



Bear Tracks

Journal of the U.C Hiking Club

USHC

12 November 1991, Carolyn Fairman,
editor. Stories, stories, please give me
stories!!!

Monster Mammoth Mountain Bike Trip

by

The tall channelling hairy motorcycle
freak

Only slightly warm I pulled up to Ho Chi Min park dodging wandering homeless people, spaced out hippie heads, exuberant dogs, and funky fluorescent pink floating frisbees. The latter were zipping out of and through the hands of forty or so over zealous, too healthy (for such a diseased society) U.C. Berkeley hiking club folks. Looking grey but feeling great, toting one mountain bike I was ready for a marathon drive to Mammoth mountain.

After escorting a pretty little Saab to a nicer part of town I was smoothly humming east on 580 with five mountain bikes strapped to my back, five overstuffed backpacks, and (guess how many) men in various states of stench and staunch crammed into every nook and cranny of my storage space. All the way through Livermore, Manteca, and Oakdale I was subjected to exaggerated ranting of sexual exploits, lost loves, and miles of other male bonding lies. I had no qualms about stopping at Bud's Frosties but just because they couldn't get any milkshakes didn't give them the right to half starve me to death just as I was working my hardest. My knuckle-headed passengers tried passing Power Bar induced methane-like-gas through the seats to me, practically

suffocating themselves, but I got even with them when we dropped over Tioga Pass, as they smelt my asbestos arse. None too late (I had more in me but why starve) they fed me some nutritious, but artificially cheap, 88 octane fossil fuel.

I hardly even had to open my eyes to find our nights resting spot, what with the moonlight shining down and the hot spring sulfur clogging up my radiator glands. However, Decoy was getting sleepy and grumpy and started treating me badly, scraping my belly on rocks and dirt: he even tried feeding me desert scrub in his delirious state. But it felt good cruising through the desert and I even collected some pretty yellow wildflowers.

AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHH,
VROOM,VROOM,
YYEEEEOOOWWW!!@#%&*~!

That's the last time I ever let Decoy's stinking Honda Civic wagoon channel through me. Gotta bring my heart beat down to 2500 rpm, ugh, I mean 60 bpm.

Where were we, oh yeah we just drove to a nifty little hot spring East of Hot Creek by a few dirty and dusty miles. Decoy, "Power Bar" Joel, Kinder Mike, Existential Eric, and I, the car channelling long haired freak, stripped to our birthday suits and plopped our long cramped bodies into a beautiful natural hot spring with unnatural, but nonetheless comfortable, cement seats. Though it was 3 a.m. we were still jazzed enough to enjoy the eastern side of the moonlit Sierras, and the high desert scenery all around us.

Saturday we drove about twenty minutes to the Mammoth mountain ski

lodge, crammed our shiny, unbroken mountain bikes and bodies into a ten person van and headed to the top.

Eight hours later after the last van to the top our bodies and bikes not so shiny and unbroken, we pointed our front wheels toward the steep and deep (skree that is) drawing energy from the bottom of our grungy boots/tennies, to race down at breakneck speeds through slippery gravel and dirt. Funny how half way through we had grins from ear to ear, dirt filling in the cracks, and mad desires to catch one more ride up, yet the other half of the mountain later we were massaging the grass with our backs.

That night we peeled off our clothes again, chiseled off the dirt, opened our pores to all natural healing feel-so-good hot spring water, shoveled the worlds best pasgetti down our throats, defined existentialism (ask Eric), played harmonica toasts to Jose C., laid our nappy heads (those that have naps) onto ever so soft cow patties, and dreamt of phenomenal mountain bike exploits to brag about to our friends.

Sunday morning we bid adieu to our colorfully adorned neighbor hippy bus to seek out new worlds where no man has.... we went hot spring searching. Joel was low on Power Bars (Thank God) and Eric was existentializing, so Kinder Mike twisted Decoy's and my arms to let him pull us and our mountain bikes up and down the desert hills. It was rough work just watching Kinder Mike "LeMonde" pull us from hot spring to cast iron bathtub, but we persevered and found seven places to soak, and actually met some magical hot tub making gnomes speaking on a higher plane of consciousness.

Stuffing everything back into and onto the Conda Hivic we headed back over Tioga pass, this time turbo boosted by my stored sulfur gases. Just before Buck Meadows (aka hot mountain bike city) we stopped to play around in Rainbow Pool. Now we should have known better than to have ended our fabulous trip at a place with so cheery a

name; remember Murphy's law and all that. Well that turned out to be a \$1200 swimming hole stop complete with stolen mountain bikes, lost glasses, and mischievous locals (who should die in hell!)

Needless to say Bud's frosties was closed as we passed through Oakdale, but all was not lost as our faith in humanity was restored by the supernaturally skilled smiling Subway sandwich server.

Ride hard lard hidell

Powell Down The Colorado from Cadillac Desert, Part I

by Marc Reisner

The region overlays parts of what is now Colorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Nevada. It was about the size of France, and through the middle of it ran the Colorado River. That was about all that was known about it, except that the topography was awesome and the rainfall scarce. The region was known as the Plateau Province, and parties heading westward tended to avoid it at all costs.

