

A Bridge (or two) Not too Far

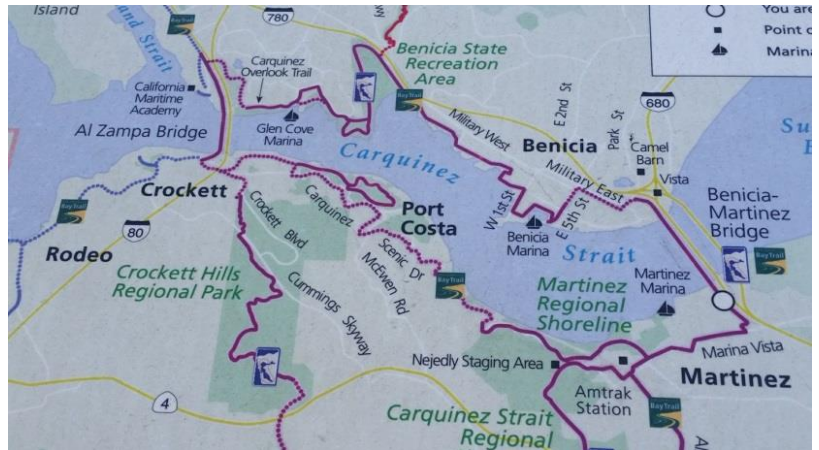
by Rich Freggiaro

Last January my friend Steve asked me to do an urban adventure ride with him. I didn't know what to expect, but it turned out to be one of the most memorable rides of the year. Not the hardest certainly, but very entertaining.

We drove to the train station in Stockton and boarded the Amtrak San Joaquin at 8:20, bound for Martinez. The train staff put our bikes in the baggage car, and the attendant commented that my bike was "really light," even though it was my Sampson, which is my heaviest ride. All of 18 lbs.

The train ride to Martinez was a delight. Steve was an excellent tour guide, pointing out highlights including the Port Chicago Naval Weapons Depot and the East Bay MUD pipe that carries water from Pardee to the Bay Area. The train was very comfortable and nearly deserted. Plenty of seats, free Wi-Fi, and really scenic views of the Delta and Mount Diablo.

We arrived in Martinez at 9:30. The plan was to do a leisurely paced 30 mile ride with minimal climbing and plenty of stops for sightseeing. The actual climbing was not so minimal: about 2000 feet according to Ride With GPS. After a nice lunch in Benicia, we would have plenty of time to catch the 3:24 train back to Stockton. But if we had a mechanical issue or other delay there was a later train at 6:44 that would get us home.



The Carquinez Loop; Clockwise From Martinez



Steve and a Speeding Tanker

The start of the ride is wonderful. A short steep climb leads to Carquinez Scenic Drive. The road climbs and dips but stays well above the water and affords tremendous views of the Carquinez Strait, the Town of Benicia, and the Benicia Bridge. If you are fortunate you might see an oil tanker or a "car transport" ship. Steve worked in the auto business and knew all about the transport and storage yards where the new cars are unloaded. Five miles of this road are closed to auto traffic, which makes pedaling along a real treat: great scenery and no cars to worry about.

The Ride Zone

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The Ride Zone is emailed to all members of the Stockton Bicycle Club. Printed copies are available at local bike shops in and near Stockton. A membership application is on the back page of the printed version.

All submissions to The Ride Zone must reach the editor by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Email to brumbyroad@peoplepc.com or call Rich Freggiaro at (209)

bridge crossing, more photo ops, and a short spin back to Martinez. We arrived in plenty of time for an espresso at the station before catching the 3:30 train back to Stockton.

Steve and I are planning to lead this ride as a Club Ride on Tuesday June 12. The train fare is only \$13 round trip. Bikes are free in the baggage car. We will design a somewhat longer ride of around 40 miles and skip the long lunch, but there will be a coffee stop. The train station in Stockton has a reputation as being in a dangerous neighborhood, but it is actually safe to park there during daylight hours. This isn't our normal club ride, but it will be fun to play urban cyclotourist for a day. Steve will have a hand out with all the information. E mail him at s-bfen@sbcglobal.net to receive one.

We took a detour down to Port Costa, and as we turned off I recognized McEwen Road. This is a very steep climb out of Crockett that I did years ago. Today we skipped the big hill and stayed on the scenic drive into Crockett, then on to the Carquinez Bridge.

I was a little concerned about wind and traffic on the bridge, not to mention the intimidating height above the bay, but my worries were unfounded. There is a wide bike lane separated from traffic by a substantial concrete barrier, and plenty of fencing to keep you on the bridge and out of the water.

Once across the bridge we followed the signed bike route along the Benicia shoreline, past parks and marinas and through quiet residential neighborhoods. When we reached downtown we stopped for an excellent, relaxing lunch. The weather on the last day of January was exceptionally fine and we ate outside enjoying the warm sunshine to accompany my grilled salmon.

