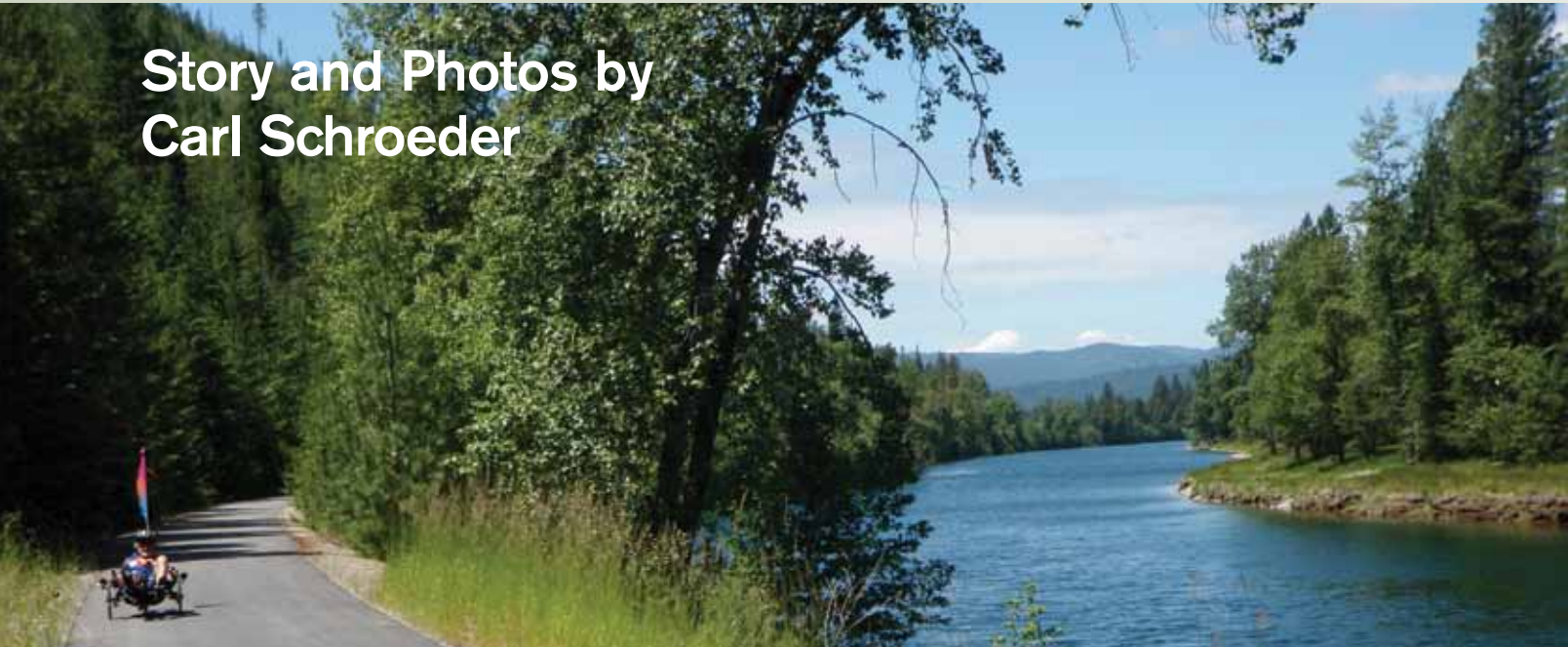


# Triking the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes

Story and Photos by  
Carl Schroeder



**H**ave you ever felt like an unwelcome alien at the *Star Wars* cantina? No? Well then, I guess you've never tried to join a pace line on a recumbent trike.

Not that I've tried it myself, but as a trike rider I have noticed an air of unease at bike rallies when trikers appear. I'm not complaining. I'm actually grateful for that reaction because the occasional "No trikers need apply" provided the stimulus for TaterTOT, an informal annual gathering of trikers in Kellogg, Idaho, and the 2010 edition ([32go.us/tt10/tatertot10.htm](http://32go.us/tt10/tatertot10.htm)) was so much fun I've started planning more ambitious adventures.

My attraction to recumbent trikes began soon after I climbed on a bicycle for the first time in about 30 years. My mind was full of happy biking memories like my 100-mile ride on a balloon-tire one-speed Schwinn from Tacoma,

Washington, to the coast with a friend one long July day in 1961.

