

EARTH RIDERS

Mountain Bike Club



Newsletter for Kansas City and Midwest Mountain Bicyclists * Volume 7, Issue 6 * November, 2004



The More Things Change... Introducing the New Officers

Mike Rago

Hello everyone. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Mike Rago and I'm the new club president. I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself, thank Sean for the work he has done, and talk about the officers and our plans for the future.

I've been mountain biking for somewhere around 13 or 14 years now. During this time I have worked my way up and have plateaued at what I like to think of as a solid 'advanced intermediate'. While others extol the virtues of singlespeeds and debate the benefits of 29ers, I have embraced technology and bought into the full suspension movement. Next time you see me, just ask and I will bore you for hours about things like stable platform shocks and four bar suspension designs. I ride a Turner 5-Spot that I got this year and I love to take it out to technical rock gardens to play. I rarely ride on anything but dirt and there is usually a direct correlation between my fitness level and the amount of rain we've been getting. I have been involved with EarthRiders for six years or more, starting out as the newsletter editor, recently vice president working with Sean, and now president.

Before I talk about the club and our plans for the future, I would like to take the time to thank Sean Cairns

for the fantastic job he has done with the EarthRiders over the past two years. Sean has lifted the club to new heights and his list of accomplishments is impressive. It was Sean who brought the club into the 21st century by creating our website and securing both earthriders.org and earthriders.com. He is responsible for our online membership, the revamped membership database, and is the one who sends out our membership cards. Sean designed our current logo; and he was the one who designed the shirts and hats that bear that logo. MTB101 was also Sean's; he designed the class, scheduled it, and taught it. While he was president, he also helped create ERTA, was involved in the creation of the Earn Your Dirt program, and has worked (and continues to work) with Johnson County Parks & Rec to secure lands for us to ride on. Sean has built a solid foundation for this club to grow and thrive on. And he's one damn fine rider to boot! Thanks Sean for all you have done for the club and the KC mountain bike community.

Now that Sean has moved on, it is my turn to further grow the club and unite the mountain bike community. Fortunately, I'll have the help of some damn fine individuals who make up the officers. Michael Gier is

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Next EarthRiders Meeting

No meeting in December
Happy Holidays!

January T.B.D.

Check the website at www.earthriders.com for updates. Meeting held on the third Wednesday.

February Chili Cookoff
and urban assault.
Begin preparing your recipes now!

New Officers

(Continued from page 1)

staying on board to continue his stellar work on the newsletter and Gary Baack has also agreed to stick around as treasurer. Both Gary and Michael are a wealth of knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm. New to the 'team' this year are Todd Posson, Karen Owens, Nate King, and Ryan Roemmich. Todd is our secretary and ERTA liaison; Karen is our ambassador; Nate is the new MMBP director and Ryan has stepped up and taken over as webmaster. Have you seen our 'new' website? Great Job, Ryan! All bring some great new ideas and a fresh enthusiasm to the club and I'm excited about working with them. In addition to the

officers, Sean has agreed to stick around for "special projects" and Max Mason is going to continue to welcome new members. Thanks Sean and Max for staying involved and helping with your expertise.

Thanks to the foundation Sean has laid, the officers and I are free to focus on what we feel this club is all about: getting together, growing the sport, and riding. To that end, we are going to lock ourselves away over the winter and work on a meeting & ride schedule for next year that will provide ample opportunity for more of us to gather, meet new people and ride together! In addition, we want to help support the good people at ERTA, who are working tirelessly to get us access to more land to build trails on. At our last officer meeting, we agreed that going forward, we will donate

\$5.00 from each membership fee to ERTA to help them in the grand quest for tasty singletrack.

I look forward to seeing everyone out in the woods working on trail and riding over the winter and next year as the riding season kicks into gear. I'm excited about another year of bringing mountain bikers together, doing what we love, and growing our sport. Part of the success of our club and growing our sport lies in your hands. I hope we can count on everyone to pitch in and help make our future social gatherings a success by helping lead rides and host meetings. Kansas City has a fantastic mountain biking scene that I feel fortunate to be a part of and I think that together we can make it even better!

Buy Groceries

Donate to ERTA

Take care of both at the same time.

