

Want to test your mettle, see what you're made of? How about a weekend spent running the Cooper River Bridge Run on Saturday and Sunday morning jumping on a bike for a quick 100 mile lap around the countryside?

Six years ago John Glover, owner of the Charleston Bike Company, took over as the race director of the After the Bridge Run Ride. "There are a lot of people that come in for the 10K on Saturday and the 100 mile on Sunday, eat some bar-b-que and head back to Charlotte or wherever they've come from," he says. "Actually there are four options: a 30 mile, 50 mile, 73 mile and the 100 mile course. They're all done on the same course with rest stops set up for support and SAG vehicles (support and gear) manned by the staff of the Charleston Bicycle Company."

"The Ride has grown from around two hundred people to about 500 participants this year," he explained. "The \$30 entry fee raises money for Coastal Cyclists, our local cycling group, to use for advocacy. We support Charleston Moves, a local non-profit promoting bike-pedestrian safety and the Palmetto Cycling Coalition which is a state-wide bicycle advocacy group."

Right now they are working on establishing Charleston as a designated Bicycle Friendly City through the League of American Bicyclists. Grants would then be available to use for more bike lanes, education on sharing the roads for both bicyclists and motor-

The Ride of the CENTURY

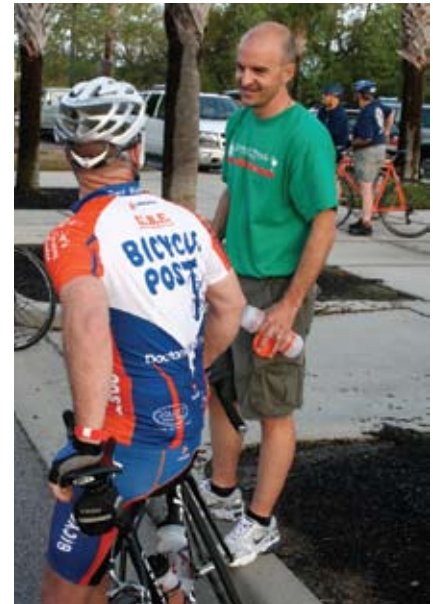
With the After the Bridge Run Ride

By Lilla Folsom

ists and for the Safe Bike Routes to School program. Spartanburg, SC has already won the designation.

Where does the Ride take you? The course starts at 8 am at the Blackbaud Stadium on Daniel Island. The 100 mile ride will go to Moncks Corner and back cruising by Mepkin Abbey and through the Francis Marion Forest. But all the courses start with the same run up Clements Ferry Road. The 30 and 50 mile courses will turn at designated spots and return by the same route. The course will continue on Cainhoj Road to the crossroad town of Huger and the general store there. At Huger, the 100 milers will go one direction and the 73 milers will turn the other way.

What kind of person would you encounter on a ride like this one? I spoke with a couple veterans who were gearing up for another great ride in the country:



Race Director, John Glover, chats with a participant before last year's "After the Bridge Run Ride."



Some of the 500 participants are seen relaxing before the start of last year's ride.

A busy tax season does not leave a lot of time for exercise. CPA John Oliver was finding less and less time for running when he remembered how, as a kid growing up in Charleston, he'd get on his bike and ride away the day. He remembered the great sense of freedom it gave him.

He began riding into the office on weekends just to get some exercise. That 36 mile round trip soon gave way to longer and longer distances. Now his non-tax season rides average 150-180 miles a week. As a veteran of the After the Bridge Run Bike Ride, he's anxiously looking forward to this year's course. "I've been helping train friends on the bicycle portion of the Iron Man Competition. We use this same course and it's great."

Mike Owens is a triathlete who joined the ride two years ago for fun. "John puts on a great ride. It's safe and all levels can enjoy it. It's not a race, but just a fun ride. A few years ago when I entered, I did the Metric Century, which is 62 miles. The ride went through the Francis Marion National Forest and it was a really good time."

Jane West exudes energy when she talks so be careful or she'll have you signing up for the Ride before you know it. She's ridden bikes all her life, mostly for transportation. In 2002, she moved into road bikes for speed, distance and competition. Now, she says, she'd love to ride forever, the longer the better. "I've been trying to hang with the fast guys and I've been the first woman in. This year, the guys were the fastest ever, 3:58 for the 100 mile, so I didn't keep up with them too well. My fastest time has been about a 4:04 a few years ago."

"This ride is great. It's so much fun to see how fast you can go. But there are all kinds of groups that form up. You can just ride from rest stop to rest stop. But it's a flat course so I like to fly. It's such a rush!!"



Want to join the fun? Call the Charleston Bicycle Company for information at (843)571-1211.

After the Bridge Run Ride



For Those Just Starting Out



And For The Seasoned Competitor