

PHOTOS BY DANIEL MURPHY AND GREG SIPLE

## During the grey days

of Missoula's winter, Siple is generally easy to find. Leaving my office, turn right, walk about eight yards and to your left, enter a longish, well-lit room with a large, shaded window occupying most of the far wall. Greg will be seated at his desk/drawing table. The brown vinyl on his War Surplus chair (at least WW II, possibly WW I) is shiny from wear. A U.S. Government tag of approval for bicycles hangs from the chair's back.

The not inconsiderable surface area of his office—an enormous wooden platform, a light table, his desk and a bookshelf—is covered with sheets of paper, boards and other creations of the printer's art, like moss clinging to bare rock. This mobile, external filing system is in a state of flux, not unlike the natural world, after which it is apparently patterned.

The most notable change in his office usually occurs just prior to the appearance of a visiting dignitary, when orders have come down from on high to get things straightened up. Greg is a flurry of motion, pausing only briefly to decide whether or not to dispose of a newly unearthed rough for a "Wheels" strip from 1977, or a sketch of an ad announcing the Huffy Grant (1981). On the last such occasion, he had me heft the wastepaper basket to properly impress upon me the weight of his efforts.

From this chaos, of course, Greg creates order—the order you see in each issue of this magazine, the order of countless coupons,



GREG SIPLE

Photo by June Siple.

forms and other small projects funnelled to his desk, and the order of his personal historical record of touring cyclists, represented in this special section. During the bright days of Missoula's summer, it's not quite so easy to find Siple. You're liable to discover an empty chair, alone among the shifting sheets of paper. Greg will be outside, flitting along the sidewalk like a water ouzel along a stream, posing his subjects against the white wall in front of Bikecentennial's offices, arranging their bikes, orchestrating his parade of photo opportunities.

We see quite a few long-distance cyclists during the summer. They come in all shapes and sizes and with all kinds of bikes. Franco, a round-the-world cyclist, had an umbrella attached to his bike frame as a shade against the sun. The unusual particularly enamours Greg: he made special arrangements to record Franco's image. Franco was in a hurry, as most round-the-worlders seem to be, so Greg met him during off-hours—a compromise as the light

wasn't just right.

Most obsessions get worse before they get better and Greg's is no exception. Not content to rely solely on the flow of cyclists coming to him, he has taken to seeking out subjects for his record. The last one I remember was towing a 400-pound log on a homemade trailer. The log had been procured from nearby Hellgate Canyon. If you have a dog along for the tour, play the harmonica or trumpet



DANIEL MURPHY

while you ride, juggle at rest stops or do anything else out of the ordinary and pass through Missoula, you're not likely to escape Greg's lens.

I don't know Daniel Murphy, the other photographer represented in this special section, but I recognized his work immediately. Murphy's photos came in the mail one day and I knew there was a Greg Siple clone living in Houston, Texas. In his cover letter, Murphy explained, "Since June, I have been photographing friends with their bicycles."

Prior to the arrival of Murphy's photos, I actually hadn't taken much interest in Greg's project. The quality of the photos certainly couldn't be impugned but I had trouble with their historical relevance. I figured that if there was a Smithsonian draft, these wouldn't go until the 15th, maybe 16th round.

The existence of another photographer patiently posing people with their bicycles changed my attitude. The coincidence was intriguing. The difference in approach was irresistible. Greg is creating a historical record. The subjects are posed similarly and biographical information is collected, along with details about the trip. If all of Greg's cyclists posed stiffly for the camera, his project might resemble an annual report, but it doesn't, because they don't—the unexpected happens, someone decides to do a handstand on his top tube instead of standing behind his bike.

Murphy, on the other hand, creates the unexpected. You look down at the cyclist in one photo and up at him in the next. In this photo, the background defies gravity, in that one, the cyclist isn't in the same room with her bike. Biographical details are sketchy or nonexistent. The whole thing is loose, but planned.

