific Coast greeted us. I stopped to take a photo. We connected up with Long Ridge Road in about a half mile and headed west downhill onto Ward Road. Here the road is steep and recently it had been graded, as we bounced down through loose dirt and upturned rocks. About a mile down the road near the vacation houses (and water tank), I flatted. I noticed the hissing sound was continuous, indicating it was not a puncture but some other type of air loss, like a bad valve or internal puncture caused by a spoke. My rims were almost too hot to touch as I removed the tire. I couldn't find the flat but noticed that a spoke was sticking through the rim tape. Brian took a piece of my business card that I carry at all times and fashioned it to cover the exposed spoke.

Back on the road, we met up at the right turn where Ward Road is no longer plowed. After some roller coasters we once again descended over loose rocks down, down into the redwoods. At the bottom we crossed Pescadero Creek.

Jobst and I kneeled down for a drink of cold, clear water. It tasted good. Jobst said the reason it tasted so good was that it didn't have any taste. Jobst took a photo of Carol, who failed to ride through the creek but instead tip toed daintily across. After we had our fill of water, we climbed out of the creek up some steep sections before reaching the Haul Road, riding into Portola State Park. At the park entrance next to a fence we decided to continue north to Loma Mar. Jobst and I went up Pescadero Road to watch the Palo Alto Criterium, which started at noon. We stopped for water at a campground. It tasted like swimming pool water.

Taking the rear entrance, Jobst and I knew the cool air wouldn't last for long. After leaving the protection of the redwoods, we entered furnace heat. Heat shimmered off the pavement. Jobst had to stop and lie down in the shade.

We made it to the race in time. Bob Mionske, 1988 Olympic cyclist, won. Our ride went longer than the criterium but not by much, 49.4 miles.

Ward Road Never Gets Old



DECEMBER 11, 1988

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, Peter Johnson, Jeff Vance,

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, southeast on Skyline Boulevard, Ward Road to Haul Road, Wurr Road to Loma Mar, west on Pescadero Road to ocean, north on Hwy 1 to San Gregorio, north on Stage Road, north on Hwy 1, Verde Road, Purisima Creek Road, Soda Gulch Trail to Harkins Fire Road, up to Skyline Boulevard, north on Skyline, down Kings Mountain Road

WEATHER: Cold and clear, then warm and sunny

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - broken frame

Over the past few months much has happened on the Jobst rides, most notably Jeff's bad accident on Pomponio Trail near Shaw's Flat. He hit a stump in the trail while riding his mountain bike and was launched into a tree, badly bruising his leg and bending his frame. He has fully recovered but had to be taken out in an ambulance.

We headed up Alpine Road at a slow pace and on the way, as usual, we saw the Portola Loop gang going the other way, dressed in their Sunday finest. As is their tradition, they said hi to Jobst. Dirt Alpine was as dry as could be, as it hasn't rained in two weeks. Dry, sunny weather isn't what we need now with the drought going into its third year. The creek crossing was dry. The landslide trail was passable, although still a little soft. A week ago it was even worse. At the north end next to the culvert we installed, there's a cliff where a cyclist might go off if not careful. The open space district installed a log to prevent just such a disaster, but some jerk tossed it into the canyon. Jobst fumed.

We passed a half-dozen runners on Crazy Pete's Road. Someone opened the gate at Page Mill Road. At Skyline a dozen mountain bike riders with ROMP had gathered for a ride. An open space district ranger stood nearby, so Jobst told him about the log caper.

We decided to ride down Ward Road, although I was there the previous week with Jim. We rode up to Gate 10 and then north along Butano Ridge Trail, something I hadn't done in ages. The trail was in great shape. We went down Dearborn Park fire road to get to Loma Mar, where we met Jobst and Peter who had just finished riding Gazos Creek Road. Ward Road is in beautiful condition, but there were a few soft, slippery spots in the shady areas, where I almost



Jim Westby heads down Ward Road on a beautiful day in spring 1989. The road is overgrown today compared to the 1980s.

lost it at high speed. The bike fishtailed before recovering. We rode across Pescadero Creek, which was running fairly well for such a dry fall. The Haul Road wasn't as muddy as the previous week when Jim and I got our brakes clogged with mud. In Pescadero Creek Park the road was in perfect shape, with all that gravel they dumped gone now. We took a high road to get to Wurr Road, a new route for me. Roger wasn't minding the store in Loma Mar.

We met a contractor who's working on the house next to Pescadero Creek that almost washed away in the 1982 floods. A lawyer in San Francisco had it built as a summer home but abandoned it and sold it to someone else for the cost of the land alone. Now it's finally being fixed up, but it's on a loose slope and it's about to fall into the creek.

We were harassed by two motorists as we rode to Pescadero, a frequent occurrence on this stretch of road. At the ocean we looked for interesting birds in the marsh. We saw a great blue heron next to the road and it watched us carefully as we rode by. The wind wasn't bad as we rode north along the coast. What a gorgeous day! Clear skies and warm. We stopped at San Gregorio for food and drink and then continued up Purisima Road. We took a new trail that winds around Soda Gulch and up to Harkins Fire Road. The panoramas of the Purisima Creek drainage were impressive. The trail was narrow and had a steep drop-off. Rocks had fallen across the trail in numerous places.

After a 1.8-mile climb we got to Harkins and continued climbing steeply before taking the Harrington Gulch cutoff. We met two mountain bike riders here and talked about trail etiquette. After a brisk descent on Kings Mountain Road, we got home safely with 79 miles on our bike computers.

P.S. I noticed a creaking sound in my bike, more like a snapping, indicative of a broken frame. I checked the down tube and found a crack where it joins the head tube. The bike was built by Dale Saso, 1 year 5 months old. [He fixed the frame, which I still own.]

1989 - 2007



One “Hail” of a Sierra Ride



JUNE 4-5, 1989

RIDERS: Brian Fessenden, Gary Holmgren, Ray Hosler, Ted Mock, Joe Terhar, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Sonora to Markleeville over Sonora Pass and Monitor Pass; Markleeville to Sonora over Ebbetts Pass and Pacific Grade

WEATHER: Cool and rainy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Ray - flat; Joe - stripped crank arm; Ted - flat

On my 10th anniversary of the Sierra Ride I had to drag myself out of bed with a bad cold, but nothing was going to stop me from breaking the tradition. Besides, I rode alone last year and didn't want to do it that way again. We were grizzled veterans, with hundreds of thousands of climbing feet between us. Jim Westby, 45, outranked us with more than 15 Sierra rides. He rode a 20-year-old Masi. Joe Terhar made it a three-day trip, riding 132 miles across the baking-hot Central Valley. This was Ted's first ride over 100 miles in more than two years. Gary Holmgren, the mysterious one, shows up for Sunday Jobst rides now and then. He disappeared for a couple years to learn Spanish guitar in Spain, working once again at Stanford Hospital. Brian Fessenden is a photographer, like Ted (but Ted never carries a camera), who joined us for the first time.



Jim Westby climbs the Golden Stairs on Sonora Pass.

