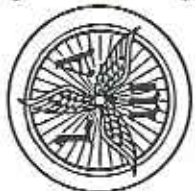




IPMBA NEWS



Official Newsletter of The International Police Mountain Bike Association

Get Out and Ride

by Officer Stephen Estes
West Hartford (CT) Police Department

I would like to take this opportunity to address a potential problem I have noticed with the increasing number of bicycle patrol officers taking to the streets. Most of us, as bicycle officers, do not ride enough. The riding that we do on our tours of duty is neither the right quantity nor the quality. Many officers, especially those with little athletic background or those who have not ridden in years and are now riding on duty, feel that their on-duty riding is enough to keep them in shape and keep their skills sharp.

This is a potentially dangerous misconception. Bike officers must be involved in some type of off-duty riding to be able to perform all aspects of their jobs, all of the time, safely and efficiently.

Bike officers are trained (or at least they should be) in how to climb and descend stairs, jump curbs, hop parking blocks, etc. How able are the officers to perform these maneuvers after a long hard ride and then a quad-burning, lung-searing sprint? Add to that equation a cross-over dismount and a fence-climbing foot chase. Then add on a fight with the suspect. For a worst case

scenario, have the suspect armed and force you into a shoot-no shoot situation after all of those physical stressors. Suddenly your physical conditioning and bike handling skills can take on life and death importance.

Bike officers cannot effectively train on-duty. Time constraints, district size constraints, investigations, reports and supervisors all conspire to thwart attempts at planned on-duty training. On-duty riding is the arena whereby bike officers showcase their abilities and talents. No other professional athletes use their games and races as their sole place to train. They condition in the off-season, practice in the pre-season and continue to practice in between games and races. Bicycle patrol officers are essentially professional athletes and as such should have the mind-set that goes along with that responsibility.

This means that bike officers should be riding technical single-track to hone slow speed riding skills, and fire roads to stay proficient at high speed-low traction situations. A structured road riding program will keep bike

Continued on page 4

Police Bikes Suspended

by Officer Terry Welshan
Maryville (TN) Police Department

While the very word "suspension" has been known to cause panic among police officers, it can be a welcome addition when applied to police bikes.

Bicycle suspension systems are not new; attend any off-road bike event and you will find them to be the norm rather than the exception. Suspension systems have even invaded the "rigid" and "Inflexible" world of European road racing and have proven their worth on the cobblestones of Paris.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of installing a fork or suspended stem on your department bikes? Following are things you should consider when exploring suspension systems.

Safety. Curbs, stairs, potholes, old mufflers, and winos become less of an obstacle as you maneuver your bike through city streets and alleys with the addition of a suspension system, and you are allowed one or two additional mistakes before the onset of asphalt rash.

Comfort. After a long day on your "office," your wrists, elbows, shoulders and neck will thank you for taking the jolt out of every crack and flaw in the roadway. Some early studies indicate that suspension even reduces the onset of carpal tunnel syndrome.

Maintenance. A suspension system soaks up the daily impact you encounter, reduces flats, leads to longer lasting tires and less frequent wheel truing. In addition,

headset adjustments and replacements will last longer.

Although the advantages of suspension systems are quite clear, the suspension revolution is not without certain disadvantages. First and foremost, expect to pay \$100 to \$300 per unit. In addition, you will add up to one and a half pounds of weight to your already overburdened steed. Finally, the handling characteristics of your bike will change slightly, so make sure you hit the cones

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Gaining Support and Approval of Patrolling on Bikes

There are three categories of people you have to convince that bike patrols are a worthwhile venture. The public, the administration (police, municipal, etc.) and last but not least, your fellow officers. If you fail to win the support of any one of these groups, your patrol is not long for this world.

Let's take a look at each of these groups and see what it takes to make them happy.

