

# The P.O.R.C. Press



Fall 2000  
Issue 1

See the color version of  
this newsletter at  
[www.porc.org](http://www.porc.org)

## Inside this Issue

- **Letter from the Prez**  
*– Welcome to the club!*
- **What the @#\$\$% just bit me?**  
*Say hello to the deer fly!*
- **News stories from other sources.**  
*MTB the best exercise?*
- **Bad Day on the Trail**  
*We've all had at least one.*
- **Banana Spiders**  
*We've all kissed at least one!*
- **Riding the Night Train**  
*Not a race for the faint at heart.*

## The Pensacola Off-Road Cyclists (PORC) Initiate Trail Improvements & Group Rides

Six months since the formation of Pensacola Off-Road Cyclists and we've got nearly 45 primary members, that many more family members and 2 businesses on board. Our main goal of monthly trail maintenance has been met – we've logged over 260 hours improving the riding at UWF. With over 15 miles of trails to think about, it's not always easy to see the results of our labor. Slowly but surely we'll get the trails where we want them. Remember that you don't need to be a club member to join us on the trail maintenance days. Most of our other events are open to everyone as well, so if you are thinking of becoming a member, you want to meet other cyclists or would just like to contribute something to the local riding, pick a date from our calendar and come on out.

Something that we could use more of is feedback. We don't hear much from our members, or other cyclists in the community for that matter. Scott G. does a great job making it easy to contact us through the website. While the site gets a LOT of hits, we get very little input.

Comments and suggestions, good, bad or indifferent, would be appreciated. We'd like more input on what you want out of the club, or what direction you think we should be heading. Keep that in mind the next time you're on the website or see one of us on the trail. Also, if you would like to play a more active role in the club, please let us know. We could especially use help with organizing and leading local group rides.

FYI: The PORC fiscal year ends on March 31. As we are now into the second half of our year, new memberships are 50% until that date. Renewals will be the full price after April 1, 2001. The PORC Social will be in the first half of the year again for those folks support the club throughout the whole year.

Hope to see you on the trail!  
*Ed Sarfert, President of PORC*



Trail Maintenance at the "Trials"

# What the @#\$\$% just bit me? Ed Sarfert

Those persistent flies that seem to have no problem keeping up with you on your bike are most likely yellow flies. Horse flies, deer flies and the true "yellow fly" are all different species, but are in the same family, *Tabanidae*. It's our high

number of yellow flies that can make a summer ride at UWF an adventure.

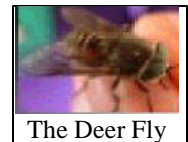
Just like with mosquitoes, it's the female that's responsible for inflicting that painful bite on you. They are present from March through November, although peak numbers generally occur for most species from May through June. Some species go through a second

peak from August through September.

These crafty buggers lie in wait in the shady areas under bushes and trees for a meal to go by. Sight is the main way they find a target, but carbon dioxide and odor also play a role. Moving objects, especially if dark colored, are most prone to attack. They tend to avoid large, open sunny areas, preferring the edges of forests, especially near the bayou and creeks. Attacks occur during daylight hours with a peak beginning at sunrise and lasting three hours. A second peak is two hours before sunset and ends shortly after. Attacks are lower on overcast days or at temperatures below and above 90 degrees. However, depending on conditions, you may encounter flies any time of the day.

Fighting them off can be a challenge. Many times I've given one a good slap and watched it tumble to the ground, only to shake it off, take flight again, and come in for another run. Repellents containing diethyltoluamide (DEET), citronella, or geraniol are somewhat effective. Permethrin-containing products labelled for application only on clothing may be effective in repelling and even killing these guys. Many of these clothing-application-only products are sold as tick repellents and are not really designed for the fabrics used in most cycling clothing.

If you want to totally avoid biting flies, good luck. They are unreported only in Hawaii, Greenland, and Iceland.



## MTB Related Articles from Other News Sources

### ABC News Rates Mountain Biking Best "Fun" Exercise

*Mountain biking uses tons of energy and tons of muscles and takes a ton of balls, and you aren't even aware of what it's doing for your body. A 180-pound guy mountain-biking for an hour burns almost 700 calories. Mountain biking has a fitness payoff even when you have no mountain handy. Hit the flat road. Riding a mountain bike takes about a third more effort than riding a road bike, largely because of the increased rolling resistance from the fatter tires and the increased weight of the bike. So if your time is limited and you have a choice of bikes, it's always better to choose the mountain bike, even if you'll be riding it on the road. Riding 12 miles on fat tires is the equivalent of doing 15 on the skinny rubber.*

<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/living/menshealth/menshealth.html>

### USA Today – Mountain Bikers Most Fit

(Mar 08, 1999 05:01 PM)

