

JT PHONE HOME



DAN BURDEN 1976

ONE OF THE MOST EVOCATIVE photos in our archives from the summer of 1976 is that of a lone cyclist sitting in a parking lot and chatting on a pay phone, in the dark, across the road from a Sinclair filling station. It illustrates how different, and how limited, the options for on-the-road communications were 40 years ago compared to today.

That lone cyclist's name is Jim Terry, and he lives in Hoover, Alabama. The shot was taken by Dan Burden "somewhere in western Missouri," Jim recalls. Interestingly, the phone conversation he was having on a now almost-extinct type of telephone involved other pieces of technology that have gone the way of the dodo, or nearly so: the film camera and the slide projector.

"I was calling my parents," Jim remembered. "I had promised that immediately after arriving back home in August, I would put together an exhibition of my Bikecentennial photos for the Birmingham Museum of Art. I would put the film in the mail for processing by Kodak, and have the slides mailed to my

parents' place. They would look at them right away to make sure my camera was functioning properly. I called in regularly, collect, to verify that everything was working correctly. In all, I shot about 1,500 slides."

For younger readers who may not know what a collect phone call is, it's the same as "reverse the charges," meaning the recipient of the call pays for it—in this case, Jim's parents.

I had only two months to ride, so I started in Missoula and rode as an independent [not attached to a Bikecentennial group]. I arrived there from Los Angeles on June 8, having just graduated with my bachelor's degree in architecture from Southern Cal. Before Bikecentennial, the longest ride I had ever completed was 25 miles, with a camping overnight, and 25 miles back the next day.

After I returned home in August, I put together a six-projector slide program that used a screen wide enough to show three slides side-by-side, accompanied by music. It was the first multimedia exhibit the Birmingham museum had ever done. It ran for

one week and then closed; I started graduate school in Michigan the following week.

Jim had made it to the end of the trail—almost.

When I got to Williamsburg, there was a hurricane creating havoc in Yorktown, so the police wouldn't let us ride the remaining 13 miles or so. That didn't bother me so much because I hadn't started on the West Coast. But for those who had their hearts set on a coast-to-coast ride, it was a disappointment. However, for everyone, the amazingly friendly people we met and friendships we had formed, coupled with the beauty of the American mountains, flatlands, and rolling countryside, made the need to reach that actual destination far less important than it seemed at the start of the ride.

I'd heard it said for many years before my adventure that in life we should enjoy the ride and not focus so much on the destination. Bikecentennial allowed me to see why that advice is so true. What a life experience! What a ride! •

LEMONADE AND A COOL SWIM

I grew up just outside of Eminence, Missouri, out on Highway 106. I have wonderful memories of the summer of 1976. My two older sisters and myself, along with a couple neighbor girls, set up a lemonade and cookie stand down by the creek and would eagerly wait for the bikers to come along. The 1976 route went right by our house that sat along the banks of Shawnee Creek. We had several bikers who would stop to visit and swim in the creek to get cooled off and, yes, even purchase a cold cup of lemonade and a chocolate no-bake cookie from the barefoot country gals of south Missouri. It was such a good experience for us, and making a few cents for each of us was extra nice. One of the bikers even gave us a Frisbee, which was so special at the time. I'm 42 and have three children now, the youngest soon to be 18. When my children were little they would always ask, "Momma, won't you please tell us stories of when you were a little girl?" I would always tell them how special to me that summer was when so many bikers came through. I wonder if there is anyone out there who was on that ride and remembers stopping at Shawnee Creek?

-Lisa L.

GREG SIPLE



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MIMICKING THE DYNAMICS OF GROUP BICYCLE TRAVEL, riders balance around a wheel. This iconic image from 1976 is one featured in a display of Bikecentennial photos at the Adventure Cycling Association headquarters in Missoula. During a visit in 2014, Tom Kalina (right) found himself in the photo. In 2015, Theresa Whalen (top) pointed herself out.