The Public: It doesn't really take a lot to gain support from the general population. This is primarily because people are conditioned to think that "new" or "different" is automatically better. In this particular case they are right for a variety of reasons. Bicycle patrol is suited for many of today's crimes because it fills a much needed void.

This is similar to a baton or pepper mace filling the void between verbal skills and deadly force. One of the biggest advantages of bike patrol comes from the public's change in attitude towards the officers. Because bike patrol officers don't look like traditional law enforcement, officers responding to calls or interacting with citizens are not met with predetermined attitudes or hostility. When this attitude is overcome right up front it is easy for citizens to see the officer is there to do something FOR them, not TO them.

The Administration: This is not necessarily a tough group to convince once you get the patrol

going. The toughest row you'll have to hoe with these guys is actually getting the funds and authorization to get started. Generally speaking, if the public is happy, the administration is happy.

Fellow Officers: This is your toughest audience, bar none. A little bit of animosity and back biting can go a long way towards dooming your patrol. Your fellow officers have daily contact with the other two groups you are trying to win over. If they decide to do an infomercial on the uselessness of bike patrols whenever they talk with these two groups, you're done.

The most difficult part about selling yourself to your fellow officers is the fact that you're never off probation. You'll be scrutinized every day you roll out on the street. And if they ever lose confidence in you as a competent police officer, you'll never regain it.

In most policing agencies the number one job of a patrol officer is to take calls for service. It literally enrages officers in patrol cars to see bike officers riding around while they run from call to call. Let the dispatcher know you're out there and available for calls. Give them a good idea of the amount of territory you can cover and how long it takes to get from one end of your beat to the other. When the dispatcher has this understanding he can use you more often and reduce the motor patrol's workload.

Volunteer for calls that are within your area and handle them completely. Short of transporting a prisoner, bike patrol officers can handle almost any situation without aide. Don't call for someone to bring you paperwork or tickets; carry the things you need to do your job.

Listen to your radio and fall in on other officer's calls and stops. Make it a point to check on your fellow officers and assist them any chance you get, especially when you can fill a gap they can't cover, like searching alleys or projects for a lost suspect. Always present yourself as a complement to motor patrol, not an alternative. People don't respond well to threats regarding their job security, real or perceived.

When the weather turns bad stay on your bike. Show the public, the administration, and most of all, your fellow officers that you are on the bike for good and bad. You'll gain a lot of respect for doing your job in the freezing cold or other foul weather.

There's a lot more to having a good relationship between bike patrol and motor patrol, and you should develop as many methods as you can. Take these words to heart, don't allow yourself to be sunk from within. Until next time, don't let the bad guys or the pavement magnet get ya.

- Allan

Education Column

Changing Weather Creates Hazards for Cyclists

Well, the holidays are upon us. It is a special time of year, and also our most dangerous. There are several potential hazards for bicycle officers that must be addressed.

The first is weather. Gone are those days of sun and 70 degree temperatures. Many of us have settled into rain and temperatures hovering in the 30s; for some of you, even snow. That means everything out there is slick. Hills, grass and wet leaves are all natural hazards. Add to that oil spots, painted surfaces, bricks, and manhole covers. All of these hazards are just waiting to introduce you to "Mr. Pavement."

Bicycle officers also have to deal with increased hours of darkness. Both the morning and evening commutes are made for the most part during the hours of darkness. Weather conditions and darkness combine to dramatically decrease visibility, both theirs and ours. Vehicles won't see you as easily and you won't see hazards as quickly.

Conditioning is another factor that must be

addressed as the weather changes. A portion of your energy is expended just staying warm. You will also be carrying more weight. For some of us that is from the holiday meals, for others it is just our winter gear. Traditionally, fitness levels decrease this time of the year as well.

The final hazard bicycle officers face during this season is all the people enjoying the 100 proof holiday cheer. Drunks are notorious in good weather and they are just that much worse when roads are wet and it is dark.

So, what can you do to minimize your risk?