If you're a Price Chopper "Chopper Shopper" member, 1% of every purchase you make can be automatically donated to the Earth Riders Trail Association. ERTA will use the money to get you really cool stuff, like signs and trail maps and tools to make trail building easier and posters to remind you when to show up.

Just go to www.mypricechopper.com to register your Price Chopper Shopper card for the Xtra Helping program. If you have any trouble, E-mail your last name and card number to ecwx97@umkc.edu.

By all means, if you have any friends, family or co-workers that are not signed up for another organization, please get them to sign up for ERTA. This is a great way to bring money in for mountain biking without mountain bikers having to spend any more money.

The organization is located in Leawood, KS. It is registered as a community service organization. The full name is Earth Riders Trails Association.

Thanks in advance for your help and support!! And a BIG thanks to Price Chopper for offering this program!!

- Elizabeth Carter, ERTA Treasurer

New EarthRiders Website



Ryan Roemmich

Hello, I'm the new webmaster for www.earthriders.com. We've given the site a new look, and I'm hoping to make the site a resource for local MTB news — a place people can visit to find out about upcoming trail work, rides, and EarthRiders meetings. If you have an upcoming group ride and you want to get the word out, let me (or any ER officer) know. We are currently updating the trail database, and could use some help writing descriptions for our local trails. Let me know if you can write a description for a trail not on the site, or if you have an update for a trail that's already listed.

EarthRiders Membership Application

Support local mountain biking, trail maintenance, and land access efforts. Return this application with a check in the amount of **\$25.00** individual or **\$30.00** family, made payable to **EarthRiders**, for annual dues to: *EarthRiders* Membership, P.O. Box 14414, Lenexa, KS 66285.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Telephone: (____) ____ - _____

EarthRiders membership information is not sold to third parties.
For more information about membership, see
www.earthriders.com or E-mail membership@earthriders.org.



Officers

Mike Rago
President
816-795-7360
mrago@att.com

Karen Owens
Ambassador Coordinator
816-804-5679
neraksnewo@yahoo.com

Gary Baack
Treasurer
913-254-9793
gbaack@yahoo.com

Ryan Roemmich
Webmaster
913-481-5009
phineas@gibbage.com

Todd Posson
Secretary
816-686-3456
toddp@landplan-pa.com

Nate King
MMBP Director
816-797-1877
nateking@kc.rr.com

Sean Cairns
Special Projects
913-894-2396
seancairo@earthriders.org

Ken Miner
Kansas IMBA Representative
913-894-4276
kminer@minertech.com

Michael Gier
Newsletter Editor
816-436-3754
mgier@kc.rr.com

Brian Robinson
Missouri IMBA Representative
816-547-0128
brianjrobinson@hotmail.com

Ride Schedule

Every Tuesday: Taco Tuesday at the Blue River Parkway Trails. Meet at Good Time Charlie's (formerly Pat Murphy's), 130th and Holmes. Rides start at irregular times after work, generally several groups of varying abilities.

Every Wednesday: Hump Day at Kill Creek. Leaves from the Shelter 1 parking lot 6-6:30 pm most Wednesdays. Leader: Joe Folse ("little blue truck, Giant red bike")

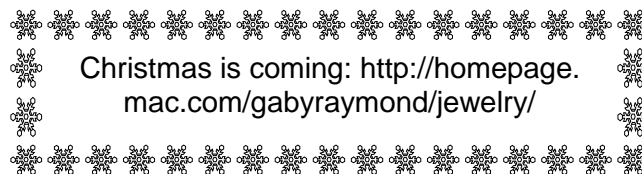
1st Ride: Wednesday, Dec. 1st, 6:00pm, Kill Creek
Nate King — It's a new month - let's ride. Beginning Dec. 1 (we were rained out in November), join EarthRiders and the Midwest Mountain Bike Patrol for the monthly 1st Ride. For December 1 we'll be at Kill Creek Park, south of Desoto, KS, for the HumpDay ride. Be ready to ride at 6:00pm so we can be done before the park closes (8:00pm through the winter months). Be sure to bring lights, and of course your helmet. Come one, come all — medium to slow pace. Fast people can come too, and we can split into different groups if we want to. No one will be dropped! It's all about enjoying the ride, the trail, and being outside, riding with friends. Come on out.