We gathered on a Saturday night, opting for a Sunday-Monday ride. It also meant less traffic on Monday for

the descent to Sonora. After a hearty dinner we hit the sack for a 6:30 a.m. departure, although I had urged a 6 a.m. departure. Little did we realize how crucial those 30 minutes would be on Sonora Pass.

After breakfast in Sonora, we headed out under partly cloudy skies and warm temperatures. As we packed clothing, I scoffed at the idea of taking tights. After all, I had done this ride for 10 years and never once needed them (although now that I think of it, it's always cold when we leave Markleeville). Anyway, I decided to travel light, figuring that even if it rained on Sonora Pass I'd have my wind breaker. That was enough. Jim had a similar attitude, but at least he had tights and gloves. I didn't bring gloves either. Joe, on the other hand, had enough clothing for an army, heavy



Weather improves on day two as we begin the long climb to Ebbetts Pass from Markleeville.

gloves, two long-sleeve jerseys, plastic bags for hands and shoes, heavy wool tights, hat, etc. He learned his lesson last year when the fateful Sierra Ride turned into a snow fest with bitterly cold winds and cloudy skies. Joe had nothing that year and had to scrounge clothing from other riders. Gary was well dressed, as was Brian. Ted was marginally well prepared.

Only three miles into the ride I had my first taste of bad luck. I was telling myself that I had never had a flat on the Sierra Ride, when suddenly, psssssss! A flat! A huge piece of metal pierced my tire. I borrowed a boot from Ted and within 10 minutes we were on our way. But those 10 minutes would add up to disaster.

I felt okay as we climbed to Strawberry, although my head was still congested. We stayed together most of the way, with Joe and Brian going off the front.

Joe pulled off the road near Strawberry with a loose crank. He tried to pound it back on with a rock and tighten it with a stick. We stood around at a ski area and waited. Fortunately it was warm, although overcast. Joe needed to ride to a gas station to borrow a wrench, so we headed off. Soon we reached a station but had no luck finding the right tool. We rode another quarter mile to an Exxon station where we found a spark plug socket wrench to do the job. We were back on the road, but another 15 minutes had been lost. We had lost an hour from all the unnecessary stops.

We blasted past Strawberry, a traditional stopping place, and headed to Donnell Vista Overlook. I had fallen back with Ted and we were several minutes behind at Donnell's. We took photos and had a bite to eat. Still the weather was nice, although in the next few minutes we would get a taste of what was to come. It hailed briefly. On the descent to Dardanella my cyclometer cable started rubbing against the spokes and I had to stop and fix it.

At Dardanella we stocked up on food and drink. A woman said that yesterday it rained all day on Sonora Pass. I told Jim how lucky we were that we didn't go yesterday! It looked like it might rain but I wasn't too worried because I had ridden over Sonora Pass in the rain and it wasn't bad.

On the Sonora Pass climb, Joe, Gary and Brian took off at the Window, never to be seen until after the summit. After the Window, Ted began to fade. I heard him sigh as Jim and I moved away. We rode together until about a mile from the Golden Stairs, where I pulled ahead. Even though I had the cold, I felt this strange sense of power, like a second wind. The weather was overcast but it wasn't raining. I waited to take Jim's picture at the first switchback. After he passed I caught up immediately and continued alone. The 9,000 foot sign was gone. About a half-mile from the summit it began to rain and the road was wet. I still wasn't worried though because it wasn't too cold.

However, at the summit I was greeted with the sound of thunder rolling through the canyons. As I began the descent the hail started, and it increased with every turn of the wheel. I passed Joe, who was putting plastic bags on his feet. He looked warm with all his winter gear. He had prepared wisely. There was a long straightaway and then a short uphill where I remember the hail being particularly fierce. It stung my bare legs like buckshot. My hands suffered horribly. They were rapidly becoming frostbitten. Fortunately I had rubber covers over the brake levers, so I wasn't touching bare metal. At the top of the little hill I saw Gary and Brian waiting on the roadside. Now the hail was so bad it obstructed visibility and completely covered the road. We wondered if we could ride through the hail. Would the tires slip? My fingers felt like Popsicles. I yelled to anyone who would listen. "My hands are frozen! My hands are frozen! I'm going to get frostbite!"



We gather on Ebbetts Pass summit for a photo as the weather improves: Brian Fessenden, Ray Hosler, Gary Holmgren, Joe Terhar. Jim Westby photo

Much to our surprise we could ride in the hail. After only a couple minutes we left the hail behind and it was only raining. But it was cold and my hands were still frozen. Joe offered me a pair of socks. I said "Great." He stopped and helped me warm my hands. It worked wonders. But the damage had already been done. I had a mild case of frostbite and my fingers felt numb for days afterward.

We descended (Jim

and Ted were behind us, their fate unknown) at good speed to Levitt Meadows where there is a log-cabin store [not anymore]. On the way down we passed several cyclists going up Sonora Pass! One guy weaved out into our lane and I nearly hit him. I yelled at him. I was in no mood for running into some careless rider who can't steer a bike.

The store was open and, as usual, we saw Marines training for mountain warfare. The owner had an electric heater going (but not the fireplace); we jammed next to it and tried to get warm. I shivered uncontrollably (hypothermia) for at least 20 minutes while downing hot chocolate. About 10 minutes later Jim and Ted came in. Ted had gotten a ride to the summit, passing Jim on the way. Just a quarter-mile from the cabin, Ted flatted! His rim heated up so badly it blew the tire. Ted and Jim fixed the flat in the freezing rain.

Jim shivered. He wasn't any better dressed than me. But at least he could pull out some tights to wear. We wondered what the weather had in store. The owner said that in the 15 years he'd lived here he hadn't seen this kind of weather. And in the nine previous outings I hadn't either.

We finally got underway after losing about 45 minutes warming up. The distant Nevada mountains had a fresh layer of snow. The sky was black everywhere and it looked like it might rain any second. But it didn't and we rode at good speed into Walker, stopping for a warm bowl of pea soup. Ted and I wanted to spend the night in Walker, but the rest of the crew decided to push on over Monitor Pass, not knowing what lay ahead. Would it be snowing?

Ted and I decided we didn't want to ride over Monitor Pass the next day, so we joined them, but first we stopped at a sporting goods store where I bought some gloves and long underwear. Ted got some gloves. We were left behind to fend for ourselves. The weather stabilized as Ted and I rode the flat stretch on Hwy 395 to Monitor Pass. At

the base of the pass we stopped to shed some clothing. Who do we see behind us coming out of the bushes but Joe! Joe had crank problems again and he had gotten help from a state forest service truck next to the road. They fixed the crank by driving two three-penny nails between the crank bolt and crank wall, effectively jamming it tight. And it worked.

We rode together up Monitor Pass (5 to 6 mph) under cloudy skies in an eerie calm. I've never seen it so calm here. We rode through some low clouds midway up the pass. Although it was cool, I felt fine because I was climbing. We got to the summit within a minute of each other and headed down the pass, which wasn't a cold descent. At the bottom I noticed my new cyclometer had gone dead (water got in it). We rode, into Markleeville, arriving about 7:15 p.m., took a shower and had a great dinner. I downed two large beers, the best beers I ever tasted.