Dress Properly. Goretex® helmet cover, face and car covers, water proof gloves, Goretex® jacket and pants, Thinsulate® socks and water-proof boots. These things will protect your body from the elements. Make sure the gloves give easy access to your weapon. I recommend you go to the range in full winter gear and practice.

Equip Your Bicycle For Winter. Goretex® bicycle seat cover, reflectors, front and back lights,

good tires (knobbies are not acceptable). These things will protect you from the weather conditions, improve your traction and make you much easier to see.

Prepare your body to ride. Stretch for three to five minutes before riding. Apply heat rub on knees, legs and lower back. Check with doctor about the use of Ibuprofen. Eat small amounts of food, often.

Don't Hurry. This time of year you are less visible, carrying more weight, have decreased vision, and typically experience a decreased physical condition. Get there a little slower, in one piece and have the energy level necessary to handle things when you do arrive on the scene.

I hope this helps you all make it through the winter. Have a safe and happy holiday season.

- Gene E. Miller
Tacoma (WA) PD,
IPMBA Education Chair

You Can't Just Drink When You are Thirsty

by David Whidden,
Washington Metropolitan (DC) PD

A conversation came up at work last week in reference to the special diet and nutritional needs of police bicycle officers. The importance of teaching a bike officer how much to drink, what to drink, and when, was being explained to a higher ranking official who dismissed the entire conversation by stating, "you don't have to teach an officer when to drink water; when they're thirsty, they'll drink." This statement was quickly acknowledged by the official's peers with laughter and agreement. I have been involved in DC's Mountain Bicycle Program since its inception in January 1992. I have 21 years of experience in the fields of weight training, exercise, diet, and nutrition, and to have someone casually dismiss the importance of instructing officers in water and electrolyte replacement simply amazed me. A deficiency in training in this area creates a serious potential threat to the officer's health and work performance as well as a loss to the department in lost man hours due to sick leave usage, medical expenses, and possible vicarious liability.

Basically, there are three levels of heat-related injuries commonly attributed to inadequate water and/or electrolyte replacement. Keeping in mind that there is no clear point where one begins and the other ends, they are:

Heat Stress: the individual feels hot and tired. There is generally a minor loss of fluid in the body. Rest and oral fluid consumption are generally all that is required for the individual to recuperate.

Heat Exhaustion: the individual's reflexes, mentation, and judgement is slower (impaired). As the condition deteriorates, nausea, blurred vision, and dizziness occur. An individual in this stage needs emergency room care, which generally includes cooling the body down and administering intravenous fluids.

Heat Stroke: The individual is in a pre-coma or coma condition. Body temperature can reach 106 degrees fahrenheit and renal failure is imminent. If critical care is not received, brain damage from the extreme fever or death can occur.

"If you wait for your body to tell you that you need water (thirst), it could be too late to avoid problems."

It is important to understand the chemical processes that occur within the body which create these conditions so that appropriate measures can be taken to prevent them.

Salt (sodium chloride) and potassium (potassium chloride) are the two most prevalent electrolytes in the body. A proper balance between the two, potassium within the muscle cell wall and salt outside of the cell wall in the blood plasma, are essential to the proper flow of electrical impulses that travel back and forth between the brain and the muscles.

There are numerous chemical processes that take place in the body during periods of prolonged exertion. However, the following four are the more important ones for us to understand as mountain bike officers.

Hypertremia: is characterized by a high salt level in the blood due to an inadequate supply of water in the body, generally due to prolonged perspiration and lack of fluid replacement. Symptoms include fever and dry skin.

Hypokalemia: generally goes hand in hand with hypertremia. It is characterized by a low level of potassium in the blood. The loss is generally due to perspiration.

Hyperkalemia: at this stage, the individual is in either a pre-coma or coma condition. Potassium is primarily stored within the cell walls of the muscle tissue. Severe muscle cramping releases the potassium and creatinine (a major component of the muscle) into the blood which leads to renal (kidney) failure.