So here's your chance to meet a few of Daniel Murphy's friends, and to glimpse a small part of Greg Siple's growing historical record. I'm not sure what will become of Murphy's project. I suspect that Greg's inventory of photos will continue to expand. I'm certain that Bikecentennial exists only because of the people on the next four pages, and thousands more like them.

—D'Ambrosio



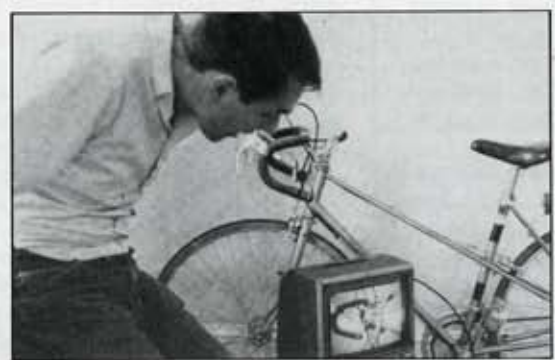
1 **ANDREA HOPE LAMMERS**, 24, advertising executive.  
 2 **GEORGE BLACKMON**, 36, plumbing sales.  
 3 **SAMUEL A. ROBERTS**, 30, unknown.  
 4 **WILLIAM WALSH CRAWFORD, JR.**, 29, television producer.  
 5 **CAROLYN VAUGHAN**, 28, museum person.



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1 **BRENT GARRETT**, 23, Houston, Texas. Led a North Star trip to Alaska on a mountain bike—no flats or broken spokes.  
 Trip: Missoula, Montana to Anchorage, Alaska.  
 2 **EWOUT BOM**, 22, Rotterdam, Zuid-Holland. While riding through a dry county in Kentucky, heard he had passed his final exams in business economics at Erasmus University in Rotterdam—going on for his master's degree.  
 Trip: Yorktown, Virginia to Vancouver, British Columbia.  
 3 **BART JONES**, 40, Portland, Oregon. Would rather be flying—travels by bicycle because it's cheap.  
 Trip: Seattle, Washington to Edmonton, Alberta.  
 4 **JANELLE PARKS**, 22, Kettering, Ohio. A member of the 1984 Olympic cycling team.  
 Trip: En route from "the Olympics to nowhere."  
 5 **SHINJI FUJITA**, 26, Shimonoseki, Japan. Bike was stolen in Montreal, ending his trip.  
 Trip: Los Angeles, California to Montreal, Quebec.



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- 1. **THOMAS "T.J." LEE PHILLIPS**, 7, student.
- 2. **ETHAN PODET**, 29, physician.
- 3. **RITA LUCIDO**, 27, attorney.
- 4. **DAVID PAUL CUNNINGHAM**, 28, lawyer.
- 5. **STEVEN LEONARD McVICKER**, 29, journalist.



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- 1. **ANDREA COLNES**, 26, North Caldwell, New Jersey. Had been on the road for two years and had ridden 18,000 miles. Trip: Around the world.
- 2. **RICHARD KANDARIAN**, 29, Irvine, California. Dreamed of recumbent bicycles as a teenager, built a "horribly uncomfortable prone bicycle" from a picture in Popular Mechanics and crashed it. Built this bike in one week from scratch. Trip: Berkeley, California to Warren, New Jersey.
- 3. **MARTY HYMAN**, 18, Baltimore, Maryland. Trip: Yorktown, Virginia to Portland, Oregon with a Bikecentennial Trans-America group.
- 4. **KIM ROLSTON**, 26, Salem, Virginia. Member of a Bikecentennial Trans-America group "crazier than most (see #3 above), we even carried flyswatters!" Enjoys teaching aerobics. Trip: Yorktown, Virginia to Portland, Oregon.
- 5. **PAUL BURKART**, 23, Columbia, Maryland. Upon crossing into Canada, was asked to prove he had enough money to get where he was going. Trip: San Francisco, California to Columbia, Maryland.