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## Summer Contrail 2008

by John Klever

After months of preparation, the day had arrived. Accompanied by a host of other RMCC riders, Beth Long, Brent Myers, Jim Peyton, Leslie Sutton, Dick Wiss, and John Klever began the 2008 Summer Contrail at 8 am at Jackson Park in Golden on July 19th, a sunny day that already had the promise of heat.

With stops in Fort Collins (80 miles); Walden (100 miles); Saratoga, Wyoming (103 miles); Baggs Wyoming (77 miles); Yampa (96 miles); Frisco (87 miles); Leadville (65 miles); and Golden (102 miles), our 710-mile, eight-day ride encompassed a loop of north central Colorado and south central Wyoming. The roads were generally good, particularly in Wyoming, but five miles were impassable because of highway reconstruction just north of Leadville. We had four flats and one slow leak. Crossing the Continental Divide three times, we climbed and descended eight passes. The scenery was breathtaking, and the weather was excellent: minor rain on three of the passes, lots of sun, few headwinds, glorious tailwinds, and moderate temperatures for the most part.

Rather than try to include everything, perhaps, you will enjoy these vignettes of Cameron Pass, Snowy Mountain Pass, 20 Mile Road, and Tennessee Pass:

The tree-lined climb from Fort Collins to 10,276-foot Cameron Pass along the Cache la Poudre River is a non-climbers dream: gentle uphill rollers for 30 miles. Just west of Mishawaka are two outward-slanting, brown, granite pillars, which appear to be struggling to hold the edges of the canyon apart so as to let the river pass through. The road tunnels through the south buttress of the funnel. The last five miles to the pass give way to a series of steepes and flats. Just over the pass it began to rain. On the descent, the trees gave way to the stunted hills and lush greenness of North Park, the rain ceased, and, spinning my gears out, I proceeded west with a very strong, quartering tailwind. To get an idea of the strength of this tailwind, I turned around and rode into the wind. The best I could muster was 8 miles per hour. The wind continued with its helping hand all the way west and then north into Walden.

Starting with broad sweeping turns just west of Centennial, Wyoming, we climbed to Snowy Mountain Pass at 10,847 feet. We took Libby Creek via State Road 350. A light, misting rain had settled over the forest primeval and the bubbling brook through which the road passed. For one short stretch Indian paintbrushes were growing in perfect harmony with ragweed. At 10,000 feet the dream was over as I rejoined the main road for four miles of rolling climbs to the top and lunch. The usual assortment of biting flies and mosquitoes was also waiting for lunch. Brent and Beth were just behind, so we descended together. Whisked along by a stiff tailwind, we arrived in Saratoga at the Riviera Motel at 6 pm to the usual party in full swing on a deck overlooking the North Platte River.

The Steamboat Springs cutoff, 20 Mile Road, is beautiful for riding or driving. The road hugs the terrain because the contours haven't been graded. There is an immediate sense of being one with the land. Everything along this rolling road was surrounded by green, grass at first, and then, as we got higher, trees. Some of the jumps were 500 feet or more followed by steep, fast and short descents.

The climb to Minturn was moderate and then leveled a bit from Minturn to the sign that read "Battlement 4 miles", where the pitch was steep and the switchbacks panoramic. After a long climb to Battlement, the road took a steep descent of 600 or more feet before rising again through a swampy meadow for several miles until the next sign that read "5 miles to Tennessee Pass". Several switchbacks later, the railroad went through a tunnel, but the road continued to climb. I passed Camp Hale, where my dad had briefly worked during World War II. All that remained in the flat expanse were the foundations of the barracks. I finally reached the top at 10,424 feet where everyone was waiting.

All in the group were congenial and flexible. Kudos go to Brent and Beth who organized this ride fest by lining up the participants, surveying the route, making the hotel reservations, collecting the money, and providing the vehicle and leadership. At the last minute, our sag driver canceled. This was, perhaps, a blessing because each of us had to take a turn driving, which tended to slow the speedsters and give the slowpokes and the exhausted a break. As a result, we arrived at each destination close together and dined each evening and morning as a group. We also saved a lot of money because we didn't have to support a driver. At \$466 per rider for lodging and vehicle for eight days, the ride was a real bargain.

I would recommend the self-support plus vehicle model as a good way to conduct future tours because it promotes camaraderie, allows greater distances to be covered, and is less expensive.

RMCC offers two, week-long tours in 2009: the Spring Contrail in April and the Summer Contrail in July. Sign up for one or both of these tours and create an adventure of your own.

You might want to check out the detailed account of this tour at [www.trailsdenver.com/Pages/Article20080801SummerContrail2008.html](http://www.trailsdenver.com/Pages/Article20080801SummerContrail2008.html).

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



## Not Your Typical Club Ride/Followed by First Time Up Lookout Mountain

*Two stories by Jim Kraychy*

The RMCC / ESPN filming ride was Thursday afternoon, October 16th, 2008. ESPN contacted Charlie Henderson wanting to film cyclists riding up at altitude in the mountains for an upcoming program. We had about 12 riders along with the Producer (Burt), Sound Man, and 2 Camera Men in one chase vehicle. 2 technicians to set up and fly the helicopter were in a second vehicle.