Planning for the future, we're going to make the 1st of the Month Ride a permanent fixture in the area scene. Times and locations will vary. Check future newsletters or earthriders.com for up-to-date ride schedules. Some months the 1st will fall on a Tuesday, so Taco Tuesday will be the scene. Other months, this December for example, the 1st is a Wednesday - we'll be at Kill Creek for the HumpDay ride. When the 1st falls on a weekend or a holiday we can road trip to Crowder, Perry, Manhattan, etc. - variety is the spice of life! Check out new trails, ride with some new folks, and generally broaden your riding horizons.

So mark your calendars for a ride on the first of the month, every month. More details as the months roll by. See you on the trails.

Check www.earthriders.com for info, directions to the trailhead, or any cancellations due to weather.

Rides are subject to weather and leader availability. Check the Mid-America MTB E-mail list for the latest updates (sign up at www.earthriders.com).



Christmas is coming: [http://homepage.
mac.com/gabyraymond/jewelry/](http://homepage.mac.com/gabyraymond/jewelry/)

Winter Training

The TriKC Club is holding a 12-week Spin Class beginning January 11th, 2005 at KU Med Center. The "Big Spin" is led by Christopher Hess, a USA Cycling Expert Coach. Cost is as low as \$60, though you must also be a TriKC member. More info at www.trikc.org.

EarthRiders October Meeting

The EarthRiders October monthly meeting, held at the Westport Flea Market, was a busy affair. In case you missed it, here are a few of the highlights:

* Trail maintenance update: www.earnyourdirt.com has all the info on what's happening, and when and where. There's also a local phone # that will contain the most current updates on trail maintenance workdays (including cancellations). It's 816-377-3037.

* Ozark trails: There's some new trails going in at the Ozarks. Official trail work is scheduled to start in February. ERTA has received a sizable grant to go towards equipment for building these trails. Once the trails are finished, all of the equipment purchased will stay with ERTA so we get the benefit of them from here on out. The catch is that we have to put in 3,000 hours working on the trails in

order to qualify for the grant. Travel time does count, so a 4-hour work day turns into an 8-hour credit toward the grant.

* New Trails: In addition to shoring up a few stretches of existing trail, the majority of this season's trail work will be done building new trails. All totaled, there's going to be over 100 miles of new trail put in or started this winter.

* Awards: Sean Cairns was given a pretty cool-looking bike (of the mantel variety) for all of the work he's put in for EarthRiders over the past few years. The officers and members of the EarthRiders thank him wholeheartedly for his service.

* Food stamps (coupons really): Price Chopper coupon books are available. It's basically a no-cost way to give \$4 to ERTA - the books cost \$5, \$4 of which goes back to ERTA,

and the next time you spend \$50 at Price Chopper/HyVee you get \$5 off. Also, see the Chopper Shopper card promotion on page 2. The money that's raised from both of these will be going into the purchase of signs for area trails. Which leads into...

* Signs and correct trail maps: When you know the trails you're riding, you don't even think of there not being any signs on the trails. We're in a situation at some local trails, though, where we can't build any new trails until everything that is there is properly marked. This serves two purposes. First, it helps newcomers to the sport and area find their way around and make sure they're on trails that match their ability. Second, it helps rescue personnel if there's ever a problem and they need to get someone off of the trail network.

Travis Swicegood contributed information for this article.

Shawnee Mission Park Upgrades

Are the Shawnee Mission Park mountain bike trails on your list of favorites? Did you learn to ride at Shawnee Mission Park? If so, do you wish the trails had:

- Fewer intersections?
- More miles of trail?
- Faster drying times?
- Fewer ruts?
- Better signage and maps?

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District has updated its Master Plan for Shawnee Mission Park, which includes the improvement and expansion of the mountain bike trails system. EarthRiders Mountain Bike Club has been asked to coordinate the improvement and expansion efforts of some of the oldest original mountain bike trails in the Kansas City area.

Saturday, November 13th, a public meeting held by the Johnson County Parks & Recreation Department and an Earn Your Dirt trailwork day kicked off this ambitious plan.

Stage 1 of the improvement is open and rideable, though it still needs some cleanup and some more erosion control on the closed trail. With a few minor adjustments,

the new trail will be outstanding.

Highlights of the day:

- Donuts
- ERTA's new DR mower.
- A Brian Robinson signature series rockwall.
- Brian Prosser's Troy Built roto-tiller, circa 1979.
- The full support and backing of JCP&RD
- Coverage of the event in the *Kansas City Star's* "Shawnee & Lenexa News"
- 4 or 5 first time trail builders
- Praise from 30 members of The Kansas City Outdoor Club taking the first trip on our trail.

