

PRESCOTT'S OWN FREE INDEPENDENT PAPER

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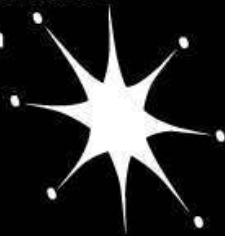
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CAR SHOW

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Raven Singletrack: Community on Wheels

This two-part segment on Raven Singletrack finds Jen Swacina risking life and limb to cover Prescott's Klunker Cruise, while Erica Ryberg explores Raven's trail building aspirations.

~ Jen Swacina

It was perilous. It was hilarious. "It was a party on wheels," said Greg Ooley, one of the masterminds behind the local mountain biking group, **Raven Singletrack**. Under normal circumstances biking requires some strenuous physical effort, but for participants in Raven Singletrack's April **Klunker Cruise** – it was all downhill.

Over twenty participants loading "klunker" bicycles onto trailers (many sporting silly costumes – hats and wigs affixed to bike helmets) created a spectacle in Albertson's parking lot. In exchange for a twenty-dollar donation, bikers and their bicycles received a shuttle ride to the top of Spruce Mountain, and the unforgettable experience of bombing down the road back to town.

"The most exercise was from breaking," said participant Dan Jannone, still wearing pink-striped knee-high stockings at Coyote Joes after the ride.

The Klunker Cruise raised money for Ooley's brother-in-law, a 35-year-old, father-of-three, battling cancer.

As a volunteer

van driver for the event, Ed Furbush was giving back. Furbush recently underwent knee surgery made possible largely because of another fundraiser Raven Singletrack organized back in March for his benefit.

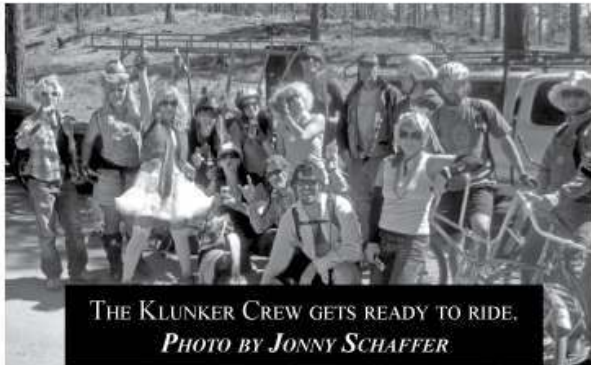
"Ed [Furbush] is the hub of cycling around here," Ooley said. Furbush owns **Southwest Sounds and Cyclery**, located near the courthouse square.

"Every web has a tiny center," Ooley said. The shop was recognized in Quality Bike Part's national catalog, where it was endearingly described as "closet-sized."

Furbush hopes to be able to ride his bicycle again any day now. He says he will be back to "full throttle by this time next year."

As a grassroots organization Raven Singletrack lacks an official mission statement, but it seems to be about doing whatever it takes to get people out riding bicycles. They work as hard at building community as they do at building trails.

"There's plenty of room to have tons of people out enjoying the trails," said Ooley. He believes the best thing about Prescott is living on the edge of the national forest. And in these



THE KLUNKER CREW GETS READY TO RIDE.
PHOTO BY JONNY SCHAFFER

tough economic times, he says, city government should promote Prescott as a mountain biking vacation destination. "We're sitting on an undiscovered goldmine of great trails."

Once a month Raven Singletrack organizes free, Sunday morning "soul" rides. Anyone is welcome – no membership to join. However, Ooley stresses the rides are not guided. "We're riders, not lawyers."

"We will show you the trails and hopefully not lose anybody," Ooley said. Come prepared to fix your own flat tire. An online announcement for a group ride explains, "The pace, duration and general vibe of a ride is determined by

the people who actually show up. Mobocracy in action!"

Raven Singletrack also hosts weekly, Thursday evening rides. Ooley tries to avoid using the term "training," but warns the weekday rides are faster paced. For ride times and location information, visit ravensingletrack.com.

If you prefer to roll solo, but just don't know where to go, Raven Singletrack created waterproof "snap maps" of the area, designed to snap onto your bike frame. You can purchase snap maps at Furbush's shop downtown.

While it is unclear where the entrepreneurial efforts of Raven Singletrack will lead, they are certainly enjoying the ride.



RAVEN SINGLETRACK CREATED THE WATERPROOF, TOP TUBE-HUGGING SNAP MAP TO HELP RIDERS FIND PRESCOTT'S BEST SINGLETRACK. YOU CAN FIND THE MAPS AT ALL TRI-CITY BIKE SHOPS.

