



CEDAR VALLEY CYCLISTS

VOL. 17 ISSUE 1 · JANUARY 2024

Dropping Back with Troy

Hey Gang!

It is with great excitement and enthusiasm that I announce my new role as President of Cedar Valley Cyclists (CVC). I am truly honored to serve in this position and look forward to contributing to the cycling community we have built over the years.

As we gear up for the next cycling season, the CVC board has been hard at work, especially focusing on our RAGBRAI Charter. We've been conducting after-action reviews, reflecting on what went right, what went wrong, and, most importantly, identifying areas for improvement. I must extend a special thanks to Bob Recker for leading this charge. Bob has brought a wealth of ideas and boundless enthusiasm to the table, and I'm confident that his efforts will enhance our RAGBRAI experience this year. While I won't reveal all the details just yet, rest assured that exciting developments are in the works.

I invite each and every one of you to join us for our spin class at the Cedar Valley SportsPlex in Waterloo every Wednesday at 6:00 pm. It's a fantastic opportunity to stay active during the off-season and keep those cycling muscles engaged. Arrive early to secure your spot on a bike – it's always a popular event!

In the spirit of giving back, I'm delighted to share news about our recent IHOPE donation. IHOPE provides amtrykes—adaptive tricycles—to children and adults facing physical or mental challenges who cannot ride a two-wheeled bicycle. Through our collective efforts, we raised an impressive \$830.00, and with Cedar Valley Cyclists' generous donation of \$1000.00, we have contributed a total of \$1830.00 to IHOPE. This supports their incredible work, making a meaningful difference in the lives of those they serve.

I hope your holiday season was full of joy and memorable moments with your loved ones. Amidst the festivities, I'd like to remind everyone about the importance of safe winter cycling. Winter offers its own unique charm and challenges for cycling enthusiasts, but safety should always be our top priority. Ensure your bikes are winter-ready, dress in layers to stay warm, and, most importantly, be visible to motorists!

Thank you for your ongoing support, and I'm eager to lead CVC into an exciting and successful new season. Here's to many more miles and memorable rides together!

Happy New Year and Safe Cycling!
Troy Buzynski, CVC President



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Holiday Lights Ride

Over 50 riders braved wind chills in the 20's to attend the annual Holiday Lights Ride. Although we rode part of the same route from previous years, we changed it up a bit and toured some neighborhoods on the far northwest side of Cedar Falls. Josh Collins and Leah Christopher won the unofficial "decorate your bike and wear a costume" contest, with Keith Reynolds coming in second! You always know it was a successful ride when people ask "can we do this again next week?" during December in Iowa!



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RAGBRAI is Less Than 200 Days Away

Plenty of time to decide to participate in the oldest, longest, and best supported bicycle ride in the world. The dates are July 20–27, 2024. The overnight towns will be announced on January 27 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines in Hy-Vee Hall B. Cedar Valley Cyclists have a private "Table of 10" at the Route Announcement Party. We have a few tickets available at the discounted price of \$50, please email deb@RideCVC.org if you are interested in purchasing one.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

- Early Registration thru February 29: \$225
- Standard Registration, March 1 to April 14: \$250
- Late Registration, April 15 to May 15: \$275
- May 15: Registration closes

Cedar Valley Cyclists is providing its usual charter services with tour-style charter buses from Waterloo and back from the end town with camping all week long. Charter options are available for camping and baggage support thru the week or daily. For more information, visit www.cedarvalleycyclists.org/ragbrai. If you have questions or need assistance with registration, contact RAGBRAI@cedarvalleycyclists.org. You will need to register for RAGBRAI separately from the CVC Charter. Please indicate "Team CVC" as your team when you register so that we can synchronize your RAGBRAI registration with our Charter registration.

Please Note: We are making several changes to improve the CVC Charter experience. One is to limit of 150 campers, compared to ~200 last year. All registrations are on a first come, first served basis, so please register early and complete all the steps below to ensure a spot with us.