The next day we had a big breakfast and blasted off for Ebbetts Pass. And I mean blast! It was like a race the whole way. I rode as hard as I could and felt okay, but not strong since the cold had taken the edge off. Nevertheless I managed to hang in there and even rode strongly up the pass, faster than I had ever ridden up that pass before. It proved one thing: Ebbetts Pass isn't all that steep. Joe and Brian stopped to remove clothing, but Gary and I continued to hammer. Joe caught me about a mile from the summit. As he passed he commented, "What did you do, eat your Wheaties today?" I was only about 30 seconds behind at the summit. Brian followed a couple minutes later, with Jim and Ted bringing up the rear. At this point I decided I wanted to enjoy the rest of the ride and I also knew that Pacific Summit has some hideously steep sections that I'm not strong on.

On Pacific Grade, I stopped at Pacific Creek to take a picture and enjoy the scenery. It was partly cloudy and cool, but at least it wasn't raining. Pacific Grade seemed steeper and longer than I remembered. Finally, I reached Bear Valley ski lodge where I found Joe, Gary and Brian eating lunch. Jim and Ted followed a few minutes later. After a long lunch we headed out. I knew the hard part of the ride was basically over because it was all downhill to Parrotts Ferry Bridge, where there was a two-mile climb. We stayed in tight formation the entire descent and at times it was hard staying on. While stopped at Arnold I noticed my tube was poking through a hole in the tire. I re-adjusted a boot and off we went. The road leading to Parrotts Ferry Bridge has been widened to a "freeway" from country lane.

I'm usually super-strong on the last climb but on this day I was wasted from the hard effort on Ebbetts. At Sonora, a cold beer waited, and so ended the Sierra rain and hail ride.

Butano State Park Brings Out Riders



SEPTEMBER 9, 1990

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, Jack Newlin

ROUTE: Up Alpine Road, Skyline Boulevard, down Hwy 9, Hwy 236, up China Grade, down Butano Fire Road, Indian Creek Trail, Olmo Fire Road, Doe Trail, Goat Hill Trail, Service Road, Butano Park Road, Cloverdale Road, Pescadero Road, Wurr Road, Haul Road, Bridge Trail, up Tarwater Trail, up Alpine Road, down Page Mill Road

WEATHER: Clear and warm, then hot

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

In 1980 I started riding with Jobst Brandt. For the next seven years I was a regular rider. On average I probably rode two Sundays a month, although I often would ride consistently for weeks on end. However, two years ago in 1988 I began work on a bicycle tour book and on Sundays I frequently had to do my rides elsewhere. Then I got a full-time job in Silicon Valley, so I had less time for riding. For the past two years I have ridden with Jobst only on rare occasions. This Sunday was one of those days.

Alpine Road is in better shape than ever since being graded last December. We rode up at a casual pace, seeing no one and nothing. The diversion trail has been closed by the open space district, although I don't see why. It's not visible from the road and it's only used by hardy mountain bike riders. As we rode past Grizzly Flat Trail, I complained about the county sign prohibiting bicycling without a helmet. The icon looks like a parachute. Jobst said he thinks that it's illegal to have such a law, except you'd have to take it to court to get it overturned. We stopped at the fire station for water then headed down Hwy 9 at good speed.

A short distance before the crest of Hwy 236 at the dirt cutoff, Jobst blasted away, as I was pushing a little bit before then. Apparently all the hard pulls on Foothill Expressway after work going home have put me in pretty good shape, but not great shape as I would discover at the end of the ride. We headed up China Grade where Jack said he had to return home. He's working at Next computers and they have a product announcement next week. We gave Jack directions to Gate 10 and then to Portola Park on the Haul Road.

After parting company, we rode to Butano Fire Road. It was dusty in quite a few places. At the outhouse we turned onto Indian Creek Trail and headed down. The trail is not more than two feet wide. Exposed roots and brush make riding difficult. In many places there's a cliff. A fall in these locations could be fatal. Most of the trail was like threading a needle. With great care I managed to ride most of the way. At a junction we turned left. A group of hikers greeted us. A man who wasn't wearing a shirt thanked us for slowing down and saying hello. He sounded friendly. Then he noticed we didn't have mountain bikes. "Say, those aren't mountain bikes." Jobst replied, "You don't need one, unless you're going motorcycle riding." Then the hiker said as we rode away, "I'd still rather see you staying on the fire roads and keep off the narrow trails."

“For the next two miles we had some of the best single-track riding I’ve ever experienced.”

After a short and steep descent, Jobst stopped to drink from the headwaters of Butano Creek. The water was barely running and I decided against drinking for fear of getting some kind of amoebic creature. Brian didn't drink either. A climb of about 0.3 miles followed to Olmo Fire Road. This section was beautiful as we followed the side of a steep canyon. However, it was virtually unrideable and I walked at least half the way. At Olmo we descended through deep sand to a saddle. At the bottom we turned right onto Doe Trail. For the next two miles we had some of the best single-track riding I've ever experienced. Only downed tree trunks disrupted the otherwise perfect riding conditions. The smooth trail was just wide enough for a bike, it had few exposed roots and no overhanging plants. At Goat Hill Trail we turned right and continued downhill; there were quite a few exposed tree roots, but they didn't require a dismount. At the bottom on the service road we saw a new pumphouse. We turned left and continued downhill to the pavement. The flume wasn't running. After getting water at the park entrance, we headed to Loma Mar. On the way there some people in a truck carrying dirt bikes yelled at us in an attempt to scare us.

Loma Mar was hopping with activity and the football game was on. I drank a bottle of Gatorade and ate an ice cream bar. After 15 minutes we continued riding up Wurr Road. The Haul Road has plenty of gravel, but it will go away after the winter rains. For now, it's rough going in places. We saw quite a few mountain bikers struggling up the hills. After a pleasant climb up Tarwater Trail, we saw a gaggle of mountain bikers moving fast up the northern half of Tarwater. We waited for the first two riders but we didn't know them. After they got a short lead, we followed along at a casual pace. On the 20 percent grade we caught the riders. On Alpine Road we rode together until another mountain biker went blasting past at a furious pace (after the flat section). I picked up the pace, as did Brian and Jobst. Although I was working hard, my speed was slow compared to the past. We left the two mountain bikers behind, as I led the way, with Brian and Jobst following right behind. After a descent on Page Mill Road, we headed home. The puncture vine

on Page Mill at Foothill Expressway is as bad as we've ever seen it. I got a thorn in the side but I don't think it caused a puncture. And so ended another Jobst Ride of 80 miles.