Some of the Franciscan friars, who were as tough as anyone in the Old West, had wandered through it on the Old Spanish Trail. Otherwise, the Mormon Outlet Trail skirted the region to the west, the California and Oregon trails swung northward, and the El Paso Yuma Trail went south. From a distance, one could see multicolored and multistoried mesas and cliffs, saurian ridges, and occasionally a distant snowcapped peak. There were accounts of canyons that began without reason and were suddenly a thousand feet deep, eroded more by wind than by water. A distance that a bird could cover in an hour might require a week to negotiate. The days were hot and the nights were often frigid, owing to the region's high interior vastness, and water was almost impossible to find. Lacking wings, there

was only one good way to explore it: by boat.

On the 24th of May, 1869, the Powell Geographic Expedition set out on the Green River from the town of Green River, Wyoming, in four wooden dories: the *Maid of the Canyon*, the *Kitty Clyde's Sister*, the *Emma Dean*, and the *No Name*. For a scientific expedition, it was an odd group. Powell, the leader, was the closest thing to a scientist. He had brought along his brother Walter—moody, sarcastic, morose, one of the thousands of psychiatric casualties of the Civil War. The rest of the party was made up mostly of mountain men: O. G. Howland, his brother Seneca, Bill Dunn, Billy Hawkins, and Jack Sumner, all of whom had been collected by Powell en route to Green River. He had also invited a beet-faced Englishman named Frank Goodman, who had been patrolling the frontier towns looking for adventure, and Andy Hall, an eighteen-year-old roustabout whose casual skill as an oarsman had impressed Powell when he saw him playing with a boat on the Green River. There was also George Bradley, a tough guy whom Powell had met by accident at Fort Bridger and who had agreed to come along in exchange for a discharge from the army, which Powell managed to obtain for him.

For sixty miles out of the town of Green River, the river was sandy-bottomed and amiable. There were riffles, but nothing that could legitimately be called a rapid. The boatmen played in the currents, acquiring a feel for moving water; the others admired the scenery. As they neared the Uinta Mountains, they went into a sandstone canyon colored in marvelous hues, which Powell, who had a knack for naming things, called Flaming Gorge. The river bore southward until it came up against the flanks of the range, then turned eastward and entered Red Canyon.

In Red Canyon, the expedition got its first lesson in how a few feet of drop per mile can turn a quiet river into something startling.

To Think about...

They took all the trees and put them in a tree museum

Then they charged all the people a dollar and a half just to see them.

Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you got till its gone.

They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.

--Joni Mitchell

New column! Submissions ecstatically taken:

Questions? Some answers, but more questions.

Poison Oak and Ivy

Summary

If you do nothing, it'll heal in two weeks. If you try all those over the counter and/or natural remedies, wait 14 days. If you go to the doctor for serious mind altering steroids, it's gone within a day.

What is it and how does it work?

Various species of the genus *Rhus*. The sap and crushed leaves contain a chemical which is absorbed by skin cells. The body mounts an immune response to these contaminated cells. Once begun, the reaction ends only when all the contaminated cells have been shed. This is one argument for scratching as much as possible, at the expense of additional scarring.

What are effective treatments?

There are many conflicting suggestions for treatment. Antihistamines are either very effective or worthless. If the affected area is small enough, self treatment with over the counter remedies can provide 'temporary relief'. Another useful method of obtaining symptomatic relief is the use of a hot bath or hot shower. Heat releases

histamine, the substance in the cells of the skin which causes the intense itching. Therefore, a hot shower or bath will cause intense itching as the histamine is released. The heat is gradually increased to the maximum tolerable and continued until the itching has subsided. This process will deplete the cells of histamine and the patient will often obtain eight hours of relief from the itching. This method has the advantage of not requiring frequent application of ointments to the lesions and is a good way to get some sleep at night.

Various over the counter remedies (rhuligel, caladryl, calamine lotion, benadryl) contain alcohol which appears to work by cooling and drying the area. This is reputed to cause cracking and even more itching. Hydrocortisone cream is supposed to be effective, although some people indicate that over the counter concentrations are too weak to be effective. Symptoms may persist for up to two weeks after exposure. None of the above remedies will reduce this time. For more serious or widespread cases, a doctor can prescribe steroids. Oral, systemic gluco-cortico-steroids may cause behavioral changes, but are effective and rapid (within 24 hours).

How can I prevent this?

Learn to recognize and avoid the plant. If exposed, wash the affected area as quickly as possible with soap and cold water (hot water is reputed to cause the pores to open and allow the oak oil in). A product called Tecnu is supposed to break down the active ingredient in the oil. It's available at some drug stores, or from Solutions (1-800-342-9988). It's supposedly recommended by power company linemen. The oil itself is very easily spread, and can persist in crystalline form on clothing or other contacted items (including pets) for many months (years?), so you should wash anything you may have touched. Scratching affected areas after symptoms develop can not spread the infection, but different levels of exposure, and

secondary exposures, can cause delayed reactions (2-3 days) in adjacent areas, giving the impression of spreading.

Equipment Exchange

Well, this may or may not work. I would've listed my pack, which I had wanted to sell but I've already sold it. So, if you are looking for something, or want to unload some gear leave a message at 643-3422, and be VERY CLEAR or talk to Carolyn Fairman in person (but still be clear!).