In the 1970s, I spent many weekends riding my Corso Valentino 10-speed the length and breadth of Manhattan from my apartment in Greenwich Village. The adrenaline rush of racing taxis down Fifth Avenue rivaled the excitement of downhill skiing at Killington. During the Bicentennial Celebration, that bike carried me up and down the West Side Highway (closed to traffic for the day) between Battery Park and The Cloisters, from Leonard Bernstein's early-morning reading of the Declaration of Independence to views of the tall ships in the Hudson River and an incredible fireworks show over the Statue of Liberty.

Ah, but that was then, and this was — more than 30 years later. A test ride on my son's bicycle quickly revealed that my 63-year-old body

was no longer happy on a bike — at least not on that one. With the right bike, I'm sure I could have been a happy cyclist again, but that evening I noticed an ad for a recumbent trike. It looked comfortable! I decided to learn more.

I was intrigued by trikes after researching them online, and I fell in love on my first test ride. The only question was, "Which one to buy?" After trying every model I could find within a two-hour drive, I bought an HP Velotechnik Scorpion fx ([hpvelotechnik.com/produkte/scorpionfx/index\\_e.html](http://hpvelotechnik.com/produkte/scorpionfx/index_e.html)) on July 4, 2008 — Independence Day, the perfect day to buy a human-powered vehicle.

Why do I love my trike? It's huge fun, especially when I hit 50 MPH down the hill outside Mossyrock, Washington, where I live. Like a bike, it's great cardiovascular exercise — especially going uphill.

Unlike a bike, my trike does not cause my body to complain. It's like sitting on a well-designed lawn chair. My body is happy no matter how long I ride. Plus there's no fear of weaving or wobbling no matter how slowly I winch myself up a hill, and if I run out of steam I can put on the parking brake, relax, and refuel while I'm ensconced in my comfortable reclining seat. At intersections there's no need to unclip and put my foot on the ground. I just sit back and relax until the light changes. As I cruise along, I can look straight up at the birds and trees overhead, or twist around to look behind me without fear of losing my balance or straying off course.

I was already having great fun and great exercise on my trike before TaterTOT10, but that event opened my eyes to new triking horizons.

The TOT in TaterTOT stands for "Trikes Optional Tour" — an event launched in 2007 by a small group of recumbent trikers sharing good-natured gripes on a Bent Rider Online forum ([bentrideronline.com](http://bentrideronline.com)) about their exclusion from some bike rallies. Someone jokingly proposed a rally that excluded two-wheeled vehicles, and a semi-organized event along Idaho's Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes ([friendsofcdatrails.org](http://friendsofcdatrails.org)) was arranged. Idaho being the spud capital of America, someone suggested the name TaterTOT.

The "no bikes allowed" rule was never serious, but news of a rally especially for trikers quickly spread. I got wind of it in March 2010 and was soon welcomed into the TaterTOT fold by Wayne Leggett,



**Laid back and loving it.** A TaterTOT rider easily handles a dirt road on his mean machine.

the closest thing to a TaterTOT organizer I've been able to detect. Wayne negotiated group rates at the GuestHouse Inn in Kellogg, where the about 80 attendees stayed. He also created name tags and distributed a photo gallery of attendees, creating the false impression that it was an organized event.

I arrived at the inn on a Sunday evening in late June, in time for the group barbecue more or less hosted by David Hanson, who volunteered to provide and grill sausages for that evening's potluck dinner. I soon learned that there was no agenda, there were no official events, and no one was in charge at TaterTOT.