13th Sierra Ride



MAY 30-31, 1992

RIDERS: Dave Faust, Ray Hosler, Joe Terhar, Gary Westby, Jim Westby

ROUTE: Up Sonora Pass, Monitor Pass to Markleeville. Day 2 - Ebbetts Pass and Pacific Grade Summit back to Sonora

WEATHER: Clear and warm to hot until the last several miles before Monitor Pass, when it turned cool and cloudy

TIRE/MECHANICAL: Jim - rear left-side spoke break

This was to be my 13th consecutive Sierra Ride, and Jim's 22nd consecutive tour. Driving to Sonora across the hot Central Valley Friday night, I wondered if 13 would be my unlucky number. I left Santa Clara at 6:40 p.m. This would be the second time I left later than the traditional 4 p.m. departure time. In years past our departure was always met with a traffic jam on Dumbarton Bridge, followed by more heavy traffic on Hwy 580. Last year I beat the jam by leaving my condominium at 4 a.m. But I didn't want to get up so early, so I decided to leave a little later. It proved to be a smart move.

Just a note about last year. I arrived in Sonora about 5:26 a.m.; Jobst had already left. I chased for the next hour and a half, catching up to the ride in Arnold. With Jobst was Jeff Vance, Marc Brandt, and Bruce Hildenbrand. We went over Ebbetts, Monitor to spend the night in Walker, and next day returned over Sonora Pass. Marc arrived in Walker after dark. He was in poor condition, but had a much better time the next day. I don't remember having any problems, but I was slow on the climb up Monitor Pass.

But I digress. Irene, my wife, had prepared my favorite spaghetti, with sun-dried tomatoes in a light oil. After buying gas, I headed out onto Hwy 280. Traffic wasn't too bad and only once did I hit slow-and-go traffic. The temperature in Sonora when I arrived at 9:45 p.m. was still hot. I saw Joe and Gary sitting outside the Inns of California hotel room on Washington Street. Gary sipped a beer. Joe had ridden across the Valley from his home in Menlo Park, a distance of 130 miles. He used Scott bars for the first time, although from his description, it wasn't all that comfortable. After an hour or so of conversation we went to bed.

Dave told me about the problems at SLAC and how he was glad to be out of there. He's working on his masters in physics at Stanford.

We got up at 5 a.m. and had breakfast in our room. I had two pieces of raisin bread, a muffin, and an orange. We left the hotel at 6:05 a.m. under clear skies, short-sleeve jersey weather. We parked our cars in the hotel parking lot



Donnell's Vista Overlook is a must stop on Hwy 108 before Dardanelle.

out back. The managers said it was OK.

On the 2-mile climb outside Sonora I was only a few seconds back and stayed with everyone into Strawberry, now a familiar landmark. I took a photo of Joe with Bigfoot, a life-size wooden replica of the mythical hairy man, outside the bright red Strawberry store. There was a posting of the last bigfoot sighting on the bulletin board. I purchased an ice cream bar and a Dr. Pepper. We stopped at Donnell's Vista overlook. The reservoir looked full. It was only then that I noticed there was no snow to be found anywhere in the high mountains. Although we had normal snowfall, it was a warm spring. At Dardanelle we stopped for more food and drink. It was about 11:40, so we were making good time.



Joe Terhar checks out the latest Bigfoot sightings, little realizing the hairy guy is right behind him.

Jim had a broken spoke. Fortunately Dave had a spare that fit Jim's 32-spoke wheel. Jim had spokes but they were for a 36-spoke wheel. I ate some animal crackers and a chewy rice bar, but I didn't feel like eating. As we headed toward Sonora Pass, we knew it was going to be a warm day. There were few clouds and there was only a slight breeze. At the base of the first steep climb at Kennedy Meadows, Joe took off, followed by Dave, Jim, Gary, and me. They continued to put distance on me as I began cramping in my right inner thigh. Gary stopped to remove an undershirt. I passed him briefly. After the second switchback I stopped at a rivulet on the side of the road to soak my head and back to cool off. I also removed my bike hat because I figured it was retaining heat. Sonora Pass and the Golden Stairs have become less formidable for me.

I have broken down the climb into three sections, which seems to help attack the climb mentally. First there's a series of steep pitches before the switchbacks, next to Deadman's Creek. Then it's three switchbacks, the second section. The final section is the toughest. It's a straightaway that goes to 9,000 feet. Unfortunately the altitude sign is gone. After going around the left bend, the road becomes less steep. The last 100 yards is most difficult. I turned the cranks as slowly as possible without falling over. During this part of the climb up Sonora I have to focus all my effort on just turning the pedals and staying upright. My speed is about 3.5 mph. Any slower and I would fall over. I try to shut out the outside world, the roaring creek, the passing cars. When cars pass I have to concentrate on holding a straight

line, as the road is narrow. The pain is excruciating. It's not like a cut or an impact. The lungs hurt and the legs burn. There's always the desire to stop, but at the same time a determination to keep going just a few more feet, where I know the road will level off.

The last couple miles to the summit didn't seem so hard this year, although I did not feel strong. Joe finished ahead of me by 17 minutes, the first one to the top. Gary and Joe were drinking sodas provided by motorists driving antique cars, a 1930 Model A, a 1952 Packard, and others. It was really generous of them to offer their drinks. A woman took our photo next to the Sonora Pass sign. The time was about 1 p.m. Before the descent, Joe asked me if I didn't think it was too cold not to be wearing a wind breaker. I told him I felt fine. It was warm even at 9,600 feet, but the others put on light jackets. This was not to be the case. I was warm and comfortable.

The cabin/store at Leavitt Meadows had closed permanently. Marines trained above us in the rocks. We could hear the sergeant barking out orders. We got water from the fountain and went on our way. The antique car motorists arrived as we were leaving. They had asked to go ahead of us on the descent but we assured them that we could beat them down. On the ride to Hwy 395, I saw two yellow-headed blackbirds in the marsh next to the road. I rode alone to Walker. There was a strong tailwind and I made good time. We stopped for lunch at the restaurant on the right side of the road. I couldn't eat my turkey and cheese sandwich because I didn't feel good. The ride to the base of Monitor Pass went quickly and without incident as we had a strong tailwind. The climb was hot in the late afternoon sun, but not

unbearable. The valley to the south was as beautiful as ever. Nothing has changed here since I first saw it. If Sonora Pass is the most difficult part of the tour, then this valley is the most beautiful scenery of the ride. From the top of Monitor Pass there's a vista of the snow-capped mountains and the green, wide valley. At the small creek halfway up Monitor, Jim and Dave stopped for water. I arrived about 1:26 back. I stopped for several minutes, soaking my head and back and drinking the delicious cold water.

When I got underway I noticed a strong tailwind. I shifted down into my 42-24, after climbing in a 42-21. Although I'm 39, I can still push that big gear. I didn't feel particularly strong, but I wasn't weak either. It just felt good to ride along at a comfortable pace.

After about a mile the weather changed dramatically and suddenly. Rain fell as dark clouds moved in. However, there wouldn't be much rain. The temperature dropped from the high 70s to the mid 60s right away. I began to feel better as the county line sign came into view. Then I saw Dave alone. I knew immediately that he had blown up. I passed him shortly. He said in a mechanical voice, "I have now officially blown up." The last mile before the summit I saw some beautiful wild Iris on the side of the road. Jim had about four minutes on me at the summit where it was cool and dry.

