

Heart-to-Heart



YOU ARE INVITED TO RELIVE THE PRO-CHALLENGE



Come on along and ride parts of the amazing Colorado Pro Challenge routes! Saturday June 25 - Tuesday June 28 (Friday lodging can be arranged for out of state riders). This 4 day tour will start with a moderate climb to get your oxygen levels up. We will go from Granby (gateway to Estes Park and Grand Lake) over Willow Creek Pass where the re-introduction of moose started in Colorado. From that ride, we will head on over to Steamboat Springs for 3 days (fixed base) of incomparable riding in one of the most magnificent mountain and sports areas in our state. We welcome our out-of-state riders! The tour leader will work with these riders to ensure that there is a van or carpool to transport them from Denver to the ride start, to Steamboat and either back to Denver or our invitation is to set up your own 3 days or more of riding in Summit County. This is home to our (in)famous Peak Pass Out event that HeartCycle led for many years. There is also plenty of riding in Summit County from moderate days in the Dillon/Frisco/Breckenridge to Passes: Loveland, Vail, Hoosier and Fremont or even the Copper Triangle. This will also be near prime time for Colorado wildflowers, which abound in an array of colors and fragrances that will delight the soul! Thank you for signing up by the end of February.

Looking forward to riding with you in June! **Diane Short (dianbike@eazy.net; 303-763-9874)**

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Steve Parker is awarded "Citizen of the Year" in January at Durango Rocks!, the Durango Chamber of Commerce's annual awards celebration held at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College. Parker was honored for founding the Leadership La Plata program, his work with Mercy Regional Medical Center's fundraising campaign, and his work as a member of the Fort Lewis College Foundation board of directors and many other accomplishments.

Oh the shame of being married to a MAMIL (that's a Middle Aged Man In Lycra)

- Jennie Price from Surrey is a cycling widow
- Her husband Richard's transformation began five years ago
- To get fit, he bought a road bike but soon became obsessed
- Now he spends hours in the saddle
- He has also spent a fortune on bikes, cycling clothing and gadgets

Standing in the sunshine, chatting with my friends in the park on a lovely Saturday morning, I could not have been more content.

Then I caught a glimpse of garish pink and DayGlo yellow. In an instant, my mood was shattered as a voice gasped: 'Dear God, Jennie. Is that your husband?'

And there he was, walking towards us in an outfit even Daniel Craig would struggle to pull off. In fact waddling would be a more apt description, as his cycling shoes made walking all but impossible. Yet, as I stood there mortified, Richard had a smile as broad as the Thames. For

my darling husband is a MAMIL, and had just returned from his ritual Saturday bike ride.

"What is a MAMIL?" I hear you cry. Well, as of last week you need look no further than the Oxford Dictionary to find out. It stands for a Middle Aged Man In Lycra. The definition is "a middle-aged man who is a very keen road cyclist, typically one who rides an expensive bike and wears the type of clothing associated with professional cyclists".

You will have seen them. Their numbers are swelling at an alarming rate, thanks to Tour de France winners Sir Bradley Wiggins and Chris Froome — men I would admire but for my husband's desire to emulate them.

As professional sportsmen, it is their job to dress in ridiculous clothes and spend endless hours in the saddle. But Richard's mid-life crisis is entirely his choice, and has turned me into a weekend widow rapidly turning grey as I watch money drain from our joint account more quickly than a Mark Cavendish sprint.



Cycle of despair: Jennie Price and her husband Richard with his £2,000 bike

For those fortunate enough to have normal husbands, allow me to elaborate. Being a MAMIL is about much more than squeezing your ample frame into tight lycra. This means boring dinner parties into silence with endless chat about bikes, spending long hours of family time out 'training', embarrassing your children walking around the house in bib shorts (think a mankini with padding around the nether regions) and paying eye-watering sums for obscure items of kit.

Richard's transformation into a MAMIL began five years ago when, to get fit, he bought a road bike. At first, he wore a sensible pair of shorts and a loose-fitting jersey. But then the buying began in earnest. New wheels (the old ones were slowing him down, apparently), a pair of cycling shoes, then another pair, then a 'quicker' helmet, then a personal trainer to help him shed the pounds and improve his 'power to weight ratio'.



Transformation: Richard's evolution into a MAMIL began five years ago when, to get fit, he bought a road bike

The clothes grew tighter, the cost escalated as he bought a cycling computer (a glorified satnav), which at £500 cost almost as much as his bike, and £250 sunglasses (they have gaps in the lenses to stop them steaming up — but if you sweat as much as Richard, they steam up anyway).

Now our weekends have been taken over by cycling. For MAMILs do not simply go on an hour-long run out. Rides regularly last three hours or more, while in the spring and summer they disappear for days to ride in 'sportive' events.

My husband, like so many of his friends, is a fanatic. He buys an average of one bike a year, each more expensive than the last. His first was a relatively meagre £800, that he sold two years on for £200.

Today, he has three: a day-to-day 'workhorse' (£1,000), a steel 'winter trainer' (£850) and a custom-built, red, white and blue road bike (£2,000 — his name is painted on the frame).

Then there are the clothes, gadgets and 'sports nutrition'. Tools, inner tubes, tires, wheels, hats, gloves (summer, autumn, winter and spring versions), shoes (waterproof for the winter, lightweight for the summer), overshoes, arm warmers, leg warmers, lights, pumps, pedals and saddles... the list is endless.

Every week another mysterious package arrives, with the latest waterproof jersey or a vintage cycling cap of a type once worn by one of his increasingly obscure heroes. At night in bed, he reads Cycling Weekly or autobiographies of surly-looking Belgians. He has also been agonizing over whether to shave his legs or not, although the only reason he can give me for doing so is 'the pros do it'.