Mike Prendergast, Tom Groves, Tim Kalisch, John Klever, Tom Foss, Cary Stewart, Tom Knoblauch, Barry Walker, Diane Benoit, etc. came out for the ride (my apologies for not getting everyone else's name). Charlie rode in the van with Burt and the technicians to give directions to us via two way radio. Unfortunately, the radio batteries didn't last very long so we resorted to direct voice communication between riders and the van for most of the ride.

We met at the Ken Caryl park-and-ride and started off West through Ken Caryl, South over to Deer Creek Canyon and up High Grade to just past the school house at Pleasant Park, then turned around and retraced our route back to Ken Caryl. A fairly short ride by RMCC standards but there was plenty of climbing. Quite a few stops on the shoulder to prepare for the next shots made for a long afternoon (over three hours).

They filmed us in motion from the open side door of the van, out the open rear hatch, and from stationary positions by the side of the road. Thankfully, traffic was at a minimum and what there was gave us lots of room (maybe because the drivers saw the cameras).

We tried to keep the group together as that is what Burt wanted for filming. It was difficult to hold ourselves back a few times (due to "lens fever" I think – must be related to "recorditis"); speeding up to close with the camera must be part of human nature. Also, it is difficult to stay together on steeper climbs as everyone climbs best at different paces.

The group ride concept made for a nice talking pace. Lots of opportunity for conversation. Wearing a microphone was a bit distracting. Seemed like several of my fellow riders were trying to instigate more than the usual amount of kidding and joking around. I am curious to see how much of our bantering was picked up, and what ends up used in the ESPN program.

Riding under "surveillance" by a radio controlled helicopter was interesting. The aircraft was just big enough to carry a camera and entirely battery powered (two \$1000 batteries powered the whole machine) giving it a flight time of about 12 minutes. There were some technical problems with it, though they had it working well enough for a few flyby / flyover sweeps. When it was in the air close by it sounded just like the audio background you hear on the Tour de France for their helicopter shots. We were asked not to look at the helicopter so to appear "normal" while being filmed. Pretty hard to do when you could hear it so close by.

The weather was spectacular: sunny down low and warm. Cloudy with some wind, and very cool up high. Lots of fall color in the canyon should have made for some very scenic footage. Interesting that the amount of color seemed independent of altitude: some trees were stripped bare of leaves, while others up higher had leaves still totally green with no sign of turning yet.

The red rock in the lower part of Deer Creek combined with the brilliant gold foliage and blue sky made for some fantastic backgrounds.

Hopefully the club will get some good national exposure from this. Thanks to Charlie for setting this up and to all who came out for the ride.

It was interesting to observe a new rider and think back to what it was like to be new, just starting to ride more; when all the rides we are blessed with in Colorado like Lookout were yet to be ridden.

The perspective of looking back at ones self as a cyclist through watching another ride was quite provocative. I can barely remember my first ride up Lookout, other than it was on a RMCC ride, and how long and steep a climb it felt like, and how much it hurt to try (and fail) to keep up with everyone else (one of the innumerable "droppings" that can help make you a better cyclist). In some ways it can feel like such a short ride nowadays, but still one of our more interesting, hard climbs no matter your perspective.

"Ralph" is relatively new to cycling from the sound of it, with a new bike, new shoes, no helmet (yikes!), and borrowed sunglasses. He wore long sweat pants and shirt. We stopped twice for a break on the way up: once at about a mile and a half up, and again at the overlook parking lot about 3 miles up. Nice clear day to check out the views of Denver and the mountains to the West.

It was a bit painful to watch the pace surge after our stops, although what great interval training (maybe not so good for your first time up Lookout)! It is a big advantage to have ridden the climb before so many times. The weaving and sudden swerving, probably due to exertion, was nerve wracking – practice, experience, and increased situational awareness will help with those tendencies.

Gearing / cadence misconceptions – spinning faster in a lower gear is somehow perceived as "cheating" or maybe not as cool looking (must be a bit of those Jan Ullrich type diesel engine genes in all of us). What works well for some may not for others. Trying different things may also help keep you out of a mental rut. And give one the chance to learn about them selves.

Patience, persistence, discipline, and perseverance (OK, maybe that's too many syllables for this close to winter) to put in the effort required will improve ones self realistically over time. Stepping stones and incremental gains seem to work better than grand plans and huge expectations or trying shortcuts. Sooner or later you are able to fit the puzzle pieces together in a different way, and improvements in yourself will be the reward. Then, if you are like me, come spring time, after a long winter, you relearn some things all over again (LOL).

It was enlightening to be passed by other riders, for the different perspective that brought to the climb. You can tell who seems to be "racing" as those won't answer when you said hello to them (too oxygen debted to spare a breath to respond?). That inconsiderate inaction makes it feel like they are taking fellow cyclists for granted.

Sometimes, it seems like there is so much we tend to take for granted when we are fixated on reaching an important goal, and we might forget about enjoying the individual moments granted to us and people it is our privilege to meet. How does that line go?: "yesterday is the past, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift". I sure appreciate RMCC and all the people who have given something back to cycling thereby making this such a wonderful club.