I put on my lightweight long-sleeve jersey before descending. During the descent I reached 48.5 mph on the lower section with a tailwind. I knew it was a tailwind because the air seemed calm. Coming around the last turn to Markleeville I saw a vast expanse of grass. It reminded me of a golf course, with cows grazing. My arrival at 5:51 p.m. wasn't too bad. The best I can remember is 5:35.



We regrouped on Sonora Pass summit. Ray Hosler, Joe Terhar, Jim Westby, Gary Westby, Dave Faust.

Dave showed up about 30 minutes later. He said he had to rest on the summit, he was so weak. Joe finished about 20-25 minutes before me. We had dinner at the Cutthroat Restaurant. I had Bratwurst with sauerkraut. It tasted wonderful! After the meal, I topped it off with coconut cream pie and then a beer. We talked about past Jobst rides during the meal, as is the tradition. Later, conversation drifted to telling stories about great bike racers who lived in the Bay Area.

Next morning Gary took sick. He had all the symptoms of food poisoning (I later learned it was the flu). He looked pale. Jim and Gary rode ahead, stopping at the junction to Monitor Pass. Jim told his son to hitchhike home, which he did. We saw him pass us in a pickup truck on Ebbetts Pass.

The ride up Ebbetts went quietly. At the Ebbetts Pass summit we stopped for a bite to eat. Joe and Dave had gone on ahead. It was already warm. An old guy caught us at the top and we exchanged a few words. He was getting ready for a ride in the Pyrenees. Jim and I rode down the pass and then began the last tough climb to Pacific Grade Summit. There are a couple of steep switchbacks followed by some steep stairs, then it suddenly peaks at Mosquito Lake.

I talked with a fisherman. His brother was in the process of catching a trout. Fishing was good, he said.

After less than a minute Jim appeared and we rode to Bear Valley together, arriving about 11:15. After eating a sandwich, an ice cream cone, and drinking a cherry 7Up, I got water, and then we were ready. We left about 11:45. The descent went quietly and without incident until just before Murphys. The pavement had a lot of black tar that was

soft from the heat. When our tires went over it we thought we were going to slip and crash. At Murphys we stopped for food and water. I drank some Gatorade and water.

We traveled about three miles down the highway before turning left onto Parrots Ferry Road. The new road is a lot easier to ride than the old bumpy one. We made good speed in the intense heat. New Melones Reservoir is still extremely low. The old road that went to the bottom of the canyon was visible. The climb up to Columbia had recently been paved with the blackest pavement I ever saw. In the 95-degree heat nobody felt like riding hard so we stayed together. It must have been 120 degrees on the pavement. We arrived in Sonora about 3 p.m. First day 125 miles, second day 91 miles.

Tour of the New Idria Mines



APRIL 2, 2005

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Brian Cox, Ray Hosler, John Woodfill

ROUTE: From Paicines south on Hwy 25, Old Hernandez Road, Coalinga Road, Clear Creek Road, New Idria Road, Panoche Road, back to Paicines

WEATHER: Cool and clear, then warm, then cloudy

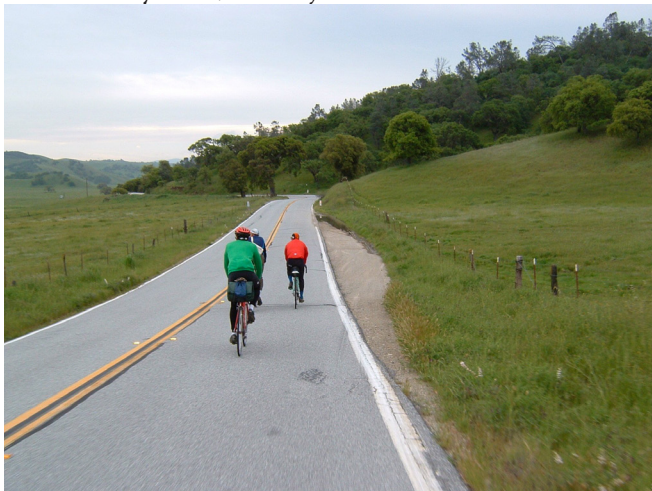
TIRE/MECHANICAL: Brian - 2 flats; Jobst - 1 flat

Two years after the first tour of the New Idria ghost town — a 115-mile loop (14 miles on dirt over a 4,450-foot summit), four of us decided on a second trip. We drove south from the Bay Area to the “town” of Paicines (656 feet) on a Sunday morning.

We arrived at 7:55 a.m., parked in front of a ramshackle apartment and started riding by 8:02 under cloudy skies, temperature in the high 40s. Weather Underground forecasters called for rain later in the day. They would not disappoint.

Paicines consists of a couple of buildings and a store at the junction of Highway 25 and Paicines Road, 10 miles south of Hollister. A state historical marker across from the junction commemorates the New Idria Mines. The mine was named after the Idria Mines of Slovenia. Both mines were digging for mercury, used in smelting gold.

Several years ago Bruce Hildenbrand told me about the ride. While it’s only an hour’s drive south of the crowded Bay Area, there’s just one store on the route.



The ride begins easily enough on the gently rolling Airport Highway.

We rode south on Highway 25, aptly named Airport Highway. The straight road would make an ideal emergency landing strip for a 747. Traffic consisted of the usual — trucks towing two-stroke dirt bikes headed to our destination on Clear Creek Road.

Neatly groomed vineyards and the occasional orchard broke up the grassy, oak-covered ridges. After a winter of steady rains, we’re talking one giant golf course here. Small ponds next to the road had turned into small lakes. The many small hills on either side of the road are pressure ridges. This valley is part of the San Andreas Rift Zone.

The sight of a majestic barn owl perched on a fence post had us reaching for our cameras. We stopped and tried to take a photo, but the proud bird wasn’t posing and flew off.

In the previous tour we continued past the Pinnacles National Monument for another eight miles before turning

left at a junction to Little Rabbit Valley. On this ride we turned left onto Old Hernandez Road three miles past the Pinnacles. Brian researched the road and found out it follows the San Benito River all the way to the Little Rabbit Valley, saving a 350-foot climb over Buck Ridge.

The paved stretch is nice enough. We came across a sprawling horse ranch, with a brass stallion perched on a hilltop — simulacra at its best.

San Benito River crossing

But back to the river. San Benito is called a river, but you could also call it a creek. When is a creek a creek and a river a river? Maybe the county decided to call it a river hoping they could get public funding for bridges. They sure could use a bridge, as we'd soon find out. Old Hernandez (we didn't see him) took us into a narrow canyon with steep hills on both sides and the river below. Much to our surprise, the road didn't follow close to the river, but strayed up and rolled along the hills overlooking the river. After about four miles, the road turned to dirt at a ranch. Fortunately the road wasn't muddy or rocky, so we made good speed. In a short distance we came to the mighty San Benito, which at one time had a paved bed over which the river flowed. However, over the years even that washed away.