Hyponatremia: this is the reverse of

hypertremia and is characterized by too much fluid and not enough salt. It is generally due to excessive fluid replacement without any electrolyte replacement.

Feeling unwell, muscle cramps, impaired mentation, slower reflexes, blurred vision, nausea, and dizziness are the pre-coma symptoms which are vital for the police bike officer to know. Not so much to recognize in ourselves, since our judgement will most likely be impaired and realizing what is happening is doubtful, but to recognize them in others, specifically, your partner.

Now that we know what to watch for, prevention is simple. Prevention is also the best cure. To keep fully hydrated, an individual should drink eight to 10 ounce glasses of water a day. Drinking just before, during, and after exercise is not adequate. Also, during periods of prolonged exercise, you should consume three to six ounces of water every 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the weather and the intensity of the exercise. Occasionally intersperse a soda or a sports drink to replenish lost electrolytes. Beer and other alcoholic beverages are not suitable for water or electrolyte replacement. Alcohol acts as a diuretic which stimulates the dehydration process. Caffeine is also a diuretic.

However, caffeine has another important property. The body will normally release fatty acids into the blood after approximately 90 minutes of exercise. These fatty acids are then utilized as the muscle's primary fuel source during periods of mild to moderate exertion, rather than the glycogen which is stored as fuel within the muscle. Glycogen is a finite source of fuel. However, there is an almost unlimited supply of fat in the human body that can be used for fuel, even among persons with a very low percentage of body fat. Therefore, athletes will often consume a caffeine rich drink before a bike race so that they can tap into this unlimited fuel source sooner and save their stored glycogen which is needed during periods of high exertion, such as sprinting. Make sure that you are hydrated before consuming caffeine. If you had been drinking the night before and wake up feeling lousy, do not drink anything with caffeine in it. You will probably be dehydrated from the alcohol you consumed the night before and the caffeine will only further dehydrate you.

Always remember, drink before you get thirsty. If you wait for your body to tell you that you need water (thirst), it could be too late to avoid problems. And never let anyone tell you that knowing how much or when to drink is not important, it could save your life.

IPMBA News

Newsletter of
The International Police Mountain
Bike Association, a division of
The League of American Wheelmen
190 W. Ostend St., Suite 120
Baltimore, MD 21230-3755

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information on International Police Mountain
Bike Association (IPMBA) membership
please contact League headquarters.

officers in good overall shape. Long distance, low intensity rides build endurance; intervals build speed; hills build power. There are countless books and magazine articles written on these subjects and I encourage every bike officer to do some studying on the training methodology used by the successful racers today.

One of the best places to gauge your skills and conditioning is in organized racing. Club and group rides follow as a close second in comparing your abilities because they often degenerate into impromptu races. In racing there are many different options open and each has its advantages and disadvantages. Licenses are not always necessary.

Criteriaums (circuit races held on small courses entirely closed to traffic) emphasize sprinting power, close quarters handling skills and cornering. However, they do nothing for off-road skills and oftentimes teamwork will offset the abilities of an exceptional rider. Mountain bike races are obviously good training choices, but many times the citizen classes and NORBA beginner classes are very short. But, everyone must start somewhere and a NORBA license coupled with some experience will let bike officers compete in the longer races. My favorite races are the multi-sport races; triathalons and duathalons. The transition from cycling to running is important because bike officers are forced to get off their bikes and run when fences become too tall or too numerous. Today, there are multi-sport races which incorporate mountain biking in the cycling segment, allowing a riding position which mimics the duty bike position.

Other off-duty training options are available for bike officers. Get a training partner who is faster than you are, join a club with a fast group and/or buy a heart rate monitor. Any or all of these will speed you on your way to becoming a bicycle patrol officer who can handle all of the unique stressors that only come when you are propelled to a hot call by your own legs.