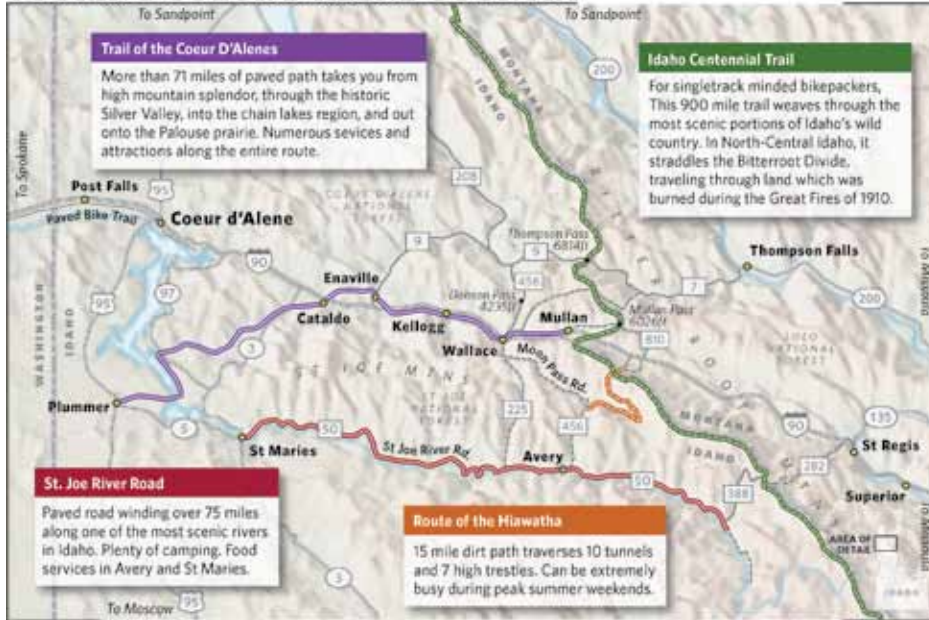
Informal group rides were expected to spontaneously congeal, however, and the next morning I set out with several others on the asphalt trail to Mullan, 17.6

miles east, a gentle climb of about 970 feet. The well-maintained tree-lined trail took us right past Excelsior Cycle in Kellogg, under I-90, and through Wallace, a funky old mining town where a big crowd of trikers met for lunch on the way back from Mullan.

The day was dry and scorching hot, and when I returned to Kellogg I found a crowd of people back from their own rides relaxing on their trikes in the shade of the motel portico. (One of the side benefits of triking, you always have a comfortable lawn chair with you.) A few were test-driving some of the 30 or so trike models in attendance.

That evening, a large group rode six miles along the trail to dinner at the Snake Pit in Enaville, Idaho, a small crossroads town at the fork of the Coeur d'Alene

## TOURING COEUR D'ALENE COUNTRY



River. The Snake Pit dates back to 1880, with a history that includes all the vices and virtues of a frontier saloon. The décor is still vintage 1880, and judging by the meal that night, it has the best barbecue west of the Mississippi. We rode back through the woods in the dark, and the long string of headlights, taillights, flash-

ers, and assorted reflectors could have easily been mistaken for an alien invasion.

Tuesday's ride was a leisurely 35-mile round trip along the trail to the west. It was another gorgeous day, and I was frequently tempted to stop for photos of the bubbling blue South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River that paralleled the

trail. Campers, kayakers, and fishermen enjoyed the river in the summer heat. I stopped in tiny Cataldo for a cool, delicious huckleberry milkshake at the Mission Inn Restaurant. The Cataldo Mission, a National Historic Landmark, was the first mission in the Northwest, established in 1842.

That evening, I decided I was ready for a real challenge. I had overheard talk of Dobson Pass, a six-mile, 1,300-foot climb into the Bitterroot Mountains on two-lane blacktop out of Wallace. Wednesday morning I strapped my CamelBak to the rear luggage rack, dropped Nuun Triberry Electrolyte tabs into two water bottles strapped to the front forks of my trike, threw a couple apples into a pannier, stuffed my pockets with trail mix, energy bars, and Hammer Gel, and was on the trail by 8:00 AM.

The climb out of Wallace on Nine Mile Creek Road (Forest Road 456) is scenic but unrelenting. I was soon in granny gear, enjoying the sound of the bubbling creek, the blue sky, and peace. The few homes along the road soon disappeared behind me, and the day grew warmer as I chugged up and up and up through the

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# NON-WEDGIE BIKES FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Below is a list of popular recumbents, folders, or other non-standard bikes. If you know of any brands or models missing from this table that are specifically designed for touring or bike travel, email us at [magazine@adventurecycling.org](mailto:magazine@adventurecycling.org). -Mike Deme

**Other Resources:** [rtrmag.com](http://rtrmag.com), [recumbents.com](http://recumbents.com), [errcmagazine.com](http://errcmagazine.com), [recumbentjournal.com](http://recumbentjournal.com), [recumbentcycling.blogspot.com](http://recumbentcycling.blogspot.com),