Brian Cox removed his shoes for the trip across the San Benito River.

With heavy spring rains, the San Benito ran as deep and as wide as we'd probably ever see it. With no recourse but to find a way across, Jobst headed upstream and found a shallow place to ford. The rest of us chose the road crossing and removed our shoes and socks. The rocky bottom massaged our feet. Once across, we put on our dry shoes, figuring we outsmarted the elements. Wrong.

The well-graded road rolled along, passing the occasional ranch. On a long, gradual climb Brian flatted. While waiting, we took in the grand scene and pondered how a place so remote could be ours alone. No doubt the SUV crowd would be loathe to cross the swollen river. All the "no trespassing" signs also helped.

We found our way back to pavement in 3.5 miles and after another mile of climbing we arrived at the intersection for Rabbit Valley Road. From here, it's a fairly flat ride through Lorenzo Vasquez Canyon; we passed a forest service station with a long-abandoned water fountain next to the road. On this cool day nobody was all that thirsty, but at least the sun peeked through the clouds by now.

Hernandez Valley

The valley narrowed as we approached a ridge and started climbing, peaking at 14 percent, but the 900-foot climb to about 3,000 feet wasn't long. We stopped at the summit; conveniently, there's a swiftly flowing stream running through a culvert. The delicious water had just a touch of arsenic sweetness.

We swiftly descended the winding road to the oak-covered Hernandez Valley, and this time we saw Hernandez Reservoir in all its glory. Two years ago we wondered what happened to the lake, but the recent rains have put the reservoir to good use. After a few more rolling miles, we reached the Clear Creek Road turnoff, where there's a prominent BLM sign with a map. Jobst forded the river on bike, while once again Brian and John removed shoes and walked

across. I rode.

We took a short break before starting up the dirt road, somewhat rocky from recent rains. The gradual climb brought us into the heart of the canyon where a half-century ago miners dug into the hills looking for precious metal. Mine tailings dot the steep, barren slopes as Clear Creek rushes downhill. We crossed the creek at least a dozen times, soaking our feet.

Brian flattened again about a half-mile before the crucial left turn where the steep riding begins — grades of 10 - 12 percent. It seemed steeper this time, but this year the road may have been looser. Fortunately there weren't too many dirt bikes going this way and more than halfway up we had the road to ourselves. Tall digger pines dot the otherwise barren, rocky hills. Higher and higher we climbed, a spectacular view of the hills below us.

The 4,450-foot summit marked its presence at a BLM sign. We took the obligatory photo and headed down, around the iron gate on the left, eschewing the detour for the old road. Steep and rocky it is. We bumped downhill carefully, dismounting for a muddy rut or two.

At the bottom we went around another iron gate and headed left at the junction where we had some more gentle climbs to deal with before another long, steep descent. Along the way we passed an encampment of off-road motorcyclists, who egged us on.

Just like last time, we passed a shiny new SUV, the driver no doubt ecstatic about driving his SUV on a rocky,



This is the first of about 10 crossings of Clear Creek on the way to New Idria.



Jobst Brandt approaches the summit at 4,500 feet where the road levels out.

steep dirt road. Imagine that.

This time it was Jobst's turn to flat. Brian waited while John and I went ahead to check out an open mine shaft next to the road with ore-car rails leading inside. The canyon's steep rocky walls closed in on the road. We continued to New Idria, North America's second largest mercury mine and Superfund site; on the way there's an overlook offering an excellent view of the smelter.

New Idria Mines

In New Idria, population 1, we met a big pig. The lone resident looked down at us from his porch. The man's pig paid us no mind. I took some photos and checked out the forlorn mine and ghost town. Signs said this place is under electronic surveillance. Right. We checked out a fire hose mounted on wagon wheels. The mine closed in 1975.

Jobst came along with Brian and we headed off down the hill again, the wind at our backs. We left the hills behind, passing through San Carlos Creek Canyon and then Griswold Canyon. A creek or two spilled over the road. Once out of the canyon, we continued on the narrow, bumpy road with its two percent grade toward Panoche Valley. The brown hills rose out of the prairie, making this place look more like Nebraska than California. The plentiful cattle and windmills only added to the impression.



New Idria, a Superfund site, is slowly being dismantled.



We enjoyed wide open spaces riding to Panoche Valley.

likes to have her stomach rubbed." Next time.

On our way, we encountered increasing winds for a while, but they died down as we entered another series of canyons and draws following Willow Spring Creek. The climb went quickly and with light traffic we enjoyed the views of oak-filled canyons. The climb peaked at 2,000 feet, followed by a long, gradual descent into Antelope Valley.

With light fading, we arrived at the Hwy 25 junction around 6:30 p.m., the rain not far behind. By the time we reached San Jose it was pouring — wipers on full.

We pedaled on blissfully, with tailwinds most of the way. At the Y junction we continued left and five miles later reached our only stop, Panoche Valley Bar, as remote a bar as you could ever ask for. It's 28 miles to Highway 25 and more than that to Interstate 5.

We greeted Larry, the owner, behind the bar. From the back wall hung hundreds of dollar bills, with people's names written on them. It's either sodas or beer. We downed some sodas and ate the free salted peanuts. After mentioning our visit to New Idria, the subject of the giant pig came up and the owner asked with a smile, "Did you offer her a drink?" We said no. "You can pop a beer and she'll guzzle it if you let her. And she

Last Sierra Ride



MAY 19-20, 2007

RIDERS: Jobst Brandt, Ray Hosler

ROUTE: Day 1: Sonora over Ebbetts Pass and Monitor Pass, night in Walker. Day 2: Over Sonora Pass back to Sonora.

WEATHER: Clear and mild

TIRE/MECHANICAL: None

This past weekend Jobst and I rode over the Sierra, no big deal if you don't mind climbing 20,000 feet. As I discovered, you can complete this 210-mile ride on only three 100-mile "training" rides, but bring the Advil. After reading Jobst's deposition, I decided to tell what else happened.

The Sierra Ride odyssey really begins on a Friday around 3 p.m., no later. That's because the drive to Sonora, our starting point, requires joining the migrating weekenders and hordes of Central Valley residents who drive 50 million miles a year to and from San Francisco just so they can own an affordable house.

That drive is taking longer and longer and costing a heck of a lot more with gas at \$3.40 a gallon. I arrived a few minutes early and waited for Jobst to get his act in gear. We chose his 1991 white Volvo wagon over my dilapidated 1989 Mazda 323 with no leg room.

As it turned out, his car has a bent right front wheel that vibrates around 80 miles per hour, which is his average driving speed on the 580 autobahn. But I didn't notice anything, except that his electric windows are wired backwards. Down is up and up is down. Is that Swedish engineering or what?

Just beyond the Dumbarton Bridge we hit traffic. Choosing 880/580 over 84/Niles Canyon, Jobst immediately regretted his decision as we crept along studying truck license plates. Did you know that today's giant trucks have dual exhaust pipes when they really only need one? Someone came up with the bright idea that two looks a lot sexier than one. That and the latest "gangster cars" from Chrysler occupied our thoughts.