Thanks to all trailworkers for all your hard work. Much more work lies ahead. Stay tuned.

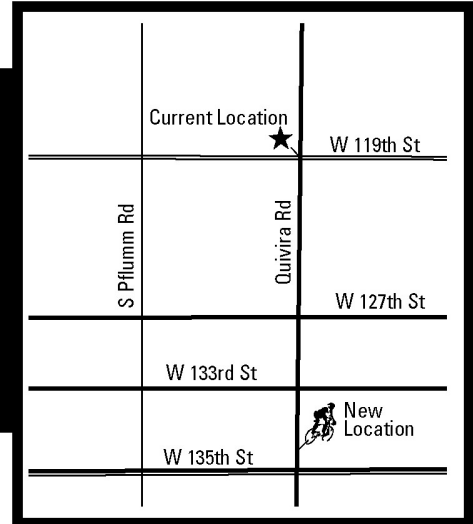


We're expanding to meet your needs!

As Kansas City's premier cycling store we are constantly looking at ways to improve and expand our product and service offerings. Our latest plan will take us to a whole new level... and location.

We'll be at a new location in March 2005!

We have broken ground on a brand new 10,000 sq. foot facility located at the northeast corner of 135th and Quivira next to Price Chopper. Our new location will have a private fitting room, performance testing, and more dressing rooms. Plus we'll have expanded parking, access to the bike trails and better test-ride areas.



Current Location

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New Location

Corner of 135th and Quivira St.
Overland Park, KS 66213

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Upcoming Earn Your Dirt Workdays

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- December 11/12 -
Stadium
- January 8/9 -
Banner Park
- January 22/23 -
Blue River Parkway
- January 29/30 -
Landahl

Check out www.earnyourdirt.com for details.

Workday updates and cancellation hotline:

816-377-3037

Greater Kansas City Bicycle Federation

The GKCBF is dedicated to supporting area bicycle organizations and local governments as they work towards improving bicycling conditions throughout the Kansas City region. Its board of directors includes leaders of transportation planning and advocacy groups, bicycle shop owners, ride organizers, sports/fitness cyclists and commuters.

The GKCBF works for a better cycling community. Example: the Lone Elm Rd. interchange over I-35 in Olathe was being redesigned; for bicycle travel the design included a wide multi-use path. The GKCBF considers a multi-use path inadequate for bicycle travel and encourages construction of on-road bicycle lanes (statistics that indicate that multi-use bike paths are less safe can be found in John Forester's book: *Effective Cycling*). The efforts of the GKCBF convinced Olathe to submit a proposal to KDOT that includes on-road bicycle lanes.

The GKCBF is looking for empathetic contacts in all local city governments to keep informed when cycling issues come up, and wants to work with the local clubs as partners to accomplish its goals. See www.kcbikefed.org (under construction, but the email address works). *Laurie Chipman, Board Member, Greater Kansas City Bicycle Federation and Missouri Bicycle Federation*

Bonktoberfest 2004

The annual trip to the Mark Twain National Forest lives up to its hype

Readers' Rides

Pete Barth

Another Bonktoberfest has come and gone. A crazy mix of driving, riding, and partying. Not necessarily in that order.

Early Friday morning. Ryan Roemmich, Ryan Turner, Tim Greene, Michael (I did NOT bring the cannonball) Gier, Joe Folse, and myself in a six-bike, three-car convoy. The plan is to gather at a strip mall and head out of town before rush hour. Joe and I are the first to the starting line, and get a kick watching the steadily increasing flow of zombies show up for their morning Starbucks fix. Gotta love them Johnson Countians, blowing \$4 worth of gas leaving the Hummer idling while they score their double-shot latte. Joe's a straight-edge kinda guy, and me, I have my personal thermos of home-grown.

The others arrive, score their fixes, and we're off. Aside from a slight delay in the triangle, we escape unscathed. After a drizzly straight-through run to Columbia, we stop for food, fuel, and ballast unloading. Across from the gas station there's a yard sale full of tempting campground accessories - worn-out couches, recliners, etc - but the cars are already packed and we resist. Blast off again, successfully navigating Jefferson City's tricky exit ramps, stop again in Rolla. By now it's around 11:00, and we stop for lunch at a 'real' restaurant before kissing civilization goodbye.