[e-bent.com](http://e-bent.com), [bicycleman.com/recumbents/recumbents.htm](http://bicycleman.com/recumbents/recumbents.htm), [biketcba.org/TRICORR/compare.html](http://biketcba.org/TRICORR/compare.html), [recumbentbicyclesource.com](http://recumbentbicyclesource.com), [bikeroute.com/Recumbents](http://bikeroute.com/Recumbents), [foldingcyclist.com](http://foldingcyclist.com), [foldsoc.co.uk](http://foldsoc.co.uk), [atob.org.uk/folding-bikes.html](http://atob.org.uk/folding-bikes.html), [bentrideronline.com](http://bentrideronline.com). For an extensive list of manufacturers with links, check out [ibike.org/library/bike-manufacturers.htm](http://ibike.org/library/bike-manufacturers.htm).

## RECUMBENTS, Touring:

**Bacchetta** [bacchettabikes.com](http://bacchettabikes.com), 866-364-9677. Offers the Giro and Bella touring lines.

**Barcroft** [barcroftcycles.com](http://barcroftcycles.com), 818-994-4171. Offers the Dakota.

**Catrike** [catrike.com](http://catrike.com), 407-905-0626. Offers the Expedition.

**Challenge** [challengebikes.com](http://challengebikes.com), +31 55 521 24 05. Offers the Sieran, Mistral, and Ventus.

**Cycle Genius** [cyclegenius.com](http://cyclegenius.com), 866-901-2453. Offers the Falcon.

**Easy Racers** [www.easyracers.com](http://www.easyracers.com), 831-722-9797. Offers the Tour Easy.

**Flevobike** [flevobike.nl](http://flevobike.nl), +31 0321-337200. Offers the Greenmachine with bags and trailer.

**Hase** [hasebikes.com](http://hasebikes.com), +49 23 09 93 77 0. Offers the Kettwiesel Tour.

**HP Velotechnik** [hpvelotechnik.com](http://hpvelotechnik.com), +49 61 92 97 99 2 0. Offers the Street Machine and foldable Grasshopper.

**Just Two Bikes** [justtwobikes.com](http://justtwobikes.com), 651-426-1548. Offers the Tricumbent.

**Lightfoot** [lightfootcycles.com](http://lightfootcycles.com), 406-821-4750. Offers the Ranger, Greenway, and World Traveler.

**Lightning Cycle Dynamics** [lightningbikes.com](http://lightningbikes.com), 805-736-0700. Offers the P-38.

**Linear** [linearrecumbent.com](http://linearrecumbent.com), 607-587-8835. Offers the Limo.

**LoGo** [logotrikes.com](http://logotrikes.com), +61 8941 82757. Offers the 18/20 and Rapide 18/26.

**Longbikes** [longbikes.com](http://longbikes.com), 303-986-9300. Offers the Slipstream and the Gulfstream tandem.

**M5** [m5recumbents.com](http://m5recumbents.com), +31 (0)118 - 628759. Offers the Shock Proof, Carbon High and Medium Racers.

