

# TERRA TIMES

The official publication of the Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association

Winter 2005

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CORBA is committed to gaining and maintaining mountain bike access to trails in Los Angeles and its surrounding areas through education, information and preservation

## Youth Adventures Celebrates Its 10th Year.

By Kurt Loheit & Peter Heumann

Seems hard to imagine, but CORBA's Youth Adventures program will turn ten years old in September. What started out as a phone call turned into a mountain bike adventure for thousands of disadvantaged kids who otherwise may not have had an opportunity to experience what the Santa Monica Mountains has to offer. After a decade, Youth Adventures has truly grown into a community asset, and continues to serve an audience that sometimes is overlooked.



Ten years ago, an unfortunate turn of events resulted in the passing of Charlie Litzky. For those who remember, Charlie was not only an avid BMX and mountain bike rider, but was mountain biking legend John Tomac's manager. A few months after Charlie's passing, I received a phone call from Charlie's widow, Mary. With his popularity in the biking world, Mary had received numerous donations and was looking for a way to best remember Charlie. At the time, CORBA had

**YA Anniversary continues on page 3**

## Advocacy Briefs

By Jeff Klinger

### THREE TRAILS TO BE OPENED ON THE HORIZON

CORBA has been informed that the State Department of Parks and Recreation is intending on designating THREE NEW TRAILS OPEN for mountain bicycling use! The following trails are anticipated to be designated multi-use by 2005:

#### Mesa Peak

Located at the top of Bulldog.

#### Buckeye Trail

located at the Moorpark entrance of Sycamore Canyon/Pt. Mugu State Park. This trail will provide an alternate drop-in/climb-out of the park. The current situation is a long, steep paved road (nothing wrong with steep, but we're happy to ditch the pavement for dirt!).

#### Hidden Pond Trail

Located in Sycamore Canyon/Pt. Mugu State Park.

#### OTHER NOTES

Statistics of the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area indicate that mountain bicyclists represent over 54% of the trail users. Meanwhile, only a small percentage of the single track

trails are designated opened for bicycle use. CORBA is at work pursuing the opening of a group of trails for mountain bicycle use in the Santa Monica Mountains. Rather than selecting individual trails and separately ushering them through the long and arduous process of multi-use designation (bicycles allowed), we have identified numerous closed trails that we believe should be opened for bicycle use. These trails have been selected based on high demand for access and common sense.

For example, only parts of the Backbone trail is currently open for bicycle use, and the

Backbone trail is a prime transportation corridor connecting various trails of the Santa Monica Mountains and linking the surrounding communities. It has always been

CORBA's goal to gain access to the entire Backbone from Point Mugu eastward. We are continuing our pursuit and stepping it up. We don't expect it to be an overnight process. As anyone who has been involved with trail advocacy knows, there are many hurdles including land management due process, legal requirements, opposition by other user groups and funding.

Aside from the three trails mentioned here, the overall trail planning process is pending the release of the final Trail Management Plan by the National Park Service. Following release of the Plan, specific trail planning will resume and CORBA will be there each step of the way advocating for access.

While the Board of Directors keeps involved with the process of trail access, we need and want your help. We encourage membership participation at meetings and at public hearings such as regional planning and specific trail planning. We also encourage you

### MOUNTAIN BICYCLISTS REPRESENT OVER 54% OF SMMR TRAIL USERS. YET, ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE SINGLE TRACK TRAILS ARE DESIGNATED OPENED FOR BICYCLE USE

to take a few moments every now and then to write letters and emails when issues arise. Every bit of participation contributes to the big picture of trail access and we thank you for your participation.

## CORBA Announces 2005 Trail Crew Schedule

**Come out and lend a hand. No experience necessary! For more information, check the CORBA website or the Hotline for work locations. [www.corbamt.com](http://www.corbamt.com); 818-773-3555.**

Just a few hours a month can help preserve your favorite trails for years to come.

- Give a little back to the sport you love;
- Help preserve your favorite trails for future riders;
- Meet some new friends.