*Which sport produces the toughest adventure athletes? Results from the recently completed Xterra off-road triathlon and the 300-mile Eco-Challenge expedition race indicate mountain bikers rule. On Oct. 11, 1998, former mountain bike world champion Ned Overend, 43, won the swim-bike-run Xterra on the island of Maui, defeating world-class triathletes such as Mike Pigg and Scott Tinley. "Mountain biking is a hard sport," Overend says. "It works the legs, upper body, back and abdominals. Riding over different terrain prepares you for a variety of sports." Overend, Xterra runner-up in 1997 and third in '96, says he must work harder on his ocean-swimming technique because his rivals will be sharpening their bike-handling. "Most triathletes are capable mountain-bike climbers," says the captain of the Mountain Dew/Specialized pro team, "but they need to learn how to maintain traction on loose and slippery surfaces. Downhill, they must have confidence to stay off the brakes on fast and steep sections." Overend isn't sitting on his laurels -- or his bike. The Durango, Colo., resident is now training for the upcoming Nordic ski racing season.*

<http://www.usatoday.com/sports/other/extreme/ruib017.htm>

# What a Wonderful Freak'n Day

By Ricky Harper

I woke up this morning pumped to go for a ride. This was the first day in a long time that I woke up before my alarm ready to ride. I guess it all started the night before after my first P.O.R.C. meeting.

I came home really excited about biking again, ready to tear up some trails and have some fun. To add to my high I got my grades back for my spring semester of school, to find out that I in fact did pass College Algebra (much to my surprise). It seemed as if there was nothing to bring me down.

Well back to the morning of the ride... Like I said I got up ready to ride, checked my e-mail, ate a bowl of cereal, and lubed up my chain ready to hit the *Trials* trail. I got to the trailhead at about 11:00am; it was warming up, but it was still good riding weather. I dropped into the trail taking the corners at faster than normal speeds (for me at least), cleaned sections I couldn't have before, and even picked up some trail trash. Not once did I feel like the trail was kicking my ass; it was a wonderful day for a ride.

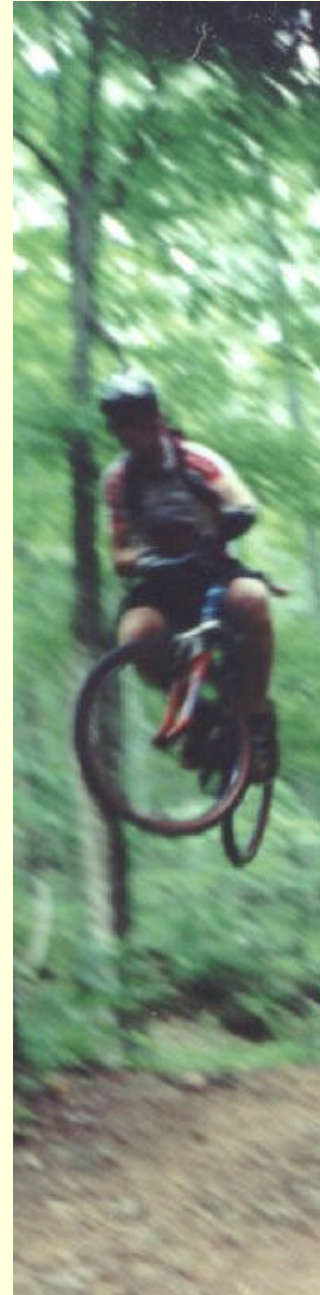
After totally ripping up the trail I still had some steam left and decided to ride a bit more. I rode through campus and down to the parking lot near the nature trail. I was still feeling good so I went on to the rock trail...

I dropped into the gully heading from the parking lot to the rock trail. Despite the erosion, I floated gently down the slope. Just as my momentum began to fail me, I started to crank up the sandy, loose upslope on the other side. It was kinda' tough at first with my back

tire slipping. I thought for a moment that I would actually clear this section. But to my surprise I heard the familiar clanking and grinding of chain suck, followed by an abrupt stop to my cranking.

So, I thought, "Big deal, I didn't make it..." How wrong could I be. As I looked down at my front derailleur all was fine and intact. As my eyes scanned toward the rear of the drive train, the look of horror came across my face. My pretty, sexy, matte black, XTR Rapid Rise derailleur was now inverted on my bike..."AHHHHHHH!...Ok Calm down and relax.", I told myself. I reached down and gently tried to push my derailleur back into place. I guess this was an act of shock and denial, like a soldier in combat might try to push his insides back in his gut after being hit. To my disappointment reality hit and the derailleur did not budge. I examined it closer only to find a severed piece of the derailleur and jagged edges. My perfect day was coming to an end...