**Maff** [maafbikes.com](http://maafbikes.com), +49(0)17048 66060. Offers the Cruising, Sporting, and Viper.

**MR Components** [mrrecumbenttrikes.com](http://mrrecumbenttrikes.com), +61 3 59835886. Offers the Swift Touring.

**Nazca Ligfietsen** [nazca-ligfietsen.nl](http://nazca-ligfietsen.nl), +31-522-490266. Offers the Explorer and Pioneer.

**Optima** [optima-cycles.nl](http://optima-cycles.nl), +31(0)251-261222. Offers the Condor, Dragon, Orca, and Rider.

**Oracle** [oraclecycleworks.com](http://oraclecycleworks.com), 416-804-9321. Offers the Omega.

**RANS** [ransbikes.com](http://ransbikes.com), 785-625-6346. Offers the Stratus LE and VRex LE.

**RecumbentUSA** [recumbentusa.com](http://recumbentusa.com), 800-473-4418. Offers the Trike X.

**Slyway** [slywayprojects.com](http://slywayprojects.com), +39 0372 29589. Offers the Explorer.

**SteinTrikes** [steintrikes.com](http://steintrikes.com). Offers the Nomad and Explorer.

**TerraTrike** [terratrike.com](http://terratrike.com), 800-945-9910. Offers the Tour and Tandem.

**Toxy** [toxy.de](http://toxy.de), +49 4127 922 83. Offers the Miles & Motion and Rotation.

**Trident** [tridenttrikes.com](http://tridenttrikes.com), 704-968-7143. Offers the Stowaway and Chameleon.

**TriSled** [trisled.com.au](http://trisled.com.au), +61 3 5981 0337. Offers the Gizmo.

**Turner** [www.turnerrecumbents.com](http://www.turnerrecumbents.com), 520-290-5646. Offers the Transport.

**Volae** [volaerecumbents.com](http://volaerecumbents.com), 715-340-1133. Offers the Expedition, Expedition Pro, and the Tour.

**Zöhler** [zohrer.com.br](http://zohrer.com.br), +55 (21) 2523-5307. Offers the Turismo.

## Recumbents, Non-Touring:

**ActionBent** [actionbent.com](http://actionbent.com), 425-444-0034.

**AVD Windcheetah** [windcheetah.co.uk](http://windcheetah.co.uk), +44 (0)161 969 9692.

**Azub** [azub.eu](http://azub.eu), +420 774 2982 29.

**Backsafer** [backsafer.com](http://backsafer.com), 800-815-2225.

**Berserker** [berserkercycledesign.com](http://berserkercycledesign.com), 805-441-0975. Suspension trike.

**Brike** [freedomryder.com](http://freedomryder.com), 800-800-5828.

**Cruzbike** [cruzbike.com](http://cruzbike.com), 888-225-2789. Offers the folding Quest.

**Edge** [edgerecumbents.com](http://edgerecumbents.com), 865-982-2555.

**Greenspeed** [greenspeed.com](http://greenspeed.com), 866-314-4323. Offers standard, tandems, and folders.

**Human Powered Machines** [hpm.catoregon.org](http://hpm.catoregon.org), 800-343-5568.

**KMX Trikes** [kmxus.com](http://kmxus.com), 877-449-4188.

**Maxarya** [maxarya.com](http://maxarya.com), 416-737-5745.

**MetaBikes** [meta-bikes.com](http://meta-bikes.com), +34 937 547 378.

**Organic Engines** [organicengines.com](http://organicengines.com), 850-443-3284.

**RaptoBike** [raptobike.com](http://raptobike.com), +31 (0) 297 525 330.

**Sun** [sunbicycles.com](http://sunbicycles.com), 305-238-1866.

**Tripendo** [tripendo.com](http://tripendo.com), +49 (0)7142 - 91 99 60.

**Velokraft** [velokraft.com](http://velokraft.com), +48 504 140 424.

**Whike** [whike.com](http://whike.com), +316 5478 3068. Pedals and a sail!

**Woodside** [woodsidecycles.com](http://woodsidecycles.com), 937-514-7556.

## Recumbents, Build-Your-Own:

**Bentech** [bentechbikes.com](http://bentechbikes.com). Sets include three 22" x 34" blueprints and a fully illustrated, step-by-step construction guide.

## FOLDING BIKES

**Airnimal** [airnimal.com](http://airnimal.com), +44 (0) 1954-782020. Offers the Joey, the Rhino, the Chameleon, and custom models for touring.

**Bike Friday** [bikefriday.com](http://bikefriday.com), 800-777-0258. Offers a variety of folding bikes and accessories for touring including the Family Tandem Traveler.

**Birdy** offers a variety of folding bikes and accessories for touring. [birdybike.com](http://birdybike.com), 503-928-7723.

**Brompton** [bromptonbicycle.co.uk](http://bromptonbicycle.co.uk), +44 (0)20 8232-8484. Offers the P6R and P6R-X.

**Moulton** [moultonbicycles.co.uk](http://moultonbicycles.co.uk), +44 (0) 1225 865895. Offers the TSR-27, TSR-30 and the AM GT for touring.