PHOTO BY ERICA RYBERG

Local Trail Maintenance: Prescott's Mountain Bike Gypsies Grab A McCleod

Prescott's forests are long on trails to maintain, and short on volunteers to get the job done.

~Erica Ryberg

It's one of those perfect late spring mornings that's liable to set a soul to singing. It's also, for Christophe Noel and Greg Ooley, one of those days that will require a second shower by noon.

The two 30-somethings have joined trail maven Rob Hehlen and an aptly-named Forest Service volunteer outfit, the **Over The Hill Gang**, to learn how to

become trail crew leaders.

"We're going to officially adopt trails," said Noel, who with Ooley founded Raven Singletrack, Prescott's mountain biking collective. "We're also going to help keep them maintained."

The group rolls up to the White Spar Campground and unloads their tools of engagement: shovels, picks and the McCleod trail building tool, which is a cross between a rake and a square scythe. The McCleod's forte is brush removal.

Down in a gully is a section of well-traveled social trail that needs to be



THE OVER THE HILL GANG BUILD TRAIL YEAR ROUND, RAIN OR SHINE. TONY BEERE SAID THAT THE ONLY THING THAT CAN KEEP THEM OFF THE TRAIL IS LIGHTNING.
PHOTO BY ROB HEHLEN

rerouted. According to Hehlen, there's a big difference between the social trails that web the forest floor and official Forest Service trails.

"It's pretty easy to build any trail quickly. All you need is enough traffic to follow a path for a certain amount of time," Hehlen said. "But that doesn't mean it's a good trail."

Like Noel and Ooley, Hehlen came to trail building via his love of biking.

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Southwest Sounds & Cyclery

928-443-8996

131 1/2 N. Montezuma
Prescott, AZ 86301



New Compact Discs & Bicycle Repair

Local Trail Maintenance: Prescott's Mountain Bike Gypsies Grab A McCleod



IN ADDITION TO LEADING TRAIL MAINTENANCE CREWS, MOUNTAIN BIKE CRUSADERS GREG OOLEY (RIGHT) AND CHRISTOPHE NOEL (LEFT) OPERATE AN ONLINE BIKE FORUM AT RAVENSINGLETRACK.COM AND LEAD FREQUENT SOCIAL RIDES.

PHOTO BY ERICA RYBERG

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He started as a volunteer at the Forest Service and before long secured a paid spot as a trail building technician. During that time, he's established himself as an expert.

They will construct 100 feet of trail this morning. Hehlen flags the route and the men dive in. Two members of the Gang, Bill Webster and 77-year-old Tony Beere, clear the brush along the flags with their McCleods, making way for the younger men to carve out the trail with their picks and shovels.

Part of the reason Noel and Ooley want to lead trail crews is that local trails see more use from bikers than hikers, and yet the hikers often shoulder the bulk of the trail work. The other reason has to do with the basic character of the two men — they just like to get people, especially bikers, together. It's similar to what keeps the Over the Hill Gang building trail.

"It's very good for a lot of things," Tony Beere said. "It's good exercise, good camaraderie, a good bunch of people we work with — there's a lot of satisfaction from doing it."

Working alongside the veterans, Noel and Ooley discover firsthand the heroic effort required to build even the shortest stretch of trail. In fact, it took Hehlen and the Gang 5,000 man-hours to build south Prescott's Trail 396, a curvy, delicate path winding from Schoolhouse Gulch to Goldwater Lake. The trail has become a mountain biking favorite.

The volunteers have also created two and a half miles of official trail behind the White Spar Campground and are currently working on a project that connects the Kingswood neighborhood to Thumb Butte.

Their trail building efforts, however, will slow this year as they run out of approved trail to build. According to

Hehlen, this is due in part to the Forest Service's reluctance to create new trail when the resources for maintaining the 850 miles of existing trail are flagging.

"It takes five people half a day to maintain two miles of trail, which needs to be done at least twice a year," he said. "That's almost 10,000 hours needed just for basic maintenance."

And that's where Ooley and Noel come in. With spring finally warming up and the winds dying down, the pair plan to hold plenty of informal trail maintenance outings as well as the occasional official trail building event (the next one is tentatively slated for mid-summer).

"Mountain bikers are a bunch of gypsies and we've found that frequent, low-key events are more well-received," said Noel, adding that it's easier to perform maintenance if Raven Singletrack knows ahead of time roughly how many people are attending.

By the end of the morning, Noel and Ooley are taking a few more breathers than they had earlier in the day. The Over the Hill Gang, meanwhile, is working as solid and slow as ever.

Down in the wash bottom, the old social trail has receded into the bunch grass, already forgotten by the morning walkers who brush past the tired but satisfied trail builders.

