

The Payne Lake Ride
The Fisher Report
(Or The Payne In the Payne Lies Mainly In The Payne)
By Greg (Bulldog) Fisher

Ah another century ride. That's a hundred miles. 197 Kilometers. A long way, a lot of pedaling, a lot of hills, and a lot of Payne. We started out all bright eyed and bushy tailed, with all our cycling gear on. Our teeth brushed and our hair combed and our tires inflated (blowed up sounds better). We had two young ladies grace our presence ready to go the distance. This ride included Tuscaloosa, Hale, Bibb and I felt parts of the Rockies from the hills we rode on. I couldn't believe it, every road we were on had a hill. Some were the long 30-degree, butt-bustin, stand-up, lung collapsing variety. The other were the steep, don't look back type.

This ride had a lot slag roooaaaaaads. Just a little bumpy, a lot bumpy, mostly bumpy, completely bumpy. We were going down Old Highway 69 when we noticed a road-closed sign. Now you would think that meant it was not passable and one shouldn't go on this road. Does this stop Larry Pierson, an intelligent, well-educated law abiding citizen and civil servant. NO!!!!!!! We soon found out why the road was closed. It was closed because it was closed. We encountered barricades and mud puddles I noticed several mud puddles the size of dump trucks. I almost got my shoes wet. I DON'T LIKE TO GET THE SHOES WET!!!!!!!!!!!!

We got through that and met up with the folks who took the sensible route. We proceeded through into Hale County on AL 25 then into Bibb. One of the tough things about this ride is you go almost 40 miles before you come to a store.

This would be the infamous Mayfield grocery on AL 25. We then continued our trek through Bibb County until we got to Bibb County Road 1. The group split as Paul Weaver and Jessica went and took the "easy" 80 mile route. The rest of us: Larry, Miles, Dave, Mike, Leigh, Ron, Patrick and I went into Brent and I stopped at another store near the Hwy. 82 south exit. Then it was onto the road to Vance. Again no other stores for the remaining 40 miles. I'm going to check with Miles to see if the club has money to put porta potties and vending machines on our rides where there aren't many stores.

The only thing flat about this ride, was the flat I had in Coaling. The other bike I had was equipped with 27 x 1/14 fat boys on it. I could ride through barbwire and not a get flat. This bike had 700x20 super skinnies. You hit a chicken nugget with these and you are flat. How many cyclists does it take to change a flat? You would say one. Sometimes as many as it takes. I was so tried all I could do was watch and stand in a fire ant bed.

Miles was the breakdown man. Larry was the pump man. Dave was the crew chief. It took two tubes and a boot to get me back on the road. To make matters worse, I had a CO-worker come by, who thinks what I do, is some crazy... (S-word here). Thought it was so funny. But offered to help which might have meant he would take back to my truck. Where was my brain?

We went the remaining 25 miles down Keene's (hilly) Mills road. When I finally caught up with my main riding buddies Dave and Larry at Hwy. 216. They were talking to Phil, who knew we would be there. This is one of the guys who has ridden with Dave and Larry and whom I look forward to riding with when he gets well.

We finally got back on University Blvd. en route to Capitol Park. Everybody else as usual had gone home. This ride to me was as tough as the MOMB ride every bit. A word of advice: carbo-load, take a day off from work. Try to get a little riding in that week. Go down Sanders or get on a trainer. If you don't you could fry like I did.