Get Out and Ride

Important numbers for training rides and races:

United States Cycling Federation:

(719) 578-4581

National Off-Road Bicycle Association:

(719) 578-4717

Suspended- from page 1

before you hit the street.

The advantages and disadvantages of suspension systems must be evaluated on an individual basis. I feel that suspension systems, like bike cops, are the wave of the future, and that someday when we are all "old timers" we can tell the rookies about the way it was back when "real men" rode rigid bikes on patrol.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Our bikes are equipped with plastic clip-on fenders. One thing I have noticed since adding trunks and panniers is that the rear fender is not long enough. It allows mud and water to be thrown from the tire onto the bags. Prior to this, we got water on us sometimes, but at that time we didn't ride much when the streets were wet. Now we ride unless there is a continuous, steady rain.

To solve the problem I took two rear fenders and spliced the rear portion to the other. The fenders are now approximately 36 to 37 inches in length. I fabricated a support bracket that runs from the fender to the rear of the rack. To this I have mounted the tail light. This gives an adequate three point support and takes care of the light. We no longer get water and mud spots all over our uniforms and the bags.

- Sgt. Maurice F. Head
Shreveport (LA) Police Dept.

Dear Editor,

I would like to share a training tip with your readers. I have found a rear wheel mounted wind trainer to be extremely useful in a classroom environment. It allows instructors to show everything from cadence and shifting to bike adjustments to body positioning for descents and stops. These trainers can be purchased used for \$25 to \$50 and are an excellent investment both for the classroom and the home.

- Ofc. Terry Welshan
Maryville (TN) PD

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Police Cyclist Lapel Pins

If you have taken an IPMBA Police Cyclist Course and have become a certified IPMBA Police Cyclist, you can order a pin to wear on your uniform. The pins are \$5.00, and can be ordered by sending a check to L.A.W., or calling 1-800-288-BIKE with your Visa or Mastercard number.



(the pin is gold with black writing and blue design)

IPMBA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone(____) _____

Police Dept. _____

Membership is \$35 for an individual, \$40 for family.

IPMBA membership is **not** offered to police departments.

Add \$15 for postage to foreign countries.

Pay by check drawn in U.S. dollars from U.S. bank, or international money order.

Enclose Payment or choose:

VISA MasterCard

Card #: _____

Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

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190 W. Ostend St., Suite 120

Baltimore, MD 21230-3755

1-800-288-BIKE (membership only)

(410) 539-3399

National Office Notes

IPMBA Program and Membership Notes

by Robin Miller, IPMBA Manager
Baltimore, MD

IPMBA Programs

You should recently have received information about the Fourth Annual Police on Bikes Conference, hosted by the San Antonio Police Department May 5 - 7, 1994, in San Antonio, Texas. Officers can attend workshops and expanded hands-on training covering bike handling, operating procedures, funding, equipment, and much more. An exhibit hall will feature the latest in police cycling equipment. The conference will conclude with a challenging competition between attendees. The cost of this year's conference is \$195 for IPMBA members, \$245 for non-members. Registration packets will be mailed in January. We hope to see you there!

Prior to the Conference, officers can receive intensive instruction by certified IPMBA Police Cyclist Instructors from across the country during the IPMBA Police Cyclist Course held May 1 - 4. Certification as an IPMBA Police Cyclist is available upon passing both written and practical tests. *This course is not an instructor's course*, although participation in an IPMBA Police Cyclist Course is a requirement of admission into the Instructor Certification program. IPMBA membership is required for participation in the course. Registration is \$130 and more information will be mailed with conference registration packets. Space is limited, so make sure you return your registration form quickly.

IPMBA Membership

IPMBA membership continues to grow, and it is this growth that exemplifies the growth of bicycle patrols across the United States. Aside from joining IPMBA, there are many ways in which you can get involved and help support and strengthen bicycle patrols across the country. Every day I am faced with calls from officers

looking for information about starting up a bike unit, from captains looking for arrest statistics, from students studying the benefits of bike patrols, from reporters gathering information for local features, and from departments looking for training. IPMBA is the only national organization of bicycle patrol officers, and we can provide answers to all these requests with some help from our members.