Want to help maintain trails (and build a great upper body) with Raven Singletrack? Visit www.ravensingletrack.com or email ravensingletrack@gmail.com. Volunteer with the Prescott National Forest directly by contacting Ron Rodgers: Call (928) 443-8072 or email rrodders@fs.fed.us. Give the Prescott trail system a hand by calling Eric Smith at (928) 777-1560.

Bike Month Events in May

May 3 - 9: Yoga Shala is offering \$5 yoga classes to anyone who bikes into their studio.

May 7: Women's Only Bike Maintenance Clinic, 6pm, High Gear Bikeshop. Free basic bike mechanics workshop for women; refreshments, giveaways. RSVP to 445-0636

May 8: Bike Pub Poker game, 7pm, meet at Pudge & Asti's (721 N. 6th St.). Visit five different pubs (on your bike!) to acquire your poker hand; prize for the winning hand.

May 10: Community Bike Swap Meet, 3 - 5 p.m. on the grounds of the PAT (Prescott Alternative Transportation) office at 309 E. Gurley Street. Buy, sell, and trade all the gear and equipment you've been needing. Vending space available for \$20; proceeds from vending fees go to supporting the advocacy work of PAT. At 5pm, the swap meet turns into an Open House at the PAT office. Refreshments provided.

May 12: Bike the Beat at 6 p.m. Meet in Granite Creek Park. Join Prescott's mountain bike police patrol on a ride that follows their "beat". Definitely an interesting ride through the streets, alleys, and trails of Prescott!

May 15: Ride to Work with the Mayor at 7 a.m. Meet in the parking lot of the shopping center at the far west end of Gurley Street. Join Mayor Wilson (he will be on a tandem!) in making this the biggest community bike ride ever! A family-friendly ride with police escorts to ensure the safety of all. Free breakfast treats await everyone at the end of the ride at City Hall.

There are ongoing road and mountain bike rides each Tues, Wed, Thu, Sat, and Sun.

Raffles: a new Gary Fisher mountain bike; a gift basket filled with New Belgium Brewing goods. New Frontiers is offering a free drawing for a gift basket - anyone who bikes into New Frontiers is eligible to enter.

For more information on PAT or Bike Month, visit: prescottalternativetransportation.org, or call 928-708-0911.

Cable Access 13 Awards!

The votes are in for the Cable Access 13 yearly awards! In celebration of the dedicated live performances of the nominees, awards were presented on Saturday, April 25th at the Yavapai College Performance Hall, amidst a lively, circus-like atmosphere.

Community Service - **Volunteer Angels**

Talk/Information - **I Believe**
Inspirational - **Christianland**

Puppet Theater

Entertainment - **Prescott Public**

Library Storytime Show

Series Program of the Year - **Prescott**

Public Library Storytime Show

Feature Program of the Year -

The Diary of a Jesus Freak

Check current programming schedules at: www.access13.org

About Town

Special Events

5/9 Tea and Quilt Show: Lonesome Valley Quilt Guild, 10-4, Mountain Valley Church of God, 8123 E. Manley Drive, Prescott Valley. Featured will be the Keepsake Quilting Challenge Collection, displaying 20 of their winning quilts from their challenge contests. Silent auction, bidding closes at 3 p.m. Vendors, free refreshments, \$3 donation.

5/9 Mountain Top Street Rodders Car Show: 12th Annual Show, Mile High Middle School, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Benefits MHMS and other local charities. Open to 1959 and older rods, customs, classics, etc. \$2, no dogs allowed.

5/9 Evening at Sharlot's Place: An evening of food, fun & music highlighted by a lively art auction plus silent auction. Items in the live auction include a ride in Sharlot's Star car in the 4th of July Parade, behind-the-scenes tours of the Museum and Archives, a catered dinner in the Museum's historic Ranch House, and a dinner with (and served by) the Director of the Museum. Tickets are \$40/person; \$60/couple. Proceeds benefit the general operations of the Museum. 3:30 - 7 p.m. Sharlot Hall Museum, 445-3122.

5/9 Mother's Day Tea: 1:30 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church, Prescott Valley, 583-7510. All proceeds benefit the Yavapai Humane Society. Tickets include luncheon, entertainment by Larry Aker, door prizes & more. Cost: \$45.

5/9 Mayer Daze: Parade @ 10AM; Pit Bar-B-Q @ 11AM; Craft booths, kiddie rides & games, chili cook-off, car show. Dance @ 8PM featuring Miles of Country. Mayer Recreation Center, 928-632-9193.

5/13 Prescott Film Festival: 6:30 p.m., Frontier Village Cinema. *The Day My Parents Became*