We had plenty of time to contemplate these worldly concerns. Eventually traffic started moving and we sped over Altamont Pass as Jobst pointed out the transcontinental railroad and about 50 other railroad lines. I can't tell you all their names, but rest assured it probably has the word Pacific in it, or a direction — Western, Eastern, Northern, or Southern.

Central Valley withers

Driving through the Central Valley, it's not hard to understand why it's only a matter of time before this country imports all its food. You can't grow food on housing tracts. We digested that grim reality over a giant sandwich at Quiznos in Oakdale.

We arrived at Inns of California in downtown Sonora on Washington Street where we gladly paid \$114 for our room. Glad because this weekend every motorcycle rider in Northern California drove to Sonora and surrounding towns for Motorcycle Appreciation Month. No doubt this "hog" bill motored through Congress on the political wheels of the honorable Senator from Wisconsin. We heard plenty of hogs and half of them stayed at the Inns of California right outside our door.

After a fitful night for me and the usual deep sleep by Jobst, dawn came about 20 minutes early with the rumble of a Harley taking off. We proceeded to pack our bags, wolfing down food before rolling away at a few minutes to 6 under clear skies and a temperature of 50 degrees.

I immediately found 10 cents and the coin collecting competition got into gear. More on that later.

Although the roads were empty, a bakery truck or some such vehicle had to buzz us as we headed to Columbia on Hwy 49. Jobst showed me where he met up with Bruce Hildenbrand on their independent 1993 "endless rides." Bruce had spent the night in Columbia and headed over Tioga Pass, while Jobst spent the night in Sonora and rode up

Hwy 4 to get to 395. Later that day Jobst, after enjoying tailwinds the entire way, met a tired Bruce, who spent the day battling headwinds, before Bridgeport on Hwy 395. [Bruce cut his planned ride short.]

We rode through Columbia where, sadly, the Foster's Freeze had been replaced by a restaurant. Jobst and friends enjoyed many a cold drink here after a long, hot day of riding down Hwy 4. Parrotts Ferry Bridge over New Melones Reservoir had its fair share of swallows and as a bonus, an Osprey nested at the top of a tall, dead tree near the shore.

We climbed up a steep piece of road across the bridge, passing the old highway to our right. I remember taking that bumpy, narrow road years ago. I can't say I like the new treeless way any better. Fortunately traffic was light.

Highway 4 rush-hour traffic to nowhere

On Hwy 4 traffic picked up as we continued uphill. Where were all these people going? At one point it felt like a freeway as waves of trucks and cars headed up the hill. To work? Fishing? Beats me.

I took the quiet Utica Powerhouse Road while Jobst stayed on Hwy 4. It's more of a climb on Powerhouse, with one section of 13 percent, but some nice houses line the road and the small hydroelectric plant offers an interesting sight. Jobst trailed me by only a few hundred yards as I merged onto 4.

Ancient skis and saws at Camp Connell store

We continued past Avery and Arnold on the way to Calaveras Big Trees State Park, where we saw no skulls, but plenty of smoke from campfires. Beyond the park we stopped at Camp Connell store so Jobst could buy a dozen 20 oz. Pepsis and guzzle a bottle, or two. He carried a shoulder bag even though he had a Carradice seat bag, all for that precious Pepsi. Jobst bleeds Pepsi.

The owners enjoyed hearing Jobst talk about the "Death Ride" and its origins. I told them to Google "Jobst" and they would find plenty more. I took photos of the store's ancient wooden skis, which shared space with logging saws on the ceiling.



Back on the road, we continued the long grind up to Bear Valley. We stopped once to photograph a brilliant red snowflower. We would see some more on the descent from Donnell Overlook. The grade holds a steady at 5 percent forever, or until reaching the Patchen road maintenance station a few miles before Bear Valley. In the modest ski resort we stopped and enjoyed a bite to eat. Jobst ate a burrito and downed another gallon of Pepsi while I drank root beer.

We contemplated the recent announcement of grandiose plans to build a huge ski resort here. Lots of luck. One thing for sure, skiers have a nice, wide road to drive up, including Hwy 207 to Mt. Rebla, up Hwy 4 a couple miles.

The road narrowed as we headed down to Alpine Lake. Snow lined the lake, but it was ice-free. Beyond the lake the road tilts up to 14 percent at the iron gate that lets you know the climb to Pacific Grade Summit is underway. Fortunately, the climbs are short.

Advil stops leg cramps

It was somewhere around Mosquito Lake and the Pacific Grade Summit that the leg cramps started. I immediately took two Advil. No more leg cramps. I felt better and on the climb up Ebbetts Pass I had no problems, even on the steepest final climb. Jobst stopped to drink more rocket fuel to get him to the top. We stopped for a bite to eat at the summit, with the annoying cattle guard. Are there really any cows up there?



Parrotts Ferry Bridge, spanning New Melones Reservoir, was built in 1979, and had construction issues. It sagged. A bracing span had to be added.

Kinney Reservoir, about 400 feet and one mile downhill from the summit, had a layer of ice, more than I would have imagined for such a dry winter. Jobst stopped to take my photo as I rode by. Jobst described how in 1974 he and a group of bike racers reached this point only to discover snowplows hadn't finished clearing a way to the summit. Jobst rallied his followers and proceeded to walk through the deep snow for more than a mile. They made it and so was born the "Death Ride." Racers told stories of their ordeal and decades later someone started an event in Markleeville using the Death Rider moniker. At least that's how Jobst tells it.

We proceeded at high speed down the narrow, twisty road

with granite cliffs on one side and Silver Creek Canyon on the other. We stopped again to take a photo and enjoy the view down the canyon. At our final stop on a tight turn, Jobst looked over the edge and showed me the ancient Cadillac that crashed decades ago. Of course this place is called Cadillac Bend.

Only one more climb. Monitor Pass on the west side offers long sections of 13 percent, a hot canyon, and plenty of headwind. I fell into survival mode at about 4 mph, Jobst just ahead. We passed a group of riders on mountain bikes who were going even slower. How can that be? We inched our way up the mountain, Monitor Creek its usual orange color from ancient mine tailings. Work crews above us on Loope Canyon Road were busy grading away.



Ebbetts Pass is one of the less memorable Sierra summits.

I took a break and enjoyed an apple along with the view of Sagehen Flat and Heenan Lake below. Not a bad place to watch the world go by. Rested, I continued up the hill and joined Jobst at Monitor Pass summit where a white tombstone backed by aspen said 8,314 feet.

55 mph without a helmet

We blasted down the eastern side, buffeted by the usual head- and sidewinds. That didn't stop Jobst from reaching 55 mph. We stopped at the creek in the trees so I could fill my water bottle. Nearby Slinkard Valley used to be such a lovely place until the big forest fire in 2002 that threatened Walker.