January 8: San Juan Trail

February 5

March 13

April 22-24: State Trail Days

May 14

June 4: National Trail Day

July 9

August 20

September 24: National Public Lands Day

October 8: COSCA Trail Day

November 12

December 10



## Access to the Whoops Preserved

A local Brentwood area Home Owners Association plan to erect a gate that would block access to the Whoops from Canyonback Road have been put on hold thanks to the efforts of CORBA and the Canyonback Alliance.

The Crown Home Owners Association includes 71 homes along Canyonback Road at the Mountain Gate Estates (visible from the 405

pass). This is a vital Los Angeles City street that connects Kenter Avenue and the coveted Whoop-dee-doos trail in Brentwood, to dirt Mulholland and the trails/fire roads of the Santa Monica Mountains. The Crown HOA wants to build and privatize the street to create a gated community. This effort would have restricted access from dirt Mulholland to Kenter Avenue and the Whoops.

Recently, and as a result of the efforts of CORBA and the Canyonback Alliance, Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo ordered that "no further improvements and no further action regarding the gates will be permitted at this time." Construction of the gate is, for the time being, halted.



## Reaching Out to Kids with Adventure

Youth Adventures is a program that takes children between ages 8 and 17 on mountain bike rides in the Santa

Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The program is geared towards youth who don't otherwise have the means or opportunity to enjoy experiences with nature.

Youth Adventures supplies the bikes, helmets, gloves, water bottles, water and snacks. The kids receive instruction on safety, trail rules, and how to use the bicycles prior to the ride. During the ride, interpretive and historical information is presented about the park and its surroundings.

Rides are supported by adult volunteer ride assistants as well as members of the Mountain Bike Unit (MBU).

**Come out and help with one of the rides. For more information contact:**

Holly Harman 818-882-2839  
Danny Y'Barra 818-999-5785  
Virgil Hemrick 818-704-1284  
David Mummert 805-522-1272  
Mike Poteet 805-524-3939

#### YA Anniversary continued from page 1

been looking at starting a youth program on mountain bikes, and Mary had heard about it. After a few get togethers, the basis for a program was developed, and the South Bay Wheelmen presented CORBA a check from the Charlie Litzky Memorial Foundation to start the program. Along with the check came 20 new bikes from Schwinn, and all the necessary helmets and gloves. Originally called Trips for Kids, the program kicked off with the first ride at Cheseboro Canyon. The group on that ride was Parents of Watts, an inner-city organization that offered kids opportunities to get out and experience life outside of their daily environment.

Leading up to that ride was an emotional roller coaster for Mary. Until the last moment, it was unclear as to whether or not she would attend. Mary and Callie Best, both from the South Bay Wheelmen, had worked together with myself to get the program kicked off. At the end of the day, it was great to see Mary come back with the kids. She had decided to participate, and was overwhelmed at how even the first ride was so successful. With the smiles on all the kids faces we knew we had a winner.

Youth Adventures relies heavily on the Mountain Bike Unit for day to day operations. Without that support, the program would not succeed. In particular, Danny Ybarra and Holly

Harmon, have been there since the beginning. John Campbell has been handling the scheduling for the groups for years, and many others like Dave Mummert, Mike Poteet and others have been volunteering their time to lead these kids on rides for years. As a CORBA program, even at ten years old, Youth Adventures looks to donations in order to keep serving the community. With this milestone, we hope that it will continue in its success and will grow for another ten years. There are kids counting on it. And if you want to see real positive impact, come out on a ride. That's a birthday present we can all use. Happy Birthday!

## Rogers Road Trail Work — Three Perspectives, One Goal

By David M. Grey

Kirk and his riding buddies complain that Rogers Road is no longer rideable because it is so rutted that mountain bikers must dismount and walk sections. Kirk and his friends think the trail needs to be smoothed out so the difficult sections will be safe and rideable. Roger's road is a crucial link in the backbone trail system and can be accessed through Will Rogers Park or from the Hub in Topanga. Roger's Road was a favorite mountain bike trail until it was closed in 1986. This trail closure helped spawn CORBA, which was instrumental in getting Roger's Road open for mountain bikers once again several years later.