Links for registration – visit all three as registration is not complete until all are updated:

- CVC Membership: www.cedarvalleycyclists.org/become-a-member
- RAGBRAI Registration: www.ragbrai.com and click on "Registration" in the menu bar. Be sure to select "Team CVC".
- CVC Charter: <https://cedarvalleycyclists.org/ragbrai/> Please send your payment to CVC within two weeks of registration to assure your spot on the charter. You will receive a confirmation via e-mail from CVC upon receipt of your payment.

We look forward to seeing you in July!

RAGBRAI® Committee:

Deb Bartels deb@RideCVC.org

Bob Recker bobr@RideCVC.org





E-Bikes and RAGBRAI

E-Bikes and RAGBRAI-A good mix? It Depends...

I rode my first RAGBRAI in 2010 and got completely hooked, riding nearly every mile and every year since then until recently. I also learned about the dreaded “4-H’s” (Hills, Headwinds, Heat, & Humidity). But I survived the fear of them with preparation, practice miles, and not having any other alternatives. After several years, the concept of an electric-assist bike (e-bike) “seemed like a good idea at the time.” (I say that a lot!) All of the local shops just looked at me, smiled, and shrugged their shoulders when I asked about e-bikes. I asked Kirby Baumgard about bringing along an e-bike “for the hard days.” He smiled and said, “Bob, I’ve been riding RAGBRAI for 15 years and have never seen an e-bike on it.” So I started looking. In the next several years, I could find one or two, usually ridden by someone recovering from major medical events, etc. I also rewarded myself for surviving a couple years with a nice carbon fiber bike to replace my trusty fitness/hybrid. It was like lowering the hills and taking 10 years off my age. But I kept looking.



My curiosity and habit of being an Early Adopter caused me to purchase an early Trek FX+ with the Bionix electric assist. “It seemed like a good idea at the time...” but I didn’t take it on RAGBRAI. It spent too much time in the garage, and the battery management on it was poor—at least as I managed it. It finally got its trial by being loaned to my niece who came to Iowa for her first RAGBRAI in 2021. She was not a seasoned bike rider and struggled with the whole energy management concept of that bike. It was a disaster. We literally spent hours trying to charge the battery along the route. Bad Idea. It has now been sold to a person who uses it on short bike ride adventures and is very happy with it—at least for now.



But over the years, I kept seeing more and more e-bikes on the ride, so my curiosity continued. In the early summer of 2022, I couldn’t resist anymore and purchased a very nice Trek Allant, which is more of a community/bike path bike than road bike. I said many times, “This is not a RAGBRAI bike,” but I purchased the Range Extender Battery package out of an abundance of caution and took it on the ride. I loved it. That same year, there were about six e-bikes with the charter, so we had great conversations sharing our mutual experiences, summarized below.

E-Bikes and RAGBRAI

The Bottom Line:

- These comments only relate to electric-assist bikes, where you are required to pedal in order to get the assistance. I can't imagine the non-pedaling pure electric bike lasting more than a few miles.
- In general, people were happy with their e-bikes. I don't think I ever got a report of anyone running out of battery on the route but some were close. That would be a memorable event, because most of them feel VERY heavy with no battery assist-at least mine does!
- The happy e-bike riders on our charter were using them as an equalizer-for keeping up with their spouses, others in their group, sons (my case), etc. I'd say without exception, any of them could finish the ride without big issues on a regular road bike. They were in shape and prepared. They did NOT use the e-bike to avoid being prepared.
- I am delighted with my setup as a stress reducer, causing me to not worry so much about a hilly day, headwinds etc. I do NOT use the power to ride faster or power up hills to the chagrin of the other riders. And to manage battery life.
- I expect my e-bike to extend my RAGBRAI riding career by 10 years. We shall see...smile...
- Be aware that e-bikes are VERY SLOW to re-charge, usually taking most of the night to fully recharge a low battery. The CVC charter nicely provides all-night power via a generator if there is not local power available. The power demands are not high, just slow.