Off again and we work our way through the back roads and back-water towns and arrive at the Berryman campground. It's early enough that we pretty much have our pick of the campsites. Excellent...our plan is working perfectly. And although it's very damp and humid, it's not raining. We pitch tents, dive back in the cars - ugh - and drive on toward Council Bluffs lake.

On the way to Council Bluffs we hit our first traffic snag; the main drag through Potosi is shut down for the Homecoming parade. But after a slight detour and a few involuntary minutes of parade watching we're back on track. Shortly af-

ter arriving at Council Bluffs, Dave Smith and Mike Rago show up - fancy meeting them here! We're basically ready to roll, and with their blessing we head out. Despite some dire predictions that the trail might be too wet, it turns out to be perfect, and we all enjoy a fantastic ride through the Ozarks' full-on fall colors.

By the time we get back to camp it's dark and busy, the campground starting to fill up with tents and bikes. St. Louis has arrived, right across from a non-cycling group in a fifth-wheel. Hmm...this could be bad. We unload the rest of our gear and settle in to the post-ride camping vibe. An older gentleman in a camper right next to us comes over, dressed in slacks and a dress shirt. Uh oh...another innocent victim, oblivious to the mayhem about to be unleashed, but it turns out to be Pete, another biker from St. Louis. Cool. Meanwhile, the rest of the St. Louis crew starts winding up the party machine, with fire ablaze and fireworks aplenty.

After eating dinner, we head over to check out what the St. Louis crowd is up to. Big fire, lots of craziness, burnt bike sacrifice. Dang... feel bad for the fifth-wheelers who had no fore-warning of the tornado headed their way.

A few more KC folk arrive, and we pretty much hang out by our own campfire, mostly ignoring and being ignored by the rowdies. Eventually things settle down and it's time to konk. Big day tomorrow.

Sometime after dawn I pop and slowly get up and around. No idea what time it is but it really doesn't matter - on camping time there's no need to know. Hungry? Eat. Tired? Sleep. Want to ride? Ride.

It's a leisurely start to the day. After some oatmeal and a couple batches of french press, yeah, maybe it's about time to start thinking about getting ready to ride. A chuck wagon shuttle is arranged, people load grub and water into the truck, and it's off. Only proper that we wait for

them to return before heading out. A couple more pulls on the french press, sit around the morning campfire, savoring the smell of the wood, the cool dampness of the morning, and the quiet stillness of the campground. Folks start checking their bikes over, filling camelbacks, and tool around the campground.

The shuttle crew returns safely, preps, and after a quick group photo, we're off. As is often the case, everyone's itching to ride and the initial pace is fast, but after a mile or so the group splits into a couple groups. I'm not in any particular hurry and hang with the slow pack - I'm just wanting to enjoy the day and enjoy the ride.



Joe Folse, Ryan Roemmich, and your editor gear up and fuel up a long day.

The trail's in great condition. Not sure how much rain fell during the week but the high amount of sand and gravel in the soil here helps it drain water well. It's a bit more loose and sketchy than home, but not bad and everyone's managing.

Joe's on the hunt for three geo-caches which are along the trail. He's having a hard time trying to watch the GPS on the trail at the same time. To make things more difficult, the trail winds around and loops back on itself so much that it's hard to tell if we're still closing in on it or if we've gone past.

We ride for a few hours, and the constant climb-and-descend topography of the Berryman is starting to take its toll. It's clear folks are getting tired and hungry because the breaks come more frequently



Ryan Turner prepares to demonstrate his wheelie-drop technique. These are his photos.

and the chatter evolves toward "how close are we to Brazil Creek?" Surely it's right over the next hill or around the next corner but like a mirage it never materializes. After what seems like hours and many miles we arrive at the steep descent into Brazil Creek and our awaiting oasis.

The fast boys are there. Maybe we're not so far behind after all. Oh well, no matter. Grab chow and feast - delicious! We eat and rest and relish in and recover from the first 15 miles' worth of whoop-ass that the Berryman's applied. No major mechanicals or wrecks so far. That'll soon change.

