

From hundreds of submissions, we chose three readers to share their tales of two-wheeled adventure with *WAM* readers. Check out three honorable mentions on our website, and perhaps add a few stories of your own.

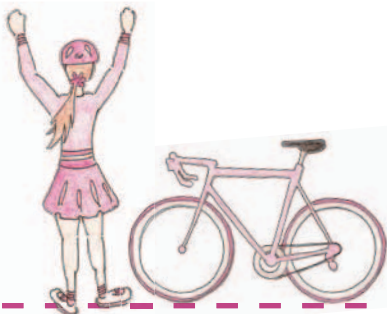
## RIDING ALL DAY IN THE HIGH COUNTRY

By Kathy Boltz

**G**reat adventures take place with good friends. Bev and I shared a girls-only weekend of high-country riding, camping, and eating in the White Mountains of Arizona. A rainstorm-filled drive led us to our campground, where we pitched a tent and dawn arrived with elk bugling in the foggy meadow to greet us. An elevation of 7,000 feet brought a welcome change from Phoenix in August! Bev's coffee involved stuffing so many grinds in the French press that I decided on coffee diluted with milk.

Packs filled with water, food, and rain clothes, we rolled through a mix of huge ponderosa pines, grasses, and aspen groves. The trails were perfect—tight, rolling, and with challenging climbs and descents that required focus—a great antidote to urban life. Our simple lunch was classic PB&Js, which Bev describes as perfect fuel. The rain held off as the singletrack flowed, only drenching us once we were almost back to camp.

Now splattered with mud, we were ready for our hot solar shower. The mud flowed off, clean skin revealed. We changed into clean clothes. Dinner in town was next, our cleanliness disguising our identity as the sweaty, muddy women who'd spent eight hours tooling through the forest. Pasta was our reward for 44 perfect miles in the saddle. A full meal, complete with wine, was exactly what our hungry bodies needed to refuel. Then we headed back out the dirt road to our campsite and crashed in our tent, ready for another ride the next morning.



## ALONE AND AMAZED IN DENALI

By Donna Childress

**V**isiting Alaska's Denali National Park, I rented what must have been the world's oldest, heaviest, clunkiest mountain bike. During a short break in the weather—it had been 40 degrees and raining heavily—I donned bandana, helmet, coat, thick gloves, backpack, and sunglasses against the low-slanting solstice sun. Then I cranked along on my rusty ride like the Wicked Witch of the West. Alone in grizzly bear country, I sang and hooted so as to warn any bruins, eyes alert and bear spray within reach.

As it was late in the day, school buses carrying hordes of tourists rumbled out of the park's only road. Every so often I would glance up to see 20 pairs of eyes staring at me perplexed from the safety and warmth of a glassed-in bus.

In between the clattering, the ride was magical. Around each curve and over each rise I could see new stretches of open tundra, folds of mountains, storms in the distance, and sun rays sifting through clouds. I stopped periodically just to listen to the quiet.

I find it hard to describe the vastness of Alaska, the sense that I was in the midst of a huge, wild place of incomprehensible size. Being in it alone on a bike, with unobstructed views of nothing but raw nature for miles, was both intimidating and exhilarating.

This ride was far from epic in the traditional sense—only a wimpy 15 miles—but what it lacked in length, it surpassed in freedom of spirit.



## AND THE WRIST ... IS HISTORY

By Cheryl Wallace

**S**ometime you'll go for the ride of your life. One ride on the trails along the Wissahickon River in Philadelphia changed my life forever.

Twenty years ago, I jumped on my mountain bike, "Slug." Red and gold leaves carpeted the trail, the air was crisp, and I was on a mission. I was determined to master the ridgeline full of gnarled roots and rocks the size of a baby's head. I cleaned the steep ascent called The Monster. Climbing was the easy part: I'm a wiry, long-distance type. The challenge was to master vertical drops.

I approached a long, rocky chute, a spot where most riders dismount. My plan was to wire this and surprise friends on our next ride. Pointed downhill and tucked behind the seat, I feathered my brakes and nailed the landing. I turned Slug around to do it again.

I can't remember what I hit. A rock? My brakes? I went flying over the bars, flipped in the air, and landed with the weight of the fall on my hands. Slug and I slowly limped home.

I knew I was in trouble when I couldn't start the car to drive to the hospital. Hours later I learned that both wrists were broken. Days later my right wrist was fused with metal hardware and bone from my hip. Several surgeries later I needed to relearn how to use my hand.

The outcome challenged my way of thinking. It was very easy to focus on the things I couldn't do. Then one day I had the idea to try things that needed my hand as if my life depended on it. Unbelievably, I started to ice-climb ... using the ice picks as surrogate hands. Then I became a rock climber.

My epic ride reinforced the significance of my powerful spirit. My wrist may be history, but for me it was the beginning of a great adventure.