"Ralph" rode very well and was happy to make it to the top. He now has a helmet and joined us on his first club ride the following Saturday. Hopefully he will be back for more rides with us.



### UPCOMING CLUB RIDES

To volunteer to start a ride, contact Jim Kraychy at 303-264-9040

Date	Start	Description	Miles	Starter
12/6	Northglenn 9:45	Northglenn Show-N-Go	30-50	Cary Stewart 717-201-4380 <a href="mailto:pfwaterdude@yahoo.com">pfwaterdude@yahoo.com</a>
12/7	Ken Caryl 9:45	Ken Caryl Show-N-Go	30-40	Diane Benoit 303-697-1463 <a href="mailto:dianembenoit@comcast.net">dianembenoit@comcast.net</a>
12/7	Erie 9:45	Sunday Fixed or Free(wheel) ride	40-60	Mike Prendergast 303-886-3690 <a href="mailto:mike.rmcc@gmail.com">mike.rmcc@gmail.com</a>
12/13	Northglenn 9:45	Northglenn Show-N-Go	30-50	Cary Stewart 717-201-4380 <a href="mailto:pfwaterdude@yahoo.com">pfwaterdude@yahoo.com</a>
12/14	Ken Caryl 9:45	Ken Caryl Show-N-Go	30-40	Tom Boyle 303-948-8947 <a href="mailto:boyle254@msn.com">boyle254@msn.com</a>
12/14	Erie 9:45	Sunday Fixed or Free(wheel) ride	40-60	Mike Prendergast 303-886-3690 <a href="mailto:mike.rmcc@gmail.com">mike.rmcc@gmail.com</a>
12/20	Northglenn 9:45	Northglenn Show-N-Go	30-50	Dan Shields 720-989-4583 <a href="mailto:closerman007@aol.com">closerman007@aol.com</a>
12/21	Ken Caryl 9:45	Ken Caryl Show-N-Go	30-40	Diane Benoit 303-697-1463 <a href="mailto:dianembenoit@comcast.net">dianembenoit@comcast.net</a>
12/21	Erie 9:45	Sunday Fixed or Free(wheel) ride	40-60	Mike Prendergast 303-886-3690 <a href="mailto:mike.rmcc@gmail.com">mike.rmcc@gmail.com</a>
12/27	Northglenn 9:45	Northglenn Show-N-Go	30-50	Dan Shields 720-989-4583 <a href="mailto:closerman007@aol.com">closerman007@aol.com</a>
12/28	Ken Caryl 9:45	Ken Caryl Show-N-Go	30-40	Tom Boyle 303-948-8947 <a href="mailto:boyle254@msn.com">boyle254@msn.com</a>
12/28	Erie 9:45	Sunday Fixed or Free(wheel) ride	40-60	Mike Prendergast 303-886-3690 <a href="mailto:mike.rmcc@gmail.com">mike.rmcc@gmail.com</a>
<b>1/1/2009!!!</b>	Northglenn 8:00	<b>RMCC ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY CENTURY!!</b>	100	Jim Kraychy 303-264-9040 <a href="mailto:jkraychy@aol.com">jkraychy@aol.com</a>

Ken Caryl: The park-and-Ride on the northeast corner of Shaffer Parkway and Ken Caryl Avenue in west Littleton.  
 Northglenn: The park-and-Ride at the southeast corner of 120th Avenue and Huron Street in Northglenn.  
 Erie: 100 Autumn Court in Erie (north of Denver/east of Boulder).

**PLEASE VISIT [RMCCRIDES.COM](http://RMCCRIDES.COM) FURTHER INFORMATION/DETAILS**  
**(Not just for ride starts, but for all the most recent club information!)**

### New Year's Day Century

Come celebrate with us on New Year's Day !

We will meet at 7:45 AM in Northglenn at the North West corner on the RTD park and ride lot at the South East corner of 120th and Huron, just off I25; departing at 8:00 AM.

The 100 mile route will head generally West to the Boulder area, then North to Lyons for a loop through Apple Valley, out East to the plains, and South past the Brighton area before returning to Northglenn.

The ride will be held except under adverse conditions of snow / ice covered roads so come prepared for possibly colder temperatures.

Guaranteed almost no traffic since most everyone else will be recovering from the night before.

A wonderful way to start off the New Year. Hope to see you there !

Rocky Mountain Cycling Club  
P.O. Box 201  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80034

### **FOR THE LADIES**

The Rocky Mountain Cycling Club is proud to announce the formation of a focus group within our organization. This group will be concerned with those issues particularly relevant to women. Getting more women involved in the club, promoting camaraderie, and a supportive atmosphere will be one of the main objectives.

The group will be called **Rocky Mountain Cycling Chicks** and will begin establishing itself around the first of the year. A link on the website should be up and running by that time. For more information call Beth Long @ 303 981 0739 Go Girl Power!

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Starting in January's newsletter, look for the 2009 club schedule  
and other very, very exciting news regarding RMCC. 2009  
looks to be the best year yet!!!!