Even when it rains we get no respite. Rather than miss a ride he sets up rollers (a treadmill for bikes) in the kitchen and scares the dog witless by riding on the spot for a noisy hour.

Then there are the foreign trips. We live in the Surrey Hills — one of the best cycling spots in the country. Box Hill, where the Olympic road race was held, is a local climb and the Tour of Britain passes through every year. The one thing we don't have is a mountain. So a couple of times a year Richard and his MAMIL pals pack their bikes into protective boxes (£500) and fly to the Pyrenees or the Alps, for a weekend emulating their professional cycling idols.

It may drive me to distraction, but I must admit I admire his dedication. Our son, James, six, certainly looks up to him and wants a road bike, too.

Even Jessica, eight-going-on-18, was genuinely interested in racing a bike until recently, when she started to prefer my Zumba and dance classes. Both ride well and have picked up a love of exercise from Richard and me.

For a man diagnosed with multiple sclerosis ten years ago, Richard is impressively active. Within a year of taking up cycling he rode from London to Paris and this summer did the Etape du Tour — a mountain stage of the Tour de France, in appalling weather.

As mid-life crises go it could be a lot worse. I am far happier my 41-year-old husband is out riding a pushbike with a bunch of other men than zooming around on a Harley-Davidson and chasing girls half his age.

I also take comfort from the fact I am not alone. In our circle of friends, six of the husbands have taken up cycling.

They are putting this passion to good use, too. Next May they will take part in a charity cycle ride from Guildford to Bordeaux in aid of The Fountain Centre, a local cancer charity.

Being a MAMIL, like all mid-life crises means acting like little boys. As 11-year-olds do, they have their in-jokes, asserting the perfect number of bikes to own is $N + 1$ (N is the number of bikes you have already).

Another formula, which shows they are not entirely stupid, is $S - 1$ (S is the number of bikes that will prompt your wife to demand a separation).

In Richard's case, he seems to have taken heed to the latter — he used to have two more than now (a mountain bike and a Brompton folding cycle).

Of course, he hankers for more. Recently, he has been wittering on about carbon and titanium frames, in the hope of boring me into submission.

I humor him up to a point, but on one issue I will not budge. Since that day in the park Richard is banned from attending any social occasion dressed in lycra — on pain of his bike being sent to the tip.

Would I really follow through with the threat? Just try me



Spending: Jennie says every week another mysterious package arrives, with the latest waterproof jersey or a vintage cycling cap of a type once worn by one of his increasingly obscure heroes

Colorado HeartCycle 2016 Tours

In Search of Texas Bluebonnets

March 30 - April 6 Status: Open
7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,180.00
Jim Bethell, jim@bikes5.com (518) 446-1766
Jay Wuchner, jaywuchner@comcast.net
(720) 840-6467

Durango Fixed Base Sampler

June 4 - 8 Status: Wait List
4 days, Int. \$750.00
Steve Parker, bsparker116@gmail.com
(970) 382-9551
Chris Matthews, chriswmatthews@msn.com
(303) 618-4789

Paso Robles Wine Country

April 23 - 30 Status: Wait List
7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,365.00
Becky Bottino, bbottino7@gmail.net
(206) 683-9220
Ken Condray, condray3@gmail.com
(425) 334-1444

New Mexico - Land of Enchantment

June 11 - 18 Status: Wait List
7 days, Adv. \$1,330.00
Rich Loeffler, richardtloeffler@gmail.com
(303) 981-2963
Bob Raicer, rjr@raicer.com

The Island of Mallorca, Spain

April 30 - May 14 Status: Wait List
14 days, Int. / Adv. \$2,400.00
Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com
(719) 237-3350
Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
(303) 910-7230

Re-Living the Pro Challenge

June 25 - 29 Status: Open
4 days, Int. / Adv. \$565.00
Diane Short, dianbike@eazy.net
303-763-9874

Heart of Holland Bike & Barge

May 21 - 31 Status: Open
10 days, Easy / Int. \$1,940.00
Joanne Speirs, jcspeirs@aol.com
(303) 312-7252

Le Monastere - SESSION 1

July 2 - 9 Status: Open
7 days, Int. / Exp. \$2,350.00
Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
(303) 910-7230

Friesland Bike & Barge

June 1 - 11 Status: Open
10 days, Easy / Int. \$1,940.00
John Penick, jdpenick@gmail.com
(203) 232-8946

Le Monastere SESSION 2

July 9 - 16 Status: Open
9 days, Int. / Exp. \$2,350.00
Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
(303) 910-7230

Colorado HeartCycle 2016 Tours

Cowboy Country

July 16 - 23 Status: Open
7 days, Adv \$1,225.00
John Penick, jdpenick@gmail.com
(203) 232-8946
Fred Yu, fredericky@comcast.net
(303) 321-4530

Grand Valley Ramble

September 22 - 25 Status: Open
9 days, Int. / Adv. \$485.00
Joanne Speirs, jcspeirs@aol.com
(303) 312-7252
Doug Moll, doug@aaplus.com
(720) 312-1203

Mothers Daughters Weekend

July 28 - 20 Status: Open
2 days, Easy \$415.00
Julie Lyons, julie@lovesweatandgears.net
Ann Lantz, ann@lovesweatandgears.net

Fireworks of Fall, Upper Hudson River

Sept. 26 - Oct. 2 Status: Open
8 days, Int. \$1,260.00
Jim Bethell, jim@bikes5.com (518)
446-1766
Janet Reilly, janet@bikes5.com

Coast to Coast, The Northern Tier: Year 1

September 19 - 23 Status: Wait List
13 days, Int. / Adv. \$2,490.00
Steve Parker, bsparker116@gmail.com
(970) 382-9551
Chris Matthews, chriswmatthews@msn.com
(303) 618-4789