After lunch we took another detour to see the "camel barns". Long ago the U.S. Army experimented with camels as a replacement for mules in the dry western climate. The experiment didn't work, because: *After reaching Fort Tejon, Lt. Beale decided that the camels' performance far exceeded that of the horses and mules for desert transportation, but were not compatible with soldiers. The demise of the camels as permanent transportation sources in the Southwest obviously had absolutely nothing to do with their ability. As Beale noted, in many ways they were superior to the horse in desert conditions. The problem was simply that they smelled horrible, scared the horses, and were hated by handlers accustomed to the more easily handled mule.*

We took yet another detour to take a look at the Commandant's Quarters, a fine white mansion, and the Clock Tower on the old Benicia Arsenal Grounds.

Then it was time for another



RIDE SCHEDULE – June 2018

Helmetsets required.

Rain or 'serious' threat of rain cancels. Follow Stockton Bicycle Club Facebook page for updates on ride status.

Rides may be amended and additional rides may be scheduled via the Stockton Bicycle Club Yahoo! Group. (details below).

A ride: 20+ mph, paceline riding, few if any regroup. **B** ride: 16-20 mph, experienced rider, regroup at major intersections, turns.

C ride: 12-15mph, regroup, no drop ride. MPH is based on a flat ride

For questions or to list a ride of your choice, please call or email Roberta Hoffman at nikehoffman@comcast.net or 763-2807

New Riders Note: There is a rest/refuel break about the middle of the ride. Unless otherwise stated, all rides are recreational in nature and intended for the enjoyment of all. **Terrain:** F=flat, R=rolling, H=Hilly, VH=very hilly

Date	Time	Miles/ Terrain	Start Location	Description	Leader
Tue	8:00	35-45 R/H	Wallace S. Camanche & Wallace Lakes Dr.	Fixed Route: So Comanche Rd/ Burson Rd Olive Orchard to COMMON GROUNDS	
Wed A- ride	5:30 PM	25 F	Stockton Bear Creek HS	W.A.R. Route map is posted on www.Stocktonbikeclub.org 18-22 mph	Rafael Posadas
Thu	8:00	35-45 R/H	Wallace Tri-Lakes Church 8021 Wards Ave.	Show and go	
Sat 2	7:45-B 8:00- A	21/45/65 H/VH	Ione Howard Park	21: SC (1200') 45: Volcano (3400') 65: PG, Tabeaud, Jackson, Stoney, BV (4800')	
Sun 3	8:00	40-45 F	Woodbridge Meet Lower Sac and Augusta St.	Loop out to Clements Ridge– Acampo Rd, Dustin, Orchard, Elliott, Peltier, Collier – break at Clements Ridge – Atkins, Brandt	
Sat 9	8:00	48- 52 F	Clements Fire Station	Ride to Woodbridge Masonic Hall on Augusta St. for pancake breakfast to benefit Woodbridge Elem. Through the vineyards and other options TBA	Double Pancake Weekend
Sun 10	8:00	34/42 F/R	Linden Orlando's Market	34:FloodRd., EscalonBellota, Shelton, Wimer, Hwy26, Shelton and back(726') 42: Milton Rd to Jenny Lind for pancake breakfast at Odd Fellows Hall	
Sat 16	7:45-B 8:00A	40/65 H/VH	Ione Howard Park	40: Plymouth (1600') 65: Fiddletown, Lockewood, Volcano, SC (4500')	
Sun 17	8:00	40-45 F	Woodbridge Meet Lower Sac and Augusta St.	Thornton, Walnut Grove	..
Sat 23	7:45-B 8:00- A	38/51 H	Starbucks (ValleySprings) Mar-Val Shopping Ctr	38: Pardee-Stoney- Jackson Break - out and back (3900') 51: Loop up Butte Mtn and down Clinton Rd.	
Sun 24	8:00	45 F	Thornton Library 26341 Thornton Rd.	https://ridewithgps.com/routes/23715017 Thornton, Walnut Grove, to Clarksburg	
Thurs 28	6:00 PM	F	Stockton Janet Leigh Plaza	Full Moon Ride in Downtown Stockton Social ride-Eat @ TAPS Bar N Grill After	
Sat 30	7:45-B 8:00- A	47 miles R/H	ValleySprings Starbuck's Mar-Val Shopping Ctr	47:Pardee Dam, Stoney, BV, Jackson Valley to Ione-Break at Clark's-Stkn Rd., Curran, Camanche, Campo Seco, VS(2700')	
July Sun 1	8:00	38 F	Clement's Fire Station	38: South on Mackville, 88, Atkins, Brandt, Tully, Baker- Fruit Bowl – return Live Oak	

For changes/additions to the ride schedule, participate in online discussions or for other club news, join our Yahoo! Group at groups.yahoo.com/group/Stockton_Bicycle_Club or send an e mail to [Stockton Bicycle Club-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:Stockton_Bicycle_Club_subscribe@yahoo.com). Also, see our Stockton Bicycle Club Facebook page for ride changes, and comments.