Steven tells us that Roger's Road has been irreparably destroyed with the best technical sections smoothed out by a Sweco. A Sweco is a mini dozer that is often used to build new trails or maintain older ones. Guadalasco Trail, at Point Mugo State Park, was built with a Sweco.

Jason rides Roger's Road a couple of times a month. It is near his house in Santa Monica and convenient for early morning rides before going to work in West Los Angeles. Jason could care less about the ruts, he rides what he can and walks what he can't ride. Jason is just happy to have such a nice trail ten minutes from home. Jason doesn't really notice the ruts, or that the trail has been smoothed over, he has been riding the trail for years and sees it as constantly changing. Jason sees the changes in the trails over time as part of the fun. Jason is a bit apathetic though and does not realize that every once in a while volunteers come out to trim back some of the brush so that he can ride without scratching his legs on the overgrown brush. Jason has never heard of CORBA, even though he has

been mountain biking for almost 15 years now. It never dawned on him that riding the trails could be a problem for anyone. Most of the people he meets on the trail are happy to be out doors and enjoying nature.

Steven and Kirk have complained about Roger's Road to CORBA. Jason does not even know that CORBA exists. CORBA, however, must be concerned with all three and the many thousand more who ride the trails.



CORBA's core mission is to keep trails open for mountain biking and to get more trails open for mountain biking. As part of this goal, CORBA is actively involved in trail maintenance and has been helping to maintain the trails for the last 17 years. CORBA is proud that two of its members, Kurt Loheit and Rich Pinder are nationally recognized experts in trail maintenance. This means that both Kurt and Rich have learned what work is necessary to make a trail sustainable over the long term. Kurt and Rich are often sought out by land managers, agencies, and mountain biking groups for advice on trail maintenance.

Trail design and maintenance takes

many forms. First and foremost the local land manager is charged with preserving our trail system for all users be they hikers, runners, equestrians or mountain bikes. The land manager is required to look into the future and preserve the trails for generations to come and to take steps that will keep the trails intact for future users. The land managers must balance these interests and more. Some of the trail users are looking for a more rustic and natural experience, others a small stretch of trail to push a baby carriage and smell the wildflowers. Still others are looking for steep rugged grades to run up, or ride through and challenge their technical skills. Each are legitimate needs that the land manager must juggle. To compound the problem are budget cuts, potential liability and the knowledge that the Santa Monica Mountains is open space that is right in the middle of some of the most densely populated area in the country.

The agency relies, to a great deal, on volunteers, such as the CORBA trail crew and other organizations to come on out and do some maintenance by hand. Volunteers will cut back some of the overgrown brush or work on the surface of the trails with hand tools as they erode over time. Without such efforts the trails would eventually disappear having been taken back by mother nature. The natural changes in the trail must be managed to keep the trail useable. This is something that requires taking the long view. That smoothed out section of trail, will revert to a more rugged and technical trail after a few rainy seasons. Given even more time the trail will become highly technical, as time continues on, the once technical wonder trail will become completely consumed and barely passable.

The trail rider that has been biking for

## SOME TRAIL USERS ARE LOOKING FOR A MORE RUSTIC AND NATURAL EXPERIENCE, OTHERS A SMALL STRETCH OF TRAIL TO PUSH A BABY CARRIAGE AND SMELL THE WILDFLOWERS. STILL OTHERS ARE LOOKING FOR STEEP RUGGED GRADES TO RUN UP, OR RIDE THROUGH AND CHALLENGE THEIR TECHNICAL SKILLS.

only 5-10 years does not always see this long term cycle that is measured in decades or more. There is disappointment when a favorite section of trail is smoothed out and appears to be lost forever. The same holds true for the non-technical rider that laments the loss of the once smooth and easily ridden trail because of one too many rainy seasons. Historically, Rogers Road was built by Will Rogers so he could ride his cars up through to Topanga. It

## South Bay Access at Stake — Palos Verdes Peninsula

Brad House

Local mountain bike riders, hikers, runners and equestrians have enjoyed trails throughout the Palos Verdes Peninsula's open spaces for more than 25 years with minimal user conflicts. Thankfully, these open spaces cannot be developed due to the unique earth-flow geology of the area, subjecting the land to constant movement-up to several feet per year. In the 1950s, some homes were lost to the constant motion of the earth, and a moratorium was enacted on new construction. Enter the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. The Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the purchase and preservation of open-space on the Peninsula. The Conservancy is expected to be the land management agency for open spaces acquired by the city.