If your department has compiled any statistics on arrest rates, please send them to IPMBA headquarters. These will be used to emphasize the effectiveness of bike patrols.

IPMBA maintains an archive file of police bicycle units. The articles you have been sending are beginning to bulge out of the file. Keep on sending them!

In addition, we welcome articles for *IPMBA News* from our members on any of the following topics: training tips, unique funding, legal information, patrol tactics, community involvement, equipment, and any other item of interest to your fellow bike patrol officers.

In conclusion, I thought I would share the following excerpt which appeared in *South Jersey Magazine* (Fall 1993). "By 1897 Bridgeton (NJ) was quite proud of its police officers as they were now all expert riders giving the city much better patrol service from riding instead of walking a beat. The officers received the okay from the City Council to secure a special bicycle police uniform with knee pants, shorter coats and caps instead of regulation sun helmets. Officer Betchner of Bridgeton, though a novice to riding, rapidly developed into a "scorcher" ready to pounce on all unsuspecting wheelmen who rode too fast through the city or who failed to have their kerosene bicycle lamps lit after sunset."



WE SUPPORT OUR

NEW ORLEANS POLICE MOUNTAIN BIKE PATROL

For more information call (504) 565-7945

Bumper sticker showing community support of New Orleans bike patrol.

New Units

Scotts Valley (CA) Police Department was able to start up a bike patrol thanks to a \$1,100 donation from Scotts Valley Nostalgia Nights. The program, launched on Halloween night, was scheduled to target areas near schools, shopping centers, and condominium complexes. With the addition of this bike patrol, all law enforcement agencies in Santa Cruz County (with the exception of the California Highway Patrol) now have bike patrols!

Metro Police Department, Nashville (TN) started a bicycle patrol on the first of October. The unit has twelve officers and received their training through an IPMBA Police Cyclist Course.

Greenville (NC) Police Department put five officers on bikes in the beginning of November as part of the department's Tactical Patrol Unit.

Belleville (IL) Police Department put two officers on bikes in October.

IPMBA Notes

We knew police bikes were a potent weapon, but this is ridiculous:

Kirby Beck (MN) recently duplicated some slides for Sgt. Joe Martin (CA) to use in his Police Cyclist Course. In order to get reimbursed for his expenses Kirby had to complete a purchase order and invoice for the City of Hayward, Calif. He also had to sign an "Affirmation of Non-Involvement in the Development or Production of Nuclear Weapons." Even with the slides, Kirby didn't think Joe was that good a teacher, so he signed it.

IPMBA Governing Board Elections will take place at Fourth Annual Police on Bikes Conference. Any members interested in running should contact Robin at IPMBA headquarters for further details.

IPMBA is a division of the L.A.W., the National Organization of Bicyclists. IPMBA members will receive renewal letters and notices from L.A.W. when their annual membership is up for renewal. Your continued support allows IPMBA to develop educational programs and assist both new and existing bike patrol units across the U.S. Renew your membership when it is time!

Attention computer buffs: Anyone interested in an IPMBA file on America Online, call Kirby Beck at (612)780-6481.

Unit Notes

The West Hartford (CT) Police Department was presented with a check for \$1,412.63. The money, proceeds from the West Hartford Center Criterium, was presented to the bike patrol by the Central Wheel of Framington and will be used for supplies, additional equipment, repairs, uniforms and uniform equipment.

The New Orleans Police Mountain Bike Patrol recently let us know that they have an added consideration when ascending or descending curbs in their district. Many of the curbs in the New Orleans area are metal and tend to snakebite tires if pressure is too low. An added incentive to check tire pressure during pre-flight bike inspections!

International Police Mountain Bike Association
League of American Wheelmen
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