When we finally break camp and continue, nobody's looking forward to the first climb out of the campground. How quickly the aches and pains return - the pack splinters almost immediately. Everyone's still hanging, though, and we regroup and continue - there are still many miles to go.

According to our maps the trail is around 20 miles long, but as we near the 20-mile mark it's clear we're nowhere near the end, and that realization triggers a few matter-over-mind incidents. Tim suffers a massive leg cramp, and Jeff Tromans completely misjudges a log crossing, endo's, and gets his bell rung loud and clear. After a few minutes his head clears enough to continue and we forge onward, feverishly comparing odometers to maps and cursing every downhill at this point, because we know we'll have to gain it all back.

After a number of "this must be the last hills," we finally reach the end. Everyone's tired and glad it's over but at the same time we're all aglow with the satisfying afterburn of an epic ride. Riding back into the campsite I see Alan Penny's ride catcher and thank it for the winner it delivered us today.

The campground is now even more crowded and busy than last night. More St. Louis folks have arrived, and it's clear that last night's activities were merely a warm-up for tonight. I notice that the fifth-wheelers have

wisely left camp. No idea if that was by plan or by choice, but I'm sure that after last night's events their opinion of mountain bikers wasn't improved...

For the most part the KC crew is more interested in relaxing around the campfire, but it's hard to avoid being curiously drawn to the St. Louis ruckus in a car-crash sort of way and we eventually head over to check out the action.

And it's in full-force. A raging fire, stoked by piles of assorted crap. Fireworks. The fire jump is up and running. Massive quantities being consumed. To me it's Frat Boys on Acid - this weekend seems like nothing but an excuse to let loose their repressed pyromania and whip themselves into a drunken frenzy. As if the riding is secondary to the party. But I notice that we're not the only rubberneckers - it's only about 8-10 guys who are the main hooligans; everyone else is really just watching. This is bad. It's a miracle nobody's been hurt. When they start throwing aerosol cans into the fire we decide we've had enough. We head back to camp, hang out a little more, and then drift off to bed. After another hour or so, the hooligans start to succumb to the alcohol and slowly the riot winds down.

Pop again Sunday morning, and another slow start - nobody's in a big hurry

to see the weekend end. Slowly we break camp and load the cars. A few KC folk are going to ride to Council Bluffs; the only ride I'll be seeing today is 5 hours in the cage. Our first step toward re-entering civilization is breakfast at a greasy spoon in Steelville. But when we stop for a break in Columbia, it's a full-on immersion. The gas station is jammed with cars and people. We pretty much stand around and gawk at the swarm, not unlike the night before - curiously drawn to it in a car-crash sort of way. Ugh - is it too late to turn back? We manage to escape and set sail westward. Miles glide by unremarkably and soon we're home again.

So in America when the sun goes down and I sit in traffic with the rest of the cagers scurrying home to find out who'll be voted off the next island, and who wins the big game, and I think about the rides and the fires and the talk and the stars will be out tonight and how the darkness reveals the light of the Milky Way if you only decide to look for it, and the



Tim Greene watches as Jeff Tromans displays his form — form that will soon plant him in the dirt with abrasions on his arm and leg, and Doug Ronk's tire track on his back.

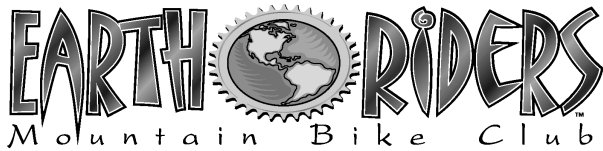
good with the bad and how somehow it's right that that's how it works, that there's some unknown galactic check and balance at work, and that the ride catcher works its magic on us all in myriad ways in myriad rides, I think of the Berryman, I even think of the Berryman and the trip that never ends, I think of the Berryman.

(slight apologies to Jack Kerouac)

Without Whom Continued...

Good trails don't build themselves. The good folks at right were missed on last month's listing of trailworkers for the 2003-2004 season. Your editor apologizes unreservedly and offers a hearty thanks.

Matthew Staub
Ben Wolkenfeld



P.O. Box 14414
Lenexa, KS 66285

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St Joseph, MO 64506-2208

River Market Cyclery

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Kansas City, MO 64106-1001

Smithville Spokes

(816) 532-8150
spokes@LDS.net
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Smithville, MO 64089

Summit Bikes

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Lee's Summit, MO 64086

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