

The San Antonio Wheelmen is a group of cyclists which boasts nearly six hundred heads to its membership. For whatever reason, we have chosen to become part of a three decades old organization with the goal of promoting safe and fun cycling in and around the San Antonio area. We have a board of officers which includes a ride chair who, monthly, dutifully arranges the group rides attended by varying portions of our membership. We attend the rides, also, for varying reasons: yet another great excuse for avoiding yard/house work, socializing with like-minded individuals, or, perhaps, to enjoy the perks of group riding. One of those perks is the paceline.

For the uninitiated, and in ridiculously simplified form, a paceline is when two or more (preferably more) cyclists ride in a (typically) single-file line where the person at the front of the line does the bulk of the work; cutting down wind resistance. Ideally, the lead rider takes a turn, or a "pull", at the front of the group for some however long they are able to, then drops back to let someone else take a pull. Providing riders in a paceline are of similar ability, a paceline could continue for pretty-much forever. However, if only one or two people take a pull, the paceline suffers. This could mean something as trivial as a reduced speed or as serious as an accident – especially if communication is not handled well. I've been involved in countless pacelines since my rebirth into cycling five years ago, both literally and figuratively speaking, and have enjoyed the benefits of riding behind some admirable riders. I have also taken my fair share of pulls, and right now, I think it's time for me to drop back for a bit of recovery time.

In January 2001, I noticed a notice on the SAW Web site: Wanted: Newsletter editor. The requirements were fairly simple, and, majoring in English in college, I felt it a fantastic opportunity for me to showcase whatever abilities I had as a writer and editor while simultaneously helping to promote cycling. It was a win-win situation, so I hopped on board first chance I had. After much appreciated guidance from the retiring editor, I bowed the April issue as my first foray into the newsletter publication business. Members were apparently receptive to it, and I was elected back to the Board in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. I will not be seeking reelection in 2006.

So, why am I telling you about it now, in September? The officer selecting committee hasn't even met, let alone been formed, and won't be for at least another month. Elections won't even take place until December, when SAW hosts its annual holiday party, being held this year at Hoover's on San Pedro.

My reasoning for notifying the club of my intentions at this point is to allow time enough to decide on a sufficient gift for the "retirement" ceremony...and to allow enough time to find a suitable replacement. I've no real say on who gets in and who doesn't, save the sole vote each and everyone of us have via the election ballot, but before a name goes on the ballot, there are a number of things a would-be editor for the club should be familiar with.

Number one is working with deadlines. The deadline for submissions for publication is the 10th of the preceding month, meaning if something needed to be in the newsletter you now hold in your hands, it had to be in my hands by the tenth of August. From there, it gets edited in Microsoft Word for sentence fluency, spacing, and so on. Some selections require more work than others; Member of the Month typically requires the most massaging, since the format it arrives in is a simple questionnaire. It could go in as-is, but I feel it looks – and certainly reads – better if it is reworked into an actual piece of prose, masquerading as an article. But I digress.

Other materials received include images, be it MOM photos or advertisements. Depending on the quality of the image, sizing, file type, etc., the image may need to be cleaned up or otherwise modified in an image editing program. Adobe Photoshop is my software of choice. Once the respective materials have been cleaned up and polished for publication, they need to be arranged in a desktop publishing program; Word is hardly the final word when it comes to proper publishing software, so I again turn to Adobe, this time using InDesign, which allows easy integration of nearly every file type used in publication, including Word documents and images in nearly every format (for the record, tagged image format files [TIFF] work best).

As one can see, the position of editor is a little more complicated than *just* producing a newsletter each month; there are technical and logistical demands. On the technical side, one needs to be proficient in text, image, and publishing programs (none are presently owned by the club, but that should be changing by the time January 2006 rolls around), while logistically, getting the finished product to the masses in a timely manner is crucial. Some of the people an editor needs to work with are the printer (who actually "manufactures" the newsletter based on the editor's final draft – we have used The Printed Word for a number of years, due mostly to their

willingness to work with us, both in terms of quantity of product produced and the time it takes to produce it), the mailer (who folds the newsletter and sticks it in the mail at a reduced rate – PC Mailing, for those who are curious), and others within the SAW organization who provide content and other necessities for producing the finished product you now hold in your hands. Additionally, having decent writing skills doesn't hurt, as, from time-to-time, one might need to come up with an article or two to fill up space. But don't let any of this scare you.

Naturally, I and others who have been involved in production of *The Pedaler* can and will help out, and it will only get easier with time. My first issue took me nearly two weeks to have ready. I can now do an issue in a few hours, providing I have all the necessary content. Outside of that, an editor just needs to attend the monthly board meeting (as anyone can and is invited to do, as indicated on the cover of each month's *Pedaler*), and be an occasional and/or regular fixture at club rides. Arranging and handling advertisers/billing is handled by a Board-nominated chairperson, who, at present, is Doug Diamond. All digital and hard copy files of past issues of *The Pedaler* will also be passed on to the new editor, as will image files for use in the continued publication of our monthly newsletter.

I do apologize for being so longwinded in my closing letter, but producing the newsletter has become a rather involved process that requires a certain amount of – if I may be so bold – talent. Talent, however, is rarely something someone is born with. Rather, it is something that is developed over time; issues will improve as individual style and the club dynamics are developed. The sooner a potential editor comes forward, the sooner that style can begin to develop.

I've been a SAW member for slightly longer than the length of time I've been an editor; I joined in August 2000 and became editor in January 2001. In that time, I've published dozens of newsletters and have enjoyed hundreds of rides with some of the finest cyclists in and around San Antonio. In that time, I have taken countless pulls and think I might be ready to sit in for a little while. Thank you for having me as your editor for so many years and for the next few issues as well. I look forward to what's to come, on the bike and in my mailbox. v