On Hwy 395 we had a wonderful tailwind for a mile or so, but the wind died down and even went against us at times. We soldiered on and around 5:45 (114 miles) arrived in Walker, my legs just starting to cramp. Toiyabe Motel offered comfortable beds and lots of crosswinds from windows on both sides of the room. We paid the \$67 bill and got ready for dinner at the swank Walker Burger across the street. We wolfed down our delicious food in the tree-lined

courtyard with an abundance of chirping birds frolicking among bird feeders and bird houses. Jobst drank another gallon of Pepsi and I finished off a \$5 “Big Gulp” shake.

A night in Walker

That evening we had no trouble sleeping, except for the next-door occupants who stayed up all hours watching TV. A couple of swift bangs on the wall and “Turn off the damn TV!” by Jobst put a stop to their nonsense.

In the morning we faced the grim reality of not having a hearty breakfast to greet the day. The restaurant next door proved too much work for the owners and now it’s for sale. We backtracked a mile to the Walker Trading Post. It wasn’t much, but at least we had some food, and gallons of Pepsi. Jobst found a driver’s license on the ground and turned it over to the store owner.

Walker River gave no indication that it was low on water after a dry winter. The roaring river rushed past us as we headed up the canyon into the usual morning headwind. At least it wasn’t as bad as 2005.

Jobst pointed out the dirt road high up on the hill where Brian Cox and John Woodfill rode a few years back. Hwy 395 was closed so they had no other choice. It connects to Hwy 395 two miles beyond Sonora Junction. Brian and John were surely snakebit on their ride with a lot more climbing, but we had our own snake to contend with. A dead rattlesnake on the edge of the road prompted Jobst to stop and harvest the rattle.

Our destination was Sonora Pass, so we turned right at the junction, looking for the yellow-headed blackbirds that call this home in the marshes lining the road. We saw a couple of birds speed by as I stopped to take some more Advil just in case. On past the Marine Corps base we rode, noting that this was anything but rugged living for the troops. Looks more like luxury condos.

We enjoyed the view of Pickel Meadow and Walker River, a ribbon of blue rushing down the snowcapped eastern Sierra. “How are we going to get over those mountains?” I asked. We would soon find out.

Sonora Pass at 3 mph

The real climbing begins around Wolf Creek as this steep section prepares you for what’s to come. We rode past the former Leavitt Station store, now just a flat patch of ground across from the Marines’ rock climbing area. Of course, anyone who has ridden up Sonora Pass knows where the fun begins. At the base of the big turn we stopped for some more rocket fuel. Jobst drank a gallon of Pepsi and I ate a candy bar. Waiting for the rider is 708 feet of climbing in 1.1 miles. I saw 22 percent flash by on my inclinometer as I managed to ride at a walking speed of 3 mph.

Fortunately we had spectacular weather with refreshing mountain air and filtered sunshine, perfect for climbing. We continued up the pass, which isn’t exactly easy in the middle section. It has several steep turns that can be tricky when wet during a descent. These turns led up to the final half-mile before the summit, which includes an amazingly tricky left turn for someone going down. From the summit you can easily reach 50 mph on the 20 percent grade. At the bottom you’ll see a short uphill. Great, something to slow you down. Only it’s not enough to slow you down



Ebbetts Pass on the eastern slope has some excellent views looking down the Silver Creek drainage.

sufficiently without riding the brakes hard for the upcoming tight left turn.

Riding uphill is a different story. Jobst took my photo as I rode ahead. While it's steep, it's half as long as the lower section and before we knew it we were at the summit sharing the road with motorcyclists. Although this has been a dry winter, we saw plenty of snow. We took the obligatory photos and then sped down the pass, negotiating the tricky Golden Stairs 18 percent grade, followed by another steep grade of more than 20 percent to Kennedy Meadows.



I can't think of a more enjoyable way to end a run of 17 Sierra Rides than going with Jobst Brandt during a fair-weather weekend.

In Dardanelle, where we usually grab a bite to eat and Jobst buys another gallon of Pepsi, we found a shuttered store. I stopped to eat the last of my food and drink some water. Jobst rode ahead looking for Pepsi.

We joined up on the long climb to Donnell Vista Point where the Stanislaus River backs up thanks to public works. We looked down from the overlook and noticed Donnell Reservoir a little lower, but not that much.

The ride to Strawberry may seem like a big downhill, but it's not. It has a lot of climbing and long flat stretches. Only in the last mile does the descent begin. We stopped for food at Strawberry Store and once again Jobst downed a burrito and two gallons of Pepsi.

After the break and insightful observations about VW vans, we headed uphill to Cold Springs and then started the long downhill to Sonora. On the way we saw gawkers looking over the edge of a canyon next to the long-abandoned Sugar Pine Ski area where 108 splits to a divided highway. A vehicle had gone over the edge and tow trucks were on the scene.

With continuing cool mountain air, we turned off to Twain Harte and took the old highway 108. It was a nice diversion from the busy 108. It brought us back to 108 and more fast descending next to some disagreeable rumble strips.

We rumbled down the road and turned right at the stop light at Peaceful Oak Road to pick up the 108 bypass. It felt like we were on the 405 heading through LA as we looked down on Sonora. That took us back to Washington Street and a short ride to the hotel, 97 miles later, 3:30 p.m.

Jobst pulled out a fistful of gnarled coins that looked like they had been through a belt sander and declared victory. I rang in with 36 cents, but at least my coins were legal tender. And so ended another Sierra Ride. Time for a Pepsi. [This was my seventeenth and last Sierra Ride. Jobst rode a couple more.]

Afterword

My rides with Jobst Brandt and friends became an integral part of my life, especially between 1980-89 when I was still finding my way in the world after moving to California from Colorado. I shared many of the same interests as Jobst, including birds, trains, the outdoors, bicycles, engineering, history. But most of all, I shared his sense of adventure that, combined with his enthusiasm for living in the moment, made the rides — hard though they may be — so enjoyable.

So many people rode with Jobst, or knew of him and his rides, that I felt compelled to keep a journal so that his rides could be shared with future generations. I took most of the photos in this book, with those taken by Jobst noted in captions.

Sadly, Jobst crashed his bike one foggy Saturday morning, January 15, 2011, at the corner of Whiskey Hill Road and Sand Hill Road. It effectively ended his cycling. He died four years later, May 5, 2015, after a long illness.

Our last ride together took place only a week before his accident when we rode through Portola Valley and he showed me one of his secret places for finding chanterelle mushrooms. My last long ride with Jobst took place on March 29, 2009, when we rode the Mt. Hamilton loop.

As I look back on the rides, it becomes painfully obvious, as I'm sure it was for Jobst too, that we slow down with age. As Jobst often said, he would continue doing the same rides he always did, only they would take longer. He mostly held true to his word, especially when it came to riding the big loop to Santa Cruz. He even continued riding off-road until only a year or so before his accident.

I dedicate these memories to all who knew Jobst Brandt and enjoyed the many hours we spent together out on the road.

This edition has, by user request, more inner margin white space to make reading easier. Font size was reduced from 12 to 11 points and I chased down more than thirty typos.

I can be reached on my blog, rayhosler.wordpress.com. **August 2018**



Bay Area Map