**Dahon** [dahon.com](http://dahon.com), 800-442-3511. Offers the 700C-wheel Tornado.

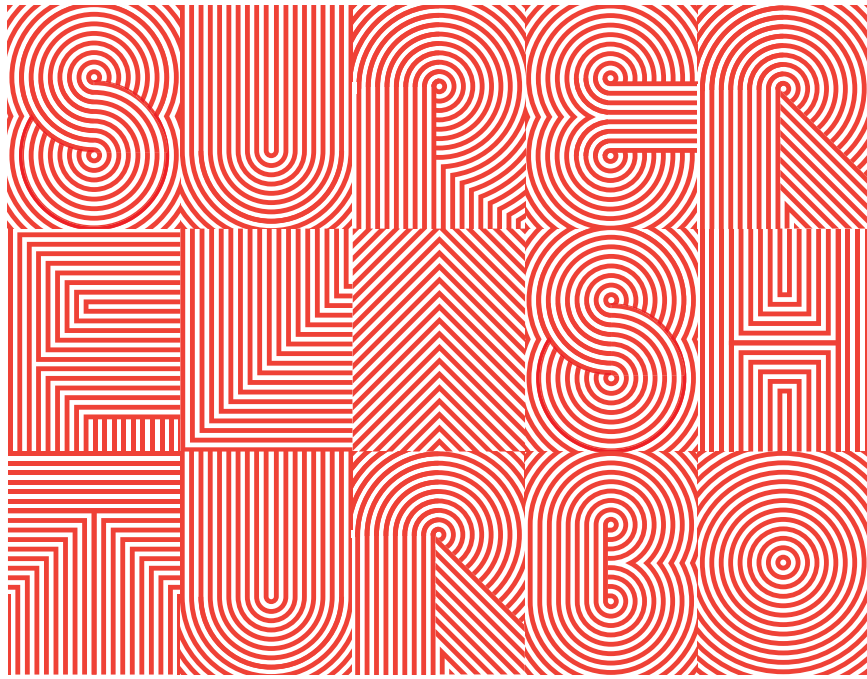
## TANDEM

**Co-Motion** [co-motion.com](http://co-motion.com), 866-282-6336. Offers the Mocha and Primera.

**da Vinci** [davincitandems.com](http://davincitandems.com), 303-936-1241. Offers the Joint AdVenture.

**Dawes** [dawescycles.com](http://dawescycles.com). Offers the Duet, Galaxy Twin, and Double Edge.

**Santana** [santanatandem.com](http://santanatandem.com), 800-334-6136. All tandems suitable for self-supported touring (48-spoke wheel option recommended).



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Coeur d'Alene National Forest. A pair of cyclists passed me going the other direction and gave me big smiles and thumbs-up as they whizzed downhill. (When you ride a recumbent trike, you get lots of smiles, waves, and shouts of "nice bike!" The word "trike" apparently doesn't occur to most people when they see an adult ride by.)

It was very steep and hot the last few miles and I paused a moment in the shady spots between switchbacks to rest. I was grateful for the energy gel and electrolyte drink, and regretful that you can't stand on the pedals when going uphill on a recumbent.

I let out a big "Whoopee!" when I reached the top of the pass, relieved that I had made it. I hadn't really known whether my legs, heart, and lungs were up to it, and reaching the top unleashed a rush of optimism about future adventures.

The easier and shorter path would have been to turn around and head straight back to Wallace, but I was curious about the road ahead, so after a short break I headed down the other side. Initially it was scary steep with killer switchbacks, and I pumped my disc breaks continuously, keeping my speed below 30 MPH. I wasn't even tempted to let it all hang out. If I went over the edge into the forest, I'd probably never be found again. Scary but beautiful — the very definition of a great adventure!

After a screaming descent for a few miles, the road became a gentle downhill journey for mile after mile of forest, farmhouses, creeks, and cows. At length I came to an aging rural gas station/general store/ice cream parlor where I had another lip-smackin' good huckleberry milkshake — apparently a specialty of the Coeur d'Alene region. From there it was many more scenic miles along the North Fork of the river before I reached Enaville and the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes. When I pulled into the shade of the portico back at Kellogg, my odometer said I'd gone 58 miles that day — not much for seasoned riders but enough to give me the confidence to plan more challenging adventures on my trike in the future. **AC**

*Carl Schroeder has fond memories of the time when he could ride a bicycle all day long without whining. He was so energized by TaterTOT, especially his trike excursion up Dobson Pass, that he's now dreaming of a cross-country trike trip.*