Local mountain bicyclists recently organized to represent bicyclists and ensure a cooperative relationship with the Conservancy. On April 14, 2004,

is hard to believe that this sweet and apparently very natural trail was once a road built for cars.

Trails are a long term feature that will change drastically over time. The ultimate in natural trails would be close to no trail at all, because it would be consumed by the natural process of erosion and plant growth. The art of good trail work is to keep the trail sustainable, meaning that it will last a long

the newly established CORBA Members of Palos Verdes introduced itself to the Conservancy. Troy Braswell, George Hicks, and Brad House made an effective presentation explaining CORBA and highlighting the Weir study, which concludes that hikers and mountain bicyclists cause equal wear on trails. The Sierra Club's statement regarding their recognition of mountain bicyclists as legitimate trail users was also highlighted.

CORBA-PV initiated education efforts with all Forrestral users regarding appropriate trail etiquette, rallied trail work volunteers and established a communications portal with other trail users. CORBA-PV's activism has inspired tremendous support as illustrated by the attendance at the Conservancy's first public input meeting, the June 5th trail work day at Forrestral, and the booth at the Palos Verdes Street Fair, as well as the great member response to a recent trail use

## THE WEIR STUDY [CONCLUDES] THAT HIKERS AND MOUNTAIN BICYCLISTS CAUSE EQUAL WEAR ON TRAILS.

Sweco make the trail appear to have been overworked and unnecessarily widened or smoothed out. Resist the temptation to judge the trail by how it looks immediately after the work. Much like plastic surgery, it takes time for the swelling and inflammation to go away. It's the same for the trails.

For more information about trail work please go to [corbamtb.com](http://corbamtb.com).

survey conducted by the Conservancy.

We continue to innovate and initiate new ideas. One idea that may be a first is the concept of an Educational Bike Unit (EBU) patrol. Our EBU riders will traverse the trails in preserve areas and educate other users about riding responsibly, sensitive habitat and native species preservation. They will also distribute a card or small pamphlet that explains these things. They may also gather information about other users they encounter on the trails and function as a communications portal to the Conservancy.

Through this locally active group of CORBA members, we plan to successfully retain bicycle access to most, if not all, of the existing trails and set a precedent for future trail access management as additional open space parcels are acquired and preserved.

We welcome your support. Please visit [www.mtbpv.org](http://www.mtbpv.org) for continued updates.

## CORBA Founder Inducted Into Mountain Bike Hall of Fame

Kurt Loheit has been a leader of the mountain bike community's efforts to contribute to the design, construction and maintenance of sustainable trail systems. For more than seventeen years, his tireless advocacy has left its mark on clubs, programs and most importantly, riding areas across North America.

Kurt was a founder of the Concerned Off Road Bicyclists Association in Los Angeles in 1987 and still serves as a member of CORBA's Advisory Board. The following year, Kurt represented CORBA at the meeting where five California clubs came together to create IMBA.

As an engineer, working for Hughes Aircraft (now Boeing), Kurt recognized that policymakers thought in terms of programs and projects and he helped

CORBA advance their programs with local land managers. In 1988, he was one of the negotiators and an original member of CORBA's volunteer Mountain Bike Unit, a partnership with the National Park Service and California State Parks. The MBU became a prototype for patrols across the country.

When the Charlie Litsky Memorial Fund was established in 1994, Kurt helped bring Marilyn Price's Trips for Kids program to the LA area. Now, the CORBA Youth Adventures Program, it still introduces inner city and at risk youth groups to the challenge and pleasures of riding a mountain bike.

