

Momb 2005  
To every thing turn, turn, turn  
The Fisher report  
By Greg "Bulldog" Fisher

Yogi Berra always said "If you come to a fork in the road, take it". The Bulldog would be no exception Saturday October 8, 2005. The Mississippi on my behind or MOMB as it is coined is a long and complicated century plus ride.

The ride starts in Coker, AL and winds itself through Tuscaloosa County into Pickens county and on into the state of Mississippi. Every road has a hill and a dog and let's not forget the turns. Saturday morning we all met at the Methodist Church in Coker, Alabama. We had about 20 folks to start the ride. We had many ladies show up to start with and the Bulldog thought it was going to be chick ride, but pretty soon some of guys showed up.

Mandy Nichols is a great person and a determined and courageous bike rider. She had struggled on the very hot "North Harbor Hot Hundred" and had to take sag. She bounced back two weeks later at the Birmingham Bicycle Club and completed a very difficult century ride. Now it was the "Mississippi on my behind" century. A ride concocted by our own Major Dave Casebeer. The Bulldog would take it on his own to see Mandy through the ride. Little did she know the fate that was before her? I thought while I was at it I would ask my old century riding buddy, Dodie Morris to go along with us. We started out and as it usually goes, the fast go fast and slow go slow and the others get there sooner or later. I held back trying to stay with Mandy who seemed to be fighting the early hills and cold muscles. I rode ahead and caught the lead group but stopped in Echola to wait on Mandy and Susie Poindexter. We rode together till we reached Gordo. Susie stayed in Gordo and Mandy took out in what we thought was the right way, however we must miss a turn and cut out 9 miles and catch the lead group in Reform. I was puzzled when saw riders on US 82. I would be this way most of the day, except when I started the ride and when I finished the ride.

I asked Dave at the gas station in Reform what happened and he told me missed a turn. Now we had our maps and some words from Dave. We also had 9 miles to make up. We take off and again the group splits up and then there are four of us since Brian Bilich joined us. We would ride happily along PC 27 till we come to junction and a Dave road marker, the banana; I asked Brian what that may have meant.

We would soon find out. We are buzzing along and I call out and say let's stop and call Dave to get our bearings. After a minute of discussion on the cell with Dave, we find out much to our chagrin that the banana was our turn some 5 miles back. We doubled back and Mandy and I recovered our lost miles. We finally reached Mississippi without any more mishaps.

We left Mississippi on new surface and a nice tail wind. We rode without any problems till we got just outside of Reform. We missed still another turn and wound up riding on US 82 into Reform. We stopped in Reform to study the map, by this time Dodie was familiar with area enough to help get us back.

We rode on into Gordo and back to US 82 and finally on to TC 140 or lower Columbus to finish an hour behind the lead group. Mandy would finish strong and so would Dodie, who last year hit the wall about 5 miles from the finish.

I will tell that Mandy and Dodie endured this adventure in confusion and frustration but never complained about the extra distance. We worked together and looked after each other and pulled together to make it to the finish. To me this is one of the great things about cycling. By the way it seems God wanted us to get our mileage, we wound up with 114 miles.

The Major without a doubt puts on one the most challenging centuries, see hills, turns, turns, hills, the AKC; see dogs, in the Scorpion series. I have done this butt buster three times and I was still like a child in high weeds. I was lost the whole day. As far as the map Dave referred to, well! I wouldn't look for it in the Rand McNally Atlas. My suggestion for folks doing this great ride next year:

- . Stay with the pack
- . Study Dave's map and take an Exam
- . Buy Dave some spray paint to mark the route.

It ain't all about pumpin the pedals- Bulldog