Recommendation: It depends...if you have reasons to need a little boost or safety factor to participate in RAGBRAI, it is worth considering e-bikes. I believe we will see many more in the future. There are major decisions to be made because there are so many choices out there for very different purposes and price points-just like all bicycles. To repeat, an e-bike is NOT a way to avoid being fit and prepared for the rigors of the RAGBRAI Adventure!

Any response, corrections, or alternate perspectives to what I've written here is most welcome and appreciated.

Good Luck and go get those miles this spring,
Bob Recker bobr@ridecvc.org



DATES TO REMEMBER



**January
27**

**Ragbrai Route Announcement Party
and the Iowa Bike Expo, Des Moines**

**January-
March**

**Indoor Spin,
6pm, Wednesdays at the SportsPlex**

**February
16-17**

**Cedar Valley Winterfest,
George Wyth Memorial State Park**

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On the CVC Scene

Cedar Valley Winterfest

Mark your calendars for February 16 and 17 for Cedar Valley Winterfest at George Wyth Memorial State Park. Our friends at CVAST will be hosting a guided night snowshoe hike on Friday night followed by hot drinks and snacks. Saturday morning they will host the Iowa Game Snowshoe and Fatbike Championships! For more information click [here](#).



CVC President, Troy Buzynski presents I HOPE President Tara Sundt with a \$1,830 check.

I HOPE stands for Iowans Helping Others Participate Everyday. Learn more [here](#).

Global Fat Bike Day was December 2, 2023



Freewheeling with Nick

Freewheeling describes a relaxed or casual state, or when we let off the pedal.

In this segment, I have a freewheeling conversation with board members so everyone can get to know the person beyond their kilowatt output, drafting tendencies and social habits. Happy reading, Nick Taiber

Did you learn on training wheels or learn the hard way?

I did not have training wheels. I didn't even have a bike. I rode other peoples bikes they had around. I remember the first time trying to ride a neighbor kid's bike, when I was 4 or 5 years old. I would walk up a street that had a hill and ride down the hill with my feet off of the pedals. When I got going too fast, I would steer into the grass to slow down. No helmet, no adult supervision.

Describe your riding as a kid...

I lived in a small town and commuted mostly. Biking would get me to my friends houses and help me do my paper route. I had a couple friends who lived in the country. Their parents owned the corner store in town. In the summer, they would come into town with their parents to hang out and ride around. One time we rode 3 miles to their house in the country. It seemed like a heroic feat as a 4th grader.

Every person has a biking gap in their life. Describe your gap, why it happened.

When I was Active Duty in the Army, I lived in the barracks and didn't have anywhere to store a bike. I bought a unicycle but I never got good at it.

How did you re-discover your love for cycling?

I got orders to go to Korea halfway through my 2-year deployment. I was talking to another soldier who had this old Huffy. He was on his way back to the states and asked me if I wanted it. The bike was terrible, it sat outside and was never cared for. I rode those wobbly wheels all over that country.

How has your relationship with bikes changed over your life?

Bikes used to get me where I wanted to go. While I still use bike as a means of transportation, most of the time, I am just out there grinding out the miles.

What is your biking dream (your Everest moment or beach cruising moment)?

I would really like to do an extended bike packing trip. Maybe a week long. I would carry everything I needed and camp every night. I would like it to be challenging, not too relaxing. Somewhere far away would be cool but somewhere relatively local would be just as good. It is easy for us to take for granted all the beautiful country roads we have all around us.

What are your big wishes for biking infrastructure in the Cedar Valley?

I am not a big fan of bike lanes. I like to ride in the regular "vehicle" lanes. I am not a fan of reducing traffic lanes to put in bike lanes. I wouldn't like to see a sparsely used bike lane while the traffic lane is bumper to bumper. It would work best if we could just share the traffic lane, which is rarely a problem for me.

If the United States had a one-bike policy, what bike would you choose and why?

My gravel bike would allow me to be fairly efficient on the pavement but still be able to venture off on gravel. Exploration and adventure is what I'm looking for.

And finally, your favorite biking beverage?

Toppling Goliath IPA



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Troy Buzynski

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