Kurt has the ability to talk about trail design in a way that's accessible to the first time trail work volunteer and to the full time, agency trail construction



Kurt Loheit at this year's Birthday Bash

specialist. His patience, encouragement and commitment to doing things right has put more trails on the ground. His

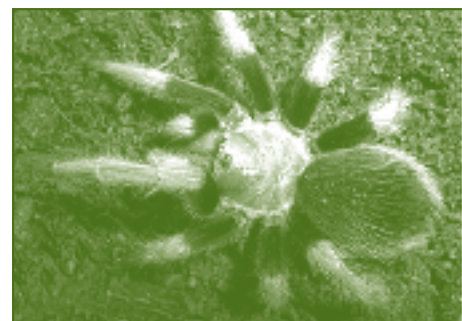
professionalism has helped create the history, trust and respect that continues to open doors for mountain bikers. Kurt has helped mountain bikers earn big returns on their sweat equity. Learn more about Kurt and the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame at [mtnbikehalloffame.com](http://mtnbikehalloffame.com)

## Spiders on the Trail (Aphonopelma chalcodes)

By Jeff Klinger

Well not Spiders, but Tarantulas. While we thought that tarantulas were in Hawaii and only haunted the Brady Bunch kids, we all remember, or will remember, our first tarantula sighting right here at home in the Santa Monica Mountains.

I am always excited when I see an individual or even several individuals on the trail. Some of my friends get a bit



freaked out when they see tarantulas and ride like mad to get out of "jumping distance." As on TV, they are dark, big, hairy and scary. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Desert Tarantulas are not deadly, but rather, their venom is no more poisonous than a wasp or bee sting (National Audubon Society, Field Guide to Insects & Spiders). Their bodies are a heavy 2-2 1/2 " in length, yet their legs can be up to four inches long. That's one big, beefy spider!

While male tarantulas live a few weeks to several years, females may live 20 years. Tarantulas are nocturnal and hide in dark cavities and burrows. At night, they come out to find a mate and hunt by feel even though they have eight eyes that are closely grouped together. They eat insects, lizards and small rodents, yet are not

known to attack people. What a relief! Our tarantulas tend to move relatively slowly, even when humans approach and check them out. I have a playful yet machismo friend who always likes to impress the ladies. He once got down on all fours to try to coax a tarantula onto his hand with an audience of me and a couple of women on Westridge Fire Road. Of course, he's seen the TV shows where tarantulas are walking all over people with no problem. I casually mentioned that this was a wild animal and that its fangs could easily puncture his glove. I tell you, I have never seen anybody pop up into the air from Down Dog like that. We all got a kick out of it and the tarantula slowly and confidently carried-on with his/her business across the trail.

## CORBA's Mountain Bike Skills Class

Mountain Biking Skills Classes are taught every month as part of CORBA's ongoing effort to educate mountain bicyclists as to the appropriate use of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area backcountry trails.

Mountain biking is a lot like tennis or skiing. Just a few minor adjustments in technique can make a huge difference in your control and proficiency. If you want to get better faster, you need to know the fundamentals of mountain biking technique. Whether you're just getting into mountain biking or have been riding for years, you'll learn some valuable tips from our Introduction to Mountain Biking skills class that is offered each month.

The Introduction to Mountain Biking Skills class is held the first Saturday of each month from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm in Malibu Creek State Park. It is free of charge to all participants, and no reservations are needed. A discussion of backcountry preparedness, shared use etiquette, and simple maintenance tips precedes several skills stations. These include proper seated rider position, controlled braking and slow speed technical maneuvering, pedaling cadence/gear use, and proper riding position and technique for climbing and descending. Please arrive no later than 8:45 am to sign in.

There is approximately five miles total of actual riding on easy to moderate trails.



## CORBA's Recreational Fun Ride Program

The South Bay Mountain Biking Club (SBMBC) is the recreational, fun ride section of CORBA

Our recreational "Fun Rides" are for CORBA members, potential members, guests, and friends. We offer a full monthly schedule of rides for all skill levels.

CORBA Fun Rides are organized by Louisa Bonnie [mtbike4@earthlink.net](mailto:mtbike4@earthlink.net) through the South Bay Mountain Biking Club. Please check out [sbmbc.com](http://sbmbc.com) and their newsletter for scheduled rides. Please contact the ride leader at least one day in advance if you plan to attend a ride.



