

# CHAINMAIL

ED'S NOTE: Only letters with full names, addresses & phone details will be considered. If corresponding by email, do not send attachments. Rather copy and paste your contribution.



e-mail: [aftrac@global.co.za](mailto:aftrac@global.co.za)



RIDE MAGAZINE The Editor,  
PO Box 3355, Rivonia 2128

## Happy women...



Dear RIDE

As women cyclists from the Western Cape, we are fortunate enough to be part of the first season of a sponsorship for women's cycling. Huisgenoot, You and Drum Magazines, together with Cyclelab Le Peloton, are breaking new ground with the Women's League, (set to have started in late September). In addition, they trained a women's racing team to take part in the Four Day Tour in Ermelo in September, as well as an all-women's team who will ride in the Pickfords Double Century at the end of November. Further information about all of these wonderful opportunities for women's cycling may be found at <http://www.sa-cycling.com> or <http://www.cyclelab.com>

The enthusiasm and generosity from the sponsors is incredible and the commitment from the organisers of the sponsorship (Karen Pinder and Tracey Bailey) is overwhelming. It is so wonderful to see women's cycling finally getting some recognition and we wish to thank Huisgenoot, You and Drum Magazines and Cycle Lab Le Peloton from the bottom of our hearts. We're looking forward to the best cycling season that the women in the Western Cape have ever seen!

Elaine Chesterton, Penny Krohn, Karin Procter, Jane van Thiel and Michelle Wilsnagh (the first Huisgenoot/You/Drum Women's Racing Team)

## ... and a not-quite-so-happy woman



Dear Editor

Thank you for the articles on women cyclists – I thoroughly enjoyed them. Ladies need to be more accepted. But why, oh, why is Ronel van Wyk referred to as a Sex kitten? She is lovely, of that there is no doubt. If we ladies want to be taken seriously, then we have to drop the continual referral to our sexual attributes. The guys are not called names! Following the article on Ronel are two totally obnoxious adverts. Anatomic with the thin, spindly legged advertising ladies attire "Tight and for a tan". Is that why we are cycling? To be noticed and get a tan? Then Cyclone with an even more disgusting "Barbie" advert. If we want to be taken seriously and treated as

equals then things need to change. Suzie Mills, you've done a great job promoting cycling. Please keep up the good work.

Gillian Fidor

## That's not a mamba!



Dear RIDE

I thoroughly enjoyed Claude Marthaler's account of his mountain bike tour of Africa (RIDE June/July 2000). However, I would like to point out that the dead snake dangling over his bike's handlebars is definitely not a black mamba! Black mambas are slender (this is a bulky snake in comparison), have a coffin-shaped head and, contrary to their name, are in fact never black. They are generally grey or olive-brown. To anyone who has seen one, they are a very distinctive snake. I am not sure what type of snake is pictured and identification is made more difficult without any knowledge of location. However, the snake is very cobra-like. Unfortunately, human nature is to sensationalise and in Africa every dark snake is a black mamba! It should also be remembered that snakes play a vital role in any ecosystem. Indiscriminate killing of snakes is an unfortunate human pastime and should not be condoned.

Dr Martin Whiting  
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## Road safety applies to even us



Dear Editor

On Saturday morning (2000-08-12), I was cycling down Hendrik Potgieter Road (R47) in Johannesburg, westwards from Hillfox Power Centre. After turning around, there was a headwind blowing which was quite strong at times, but still a nice ride, all in all. On one of the downhill on this route (right where the name "Little Falls" is spelled out in white-washed rocks on the hillside next to the road) I was passed by a truck carrying some tons of mixed earth, rocks and building rubble. Quite a well-mannered truck driver too – he gave me metres of space when he passed me. What struck me was that a cyclist was drafting this huge truck. Here was this guy on his bike, no

more than two metres from the tailgate of this huge lorry loaded with loosely packed material. I was doing around 40 kph down this hill, and this truck passed me easily doing 60 or 70 kph. Now we all know that material can and does fall off these lorries – quite often in fact large rocks fall off. If that happened that day with that lorry, there would have been no way for that cyclist to have escaped serious injury. I cannot imagine that the lorry driver could have been aware of the cyclist drafting his vehicle – that lorry was just too wide for the driver to see a guy on a bike two metres behind his tailgate. One hard touch on the brakes to avoid a kid running across the road, or some taxi driver plying his suicidal trade, would have sent that cyclist into the chassis of the lorry. Are we cyclists thinking when we do things like this?

Jan Stander  
Meredale, Johannesburg

## Unhappy readers write



Dear RIDE

I have just purchased the Aug/Sept issue of RIDE at R15. When the very first issue of RIDE appeared on the shelves a few years ago, I was very excited as I always believed that there was a need for such a publication and soon afterwards I became a subscriber. Whilst a subscriber I noticed that that RIDE was available on the shelves before I received my copy for which I paid in advance. I raised that at the time with the then editor at the Lifecycle show in Cape Town and her response was something to the effect of 'take it or leave it'. I then did not renew my subscription but kept on buying it every time it appeared at the cycle shop. After reading this last issue, I know there is going to be a new pilot at the helm and I wish him well. The purpose of the letter is to tell him that I am starting to doubt whether I am getting value for money. The reason for my doubt? The issue consisted of 92 pages of which more than 60 pages are full page adverts, half page adverts, third page adverts, full page photos, calendar of events and other non-editorial content. Believe me I am not stingy because I happily pay more than R50 for Cycle Sport which contains material which one can read over and over. Surely the advertisers must pay for those pages

and not the readers.

Good luck with the magazine, I will keep on looking at it at the shop and buy it if I think it offers value for money. There are now also other 'kids on the block'.

Arno Botha  
Lynnwood, Pretoria

Dear Arno

We use the Post Office to deliver magazines to our subscribers and courier services to deliver the bulk packages to cycle shops. The speed of the Post Offices service varies and we unfortunately have no control over this. As for your doubts over value for money, let us know what you think after having read this issue, which you will have had to buy unless you have plenty of spare time to spend in your local cycle shop. ED - new pilot



Dear Editor

I would like to comment on your report of the Giro del Capo 2000 in an earlier edition of your magazine. I am the Chairman and Manager of the Elfin Cycling Club (Coltex Team). I obviously followed the race from our team vehicle. I am not aware of the source of your information, or whether you actually had a journalist follow the event, but I would like to voice my disapproval of certain pertinent facts which were omitted from your report. On Stage 3 of the event, one of our riders, Marcel La Ponder, went on a heroic 40km solo breakaway from the main bunch. This to me is indeed heroic and courageous, since most of the riders in our team, do not cycle full-time. He had the guts to take on the country's best riders. The very next day, on Stage 4, another of our riders, Geddon Rudock, went on a 70km solo breakaway. Neither of these feats were mentioned by any newspaper or TV reports. Why is it that journalists report only on the winners? It is not the winners who make an event, but the masses who partake in an event. If that is the case, then you are not doing anything to create an interest in the sport for the masses. You are focussing only on the winners of the race. I personally feel that that form of journalism