

Basherama

The underground newsletter of the
Kuala Lumpur Mountain Bike Hash
No 25a
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Hagedorn Hospitalised

John Hagedorn, the scribe who co-writes the Spoking Out column on cycling in the Star, was hospitalised earlier this month after a Kiss-the-Tarmac ritual. It appears that John, while on his way to Bangsar for dinners (*sans* helmet tsk, tsk) caught air, big time, in a mother of all endoes at a speed bump near Pantai Hills. Subsequent analysis of his injuries suggest that he cartwheeled over the bike (a *Le Run*), used the side of his face as a pivot point, and landed flat on his back. The resultant injury almost tore his ear off and required 35 stitches on the head. The *Le Run* escaped with minor scratches. He claims no recollection of the cause of the accident, though bash investigators have reason to suspect it was the result of running-the-brakes-the-wrong-way-on-the-second-bike syndrome.

Messages of condolences may be sent to the Star newspaper, c/o Weekender. By the way, John, alloys are *not* metal matrices.



Mike Smit found on the Net!

Some bashers may remember with warm fondness Mike Smit (pictured above at his farewell bash in June 1995), the flatlander mountain biker who left Malaysia to pursue his studies in the Netherlands. Reports have come in that he was found wandering on the 'net, masquerading under the (not inappropriate) *nom de plume* Crazy Mike. Rude messages may be sent to: mikesmit@up.nl

Race Today!

There will be a 15km mountain bike race at the International Islamic University campus in Gombak on Sunday 30 March at 2 pm (yes, that's this afternoon!). If you want to find just how wobbly your legs can be, contact Joe (the one with the silly green horn on his bike).

There is also planned a race in Ipoh in April or May, so keep your eyes peeled for more information.

Le Tour de Langkawi

A bicycle race with a more improbable name I have yet to see. Despite the silly use of French (don't they know of the "Giro" and the "Vuelta"?), despite the fact that it was a tour of *Malaysia*, not Langkawi (you can just about imagine the Italian riders thinking, "Hmm, nice country, that Langkawi!"), and despite the logistical cock-ups, the racing was actually quite good. Pity that TVI gave the impression that they knew as much about cycling as about nordic skiing...

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KLMBH Homepage?

The Ministry of Tourism runs a site where news of cycling related activities may be posted. Seeing as how this service is free, it might be a good idea to start contributing news items, promising photographs, articles (preferably not ones which we've nicked from elsewhere), damp underwear, etc. Interested? ☎ 250 7445 (Joe).

www.mtbr.com

Have you ever wondered whether that tyre Boon Foo was selling to you "cheap-cheap" was any good? Or whether the Marzocchi Bomber is a decent shock? Well, wonder no further—visit www.mtbr.com where mountain bikers review their own purchases. An excellent resource. Check out also its Techtalk section if you have a mechanical mystery you can't solve.

This month's choice Web sites

MTB Review
<http://www.mtbr.com>

Singapore Bike Hash
<http://handel.pacific.net.sg/~twel/sbh.htm>

The Mike Smit home page
<http://www1.ttp.nl/users/t015351/index.htm>

Bash Basics

For the benefit of bash beginners

“Eh? Bashing?”

The idea is simple. A “hare” volunteers or is “volunteered” to set the ride each month. He or she marks the trail with shredded paper. Incorporated into the trail are checkpoints (usually at junctions and which require reconnoitring before the continuation of the trail may be found), and false trails (which masquerade as the continuation of that trail).

The system of checkpoints and false trails “levels the playing field” so to speak and allows riders of differing abilities to ride together. More or less. The fitter you are, the more you will ride and the more drawn you are to checking a false. It also ensures that all the riders are more or less bunched together in the plantation/jungle/*belukar*, so that if one of you is taken by a tiger the rest can raise the alarm to scarpers. Also, when you take a tumble we will all be there for the entertainment.

There will be two “runs” at each bash—the scenic bash is intended so that children of say, 6 to 8 years will be able to do it within an hour (or an hour and a quarter, *tops*). The *terrain* (not too steep, thank you very much) and *distance* (shorter if terrain is varied, and longer if flat) will therefore have to be adjusted accordingly. Be wary of benchmarking the degree of difficulty of a trail against the ability of that super 7-year old Sixten Schoo, who, as most of us know, can ride the pants off er, something whose pants can be ridden off.

As far as the long bash is concerned, anything goes (short of man-snares, booby traps, flying bamboo stakes etc.). A long bash should be capable of completion within a couple of hours or so, but this rule is fluid (as any of you who rode Andrew “Prince of Darkness” Animal’s Bash from Hell will be able to tell you).

“Yes, yes, I know all that. But how?”

Hold your horses, I was coming to that. The following is a four step guide (shamelessly plagiarised from the Singapore Bike Hash website, with a bit of gratuitous smut thrown in).

1. *Two months before...*

You are volunteered by Clara to be the hare. **Select a suitable site** and get permission from the land owner, if necessary. Give the Bash-News the directions to the On-on site for publication in the Basherama!

The On-On site should have—

- enough room to park about 20 cars;
- some shade for the barbeque;
- no angry dogs or guards.

Then **recede the trail**. The ideal hash is 20km long and lasts for only 2 hours. A good hash needs between 3 to 10 recesses.

The idea is to lay a trail which keeps the pack together. Avoid main roads. Make sure the in-trail doesn’t cross or come too close to the out-trail or first timers might find themselves going round in circles (which can be fun too, but not for very long). If unavoidable, set home-paper after the pack has passed. Avoid putting out-paper checks near the home trail or people might complete the hash in a shorter period than expected.

2. *One week before*

Gather hares’ biodegradable paraphernalia:

- copious amounts of shredded paper or paper strips;
- chalk or flour for checks and crosses (for that added professional touch);
- small knapsack (35 litres ideal) for paper-laying;
- an inflatable rubber doll (for just plain laying).

3. *The Day Before*

Set the trail. Better pre-lay the day before unless it rains and you have to go out again on the day itself. All hashers are half blind and play follow the leader. Lay 2 - 3 times more paper than you think necessary. Paper hung on trees and on top of tall grass won’t disintegrate if it rains overnight. Remember that unlike runners, bikers tend to look up and ahead. Put paper in the distance where it can be seen in the distance. Trail turn-offs must be clearly marked. Trail markers should be visible at all times unless you are at a check.

Checks are marked with a circle, and falsies with a cross or X. Don’t lay checks in the last 1-2 kilometres. Paper must be found again within 400 metres of a check. False trails should only start at a check. A false trail peters out quickly—don’t lay it too long unless in a machiavellian mood (in which case, you’ll pay for it later!).

4. *The Big Day*

Be at the hash site 3 hours before to freshen up or lay the trail. Try to be back for the start to make any announcements. If you are out still laying the trail and can’t get back in time, never mind. Better to finish laying the trail. The trail should start near the On-on site. **Make sure everyone checks out!**

Sweep behind the pack and observe how well they can read your trail. You will learn alot from this. Let the pack solve any checks themselves. But if they are still there 10 minutes later please say something! If there are people who obviously cannot go on or first timers who find it hard and want to short cut, you must show them a shorter route. **Make sure everyone has checked in!** If anyone is lost, hares must locate them.