As I walked home I had hopes that maybe through some smooth talking with Shimano I could get this part warranted out, and everything started to brighten up. I even saw my dream car, a Chrysler PT cruiser, drive by on the walk home...Hmmm, maybe things will be ok....WELL MAYBE NOT. I got home and surfed on over to Shimano's website and was shocked once again not to find a toll free number or an e-mail address, just an old fashioned snail mail address. Looks like this might be a long painful ordeal to replace my derailleur, until then I guess it's back to the old STX collecting dust in the attic.



*Check out our numerous club photos at [www.porc.org](http://www.porc.org)*

# Riding the Night Train – Fontana, NC

by Dale Long

Saturday, August 26, 2000, was the date of the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Night Train race at Fontana Village, North Carolina. The race is a 12 hour race that starts at noon and ends at midnight. The format is a relay race with solo, duo, four and five person teams. Our team consisted of myself, and three other guys from South Carolina. The object of the race was to ride as many laps as possible during the 12 hour time period, with only one member of your team on the course at a time. They also timed your laps in the event that more than one team had the same number of laps in the end.

The race course is a 7.5 mile loop. The first 1.5 miles of which absolutely suck. Very steep, very soft, technical climbing. Lung butter galore. You know its steep when, you have to stop to rest, because you can't catch your breath while pushing. Kind of humbling. The remaining 6 miles consist of fast rolling hills with some intense butt on the rear tire technical descents, and a few short really steep climbs. This is not a course for the weak at heart. The advertisement for the race stated that there is no beginner class, because this course is not intended for beginners.

The race course consists of a couple of named sections including the lunchbox, which is a almost unrideable rock garden much like blood rock in Birmingham. The only difference is that it comes on the tail end of a brutal climb and by the time you get to it you can hardly breathe, let alone select a good line and finesse your way across rocks of varying height and spacing.

Another named section is First Blood. This is one of those descents where you climb up to it and at the top there are two signs with three red arrows pointing down and the word danger everywhere. Those signs always strike fear in the hearts of mortal men. So before you even see the decent you already have

that sinking uneasy feeling. Then once you go over the edge you are praising the fact that you adjusted your brake pads and that you went ahead and spent the extra cash on that "good" front suspension. Loose soft dirt, a 70 degree or better angle, hordes of rocks, and a couple of serious drop-offs make this decent a blast. By the time its over, you are so glad that it was only about a quarter mile long, because your arms and thighs are burning like Joan of Arc and you can barely feel your hands. But that's the way it should be, no?

The course finishes with a 1/2 mile of super fast bermed switchbacks. Awesome. You can absolutely fly through this section. At the bottom is a near vertical, loose, decent to the pavement and the finish area.

The race was a lot of fun, aside from the pain, or maybe because of the pain? No major mechanicals, no bloody crashes, just good, clean fun. How did we do, you ask? Our team turned out 10 laps at about 1 hour each, and came in 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> place, out of six 4 person teams. They were only awarding to 3<sup>rd</sup> place so we opted to drink beer in lieu of riding an 11<sup>th</sup> lap or attending the award ceremonies. The solo pro folks were turning 12 or more laps...wow!

golden color of their huge webs. I have always been told that these spiders do not usually bite, and if they do they are not venomous. However, this knowledge still lacks the ability to keep me from hoppin' and shaking like a flaming pop singer with a Pepsi can once I crash through one of their 10 foot webs across the trail.

These impressive spiders are found world-wide, but in the United States they are most common in the Southeast, especially Florida (we knew that!). The female spider is usually about 3 inches long (I swear I've seen some twice that size!) while the soon to be eaten male dwarfs the female, measuring only about one-half inch.

Although their numbers seem to be down during the Summer of 2000, the spider is commonly discussed among mountain bikers, and a true test of courage is to continue riding, even with the knowledge that one of these 2 pound spiders may be hitching a ride somewhere on your body. Their webs are some of the largest and strongest in the Arachnida class, usually measuring about 3 feet in diameter and strong enough to make a sick, crackling sound as one rides through the web. Interestingly, the spiders naturally prefer to build their webs across trails (we knew this too).

What about the bite? Well, fortunately these spiders are not venomous or aggressive. They rarely ever bite people, but if they do bite it's about the same as getting bitten by an ant or deer fly. So fear not, as it appears that these spiders may not be near as bad as they look. However, don't expect me to ignore them while they are clinging to my face, body, or helmet. I will likely dismount and shake them off as I have done in the past, and my hats off to those who have the nerve to keep hamming despite their size and weight.

## Banana Spiders – Intimidating but not so bad

by Scott Grubbs

If you have ridden any of the area trails in the summer time, you are surely familiarly with the Banana Spider, also

commonly known as the Golden Orb Weaver or the Golden Silk Spider (*Nephila clavipes*).



Female Banana Spider

So named because of the great strength of their silk and the

