

CENTURY TUSCALOOSA

"The Fisher Report"

"The Rubber band Man"

or "Just Me and Dodie"

By Greg (Bulldog) Fisher

It has been some time since I have written a ride report. This is due to the fact I haven't ridden a century since early October. I have had some trouble with my back and some work conflicts, which caused the Bulldog to miss the last three Scorpion rides of 2003.

This is a New Year and a new start on the Scorpion series. The first Scorpion ride 2004 was the "CENTURY TUSCALOOSA" ride. Saturday Morning at the University Rec. Center, would find Jared (who's last name I can't recall) Tim Haskew, Raymond Poore, Mike Shelton, Phil Hardee, Dodie Morris, Ashley Renfro, Bob Wood, Ken Dewitt and yours truly. We were about to embark on some of the toughest 26 miles of a century ride anywhere around these parts.

There was no Larry, who had to work (dad gummitt), as Larry would put it. Major Dave also didn't ride. He did show up to take a non-picture of the group. It seems the battery was dead in his digital camera. The way that thing eats batteries he must use it as an electric shaver.

With the temperatures in the low 40's we were off, but not at 8 am as specified by the Larry Pierson departure handbook. Due to a late arriver we left at 8:15. We would proceed on to Jack Warner parkway on route to the arduous 25 miles leading to Roosters Sav-More on U.S. 43 at the base of Bone Camp Hill. As the ride leader, so called I tried to stay in the back to help the newer riders to make sure they made the right turns and help them up the hills. This comes with some sacrifice, but that's part of cycling. When I was learning, the same was done for me.

It would be here, that Bob and Ken would do the smart thing and head back to the Rec. center via Mitt Larry Road. They would wind up with 40 plus miles, Good job fellows. We met Pat Ferguson on his Trek mountain bike, since his carbon road bike is busted awaiting Congress to sign the bill to repair it or replace it. This is where the rubber would meet the road or the "The Rubber band Man" affect would begin.

Some of the guys said they were going ahead. Some were on a time limit, some were concerned about the chance of rain and others couldn't wait to climb the 1- mile mound of misery know as "Bone Camp Hill". We started up the hill. The first group went and then the next bunch. Slowly the invisible rubber would stretch. We would get closer to the first group and then they would speed up. The band would stretch. It finally broke on highway 171 when the Fast group kicked it into hyperdrive. I would never see them again. That would leave Phil, Dodie and me.

When we finally reach Upper Columbus Phil would take off and leave the Me and Dodie to do cleanup.

When I reach what I call "Bladder Hill", this is the long hill before go into the Sipsey valley just outside Echola. I am taking care of my bladder and old Dodie is reaching the top of the hill. I offer him some pretzels, as he looked like he had dragged a car up the hill. We clip back in and make the long descent into the valley and on to Echola to the now J&L store, formally Pearsons.

We see that Phil was already there and munching on the 5 lb. Bag of pretzels he had.

We are relaxing and taking in some nourishment. You look up and see to my horror, the "Rocket Riders". These cats started 45 later than we did and were only 10 minutes behind. There would Eric white, Guy Cutting, Mike Ham and two others pull up. Mike told me they were average 19 miles an hour. This was the same RPM we were averaging.

Enough was enough, so we saddled up and took off, sort of. Phil and the Rocket riders would burn a blue streak. The rubber band would again stretch and then snap as the rocket riders and Phil were catapulted into a different time dimension.

This would leave Dodie Morris and me, the last of the last, the back of the pack, the backside of cycling to bring up the rear. They say that Lance Armstrong get paid 8, 000,000.00 a year to ride a bike. We get paid 0, nada, nothing, zip, until I am coming down a long hill on the Echola road and the bottom of the hill I see two one dollar bills folded on the road. Of course, I passed the money

On the road, NOT! I pick up the money and put in my cycling shorts. I didn't think anyone would want it back after that.

Dodie and me finally hook up just before 82 highway. We would ride the next 20 miles to Ralph, via lower Columbus, Sipsey Valley North and South. We are on Sipsey Valley south when it starts to drizzle. I told Dodie " bud, we're fixin' to get wet". We were not going to cut the ride short that wouldn't be right. We finally arrive in Ralph and see Phil 's bike. We go inside and see Phil at the back table. He said had we been 10 minutes later he would have left. He said he was tired of riding alone. We refresh and then do the last 25 miles to nirvana. We finally get on Sander's Ferry, the home stretch. We would meet Major Dave at Pembroke farm He would ride with us until we got to the park. Then Dave peeled off and we rode on to the Rec. Center just as it really began to rain.

I handed out a T-shirt to Phil and Dodie. Out of the 15 that did the ride, 12 finished the Century. This is a great turn out on a very difficult Century. Thanks to Larry Pierson and all his hard work and the great T-shirts, to make this a great ride.