## CORBA Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I'd like to lend a hand. Contact me about volunteer opportunities.

CORBA is a tax exempt "501(c)(3)" organization. Your donation to CORBA is tax deductible. Your dues will be used to promote trail access and other interests of mountain bicyclists in Los Angeles and its surrounding areas.

Annual Membership \_\_\_New \_\_\_Renewal \$ 25.00

I'd like to do more to keep trails open with an additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to CORBA and mail to: CORBA, P.O. Box 57576, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413.

**Tell a friend.** Send CORBA information to:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you! Welcome to CORBA.**

**CORBA Information**

818-773-3555  
info@corbamt.com  
www.corbamt.com

**Membership Services**

Greg Scarich  
310-374-7552  
membership@corbamt.com

**Terra Times Newsletter**

David M. Grey  
dg@corbamt.com  
310-444-1960

**Trail Building & Maintenance**

Rich Pinder  
818-909-7185  
rpinder@usc.edu

**Youth Adventures**

Holly Harman  
818-882-2839  
hollytfk@socal.rr.com

Danny Ybarra  
ssc69@juno.com

**Skills Classes**

Mark Langton  
805-480-0500  
markmtb@verizon.net

**Fun Rides**

South Bay Mountain  
Bike Club  
Louisa Bonnie  
mtbike4@earthlink.net  
www.sbmbc.com

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

California Department  
of Parks & Recreation  
818-880-0350  
dpree@parks.ca.gov  
Fire Closure Info  
805-488-8147

The message changes every  
day at 2 p.m. It is illegal to  
ride in the parks when they  
are closed due to high fire  
danger.

National Park Service  
805-370-2300  
www.nps.gov/samo

Santa Monica  
Mountains Conservancy  
310-589-3200  
www.smmc.ca.gov

Conejo Open Space  
Conservation Agency  
805-495-6471  
Ranger office 805-381-2741  
www.cosf.org

Mountain Bike Unit  
Terry Harman  
818-882-2839  
terhol@gte.net

International Mountain  
Bicycle Association  
a(headquarters)  
303-545-9011  
imba@aol.com  
local rep Jim Hasenauer  
818-704-7396  
imbajim@aol.com  
www.imba.com

**CORBA is committed to:**

1. Maintaining access to and gaining access to trails in Los Angeles and its surrounding areas, through education, information and preservation..
2. Educating mountain bicyclists in the safe and appropriate use of mountain bikes.
3. Contributing to the building and maintaining of riding areas in Los Angeles and its surrounding areas.



P.O. Box 57576 Sherman Oaks, CA 91413  
www.corbamt.com



## 17th Annual Birthday Bash & Fundraiser

**CONCERNED OFF-ROAD  
BICYCLISTS ASSOCIATION**

*This year's event was an overwhelming success as CORBA raised \$8,000 at Malibu Creek State Park to support trail access.*

*Attendees got to ride with Tinker Juarez, browse the latest gear from lots of vendors, take part in a huge raffle that included several bikes, awesome accessories and gear and enjoy unlimited trips to our Taco Bar. Thanks for your support! We can't do this without you.*



**Michael Goodman presents the raffle stash (above); The ageless Joe Dillman takes home his Kona Grand Prize.**



**Just a few of the exhibitors at this year's Bash. Thanks for your support!**



**Tinker Juarez (Cannondale USA) chats up the crowd before leading a ride up Bulldog.**



**Michael Goodman receives his award recognizing 13 years on the CORBA Board of Directors.**

**October 16, 2004  
Malibu Creek State Park**



*Top to bottom: Jeff Klinger helps with the Chow line – thanks Carmen's Tacos!; Ed Dee accepts his award for service as CORBA Chairman of BoD; Mark Langton Of Giant presents Jon Sacks of South Bay Cycles with his Giant Grand Prize (Jon donated AND won - cosmic).*



*George Madias, KHS Grand Prize winner.*



*Founding CORBA members (from left) Kurt Loheit, Matt Landes and Mark Langton.*

