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Cresta Wheelers

Reflections and outlook

Isn't it amazing how, the older you get, time seems to fly past so much faster? Here we are at the end of January already, getting geared up for another cracking cycling season. The big news of the year so far has been the flying visit of Lance Armstrong to these shores –more of that later.

The season kicks off properly with the Hyper to Hyper on January 29. Many of us find the logistics of getting back from Vanderbijlpark too daunting to ride, while others are put off by the large bunches and sometimes unruly behaviour of certain participants in these bunches. But for those who ride safely, it's a classic ride and one which offers the recreational cyclist the opportunity to bring down his/her seeding index considerably.

On the subject of bad behaviour, it has been brought to the committee's attention that certain unruly elements in the club are making our name toffee in the cycling community. This is unfortunate, as Cresta has always enjoyed a well-deserved reputation of being a friendly and well-mannered club. Such behaviour won't be tolerated.

2005 will go down in club history as being one of the most eventful, challenging and successful. The year began with the news that the organizers of the Dome to Dome (D to D) had managed to persuade the powers that be in Gauteng Cycling to let them have our Spring Ride date for their event. As a committee, we were concerned, to say the least. But all credit must go to the committee and in particular to the diplomatic efforts of our chairman, Wayne Hinsch, who turned a potential major negative into a big positive. By offering our services as a club to the D to D organizers and re-scheduling our Spring Ride date, we had a win-win situation. It looks like Cresta will be the D to D's preferred cycling club in future, with all of the associated benefits.

The Spring Ride itself was another great success, held on a magnificent day in October. Judging by the host of complementary messages sent to the club, that view was shared by many other cyclists.

Both the 2004 and 2005 Spring Ride organizers—Richard Maddern and Jan vd Hoek—are standing down from the committee this year and it's a fitting time to commend them on their sterling efforts in organizing this truly outstanding event. Thanks also to Bill Dixon for organizing the marshalling superbly.

There are plenty of nominations for this year's committee, which will be chosen at the AGM on 31 January. Please make an effort to be at the

Hyper to Hyper Hospitality & Transport

For those of you riding the Hyper on Sunday 29 January, please note that there will be a Cresta Wheelers hospitality gazebo at the area adjacent to the lapa and toilets closest to the river at the Vaal Triangle Campus of the university's sports grounds. Cool drinks and beer will be available to members in the gazebo. A limited number of spaces are also available for those riders wishing a lift back from the finish to the start at Steeledale.

It's interesting to note that Cresta is one of the few independent cycling clubs to have its own hospitality facility at the large rides. Those of you who rode the 94,7 last year can't fail to have been impressed by the Cresta gazebo at the finish. It was easy to find, and provided a well-needed oasis for tired legs and dry throats. The club puts most of its effort into this particular event, so other events won't be as

comprehensively equipped. However, Steeledale car nevertheless nice to sit and park at about 16h00, race in a friendly, like-minute interval of all cyclists. As far as transport is concerned, riders should meet Bill Dixon at the finish and decide to hand over kit bags, cool boxes etc. This will only be done if cyclists wanting a lift with Bill want him to drop off "goodies" with him. Riders must phone him on 0827721462 to confirm.

It's Bill's intention to leave the Vaal Triangle Campus University sports Grounds only once all cyclists who have booked a return trip with him (and obviously finished the event) at about 15h00 or sooner if possible.

Cyclists will be dropped off at the Pick 'n

Cannondale / Barloworld

After nine successful seasons in the European pro peloton, American bicycle manufacturer Cannondale has confirmed that it will continue to be part of European racing scene by sponsoring Continental Pro team Barloworld. The team will be managed by former Saeco and Lampre manager Claudio Corti, who took control of the UK registered and South African originated squad in late 2005 from former manager John Robertson. Barloworld will be active in European, Asian and North American racing circuits.

Barloworld, a multi-national company with headquarters in Johannesburg, represents and manages many leading brands around the world in the transportation equipment field. Active in 31 countries, Barloworld has 23,000 employees and sales of US\$3 billion. Barloworld has shown its commitment to the sport of cycling with the long term objective of placing the first South African sponsored team on the podium at the Tour de France.

The Day Lance Armstrong Came to Town

Lance Armstrong paid South Africa a flying visit on Wednesday 18 January. I was privileged to attend the media conference at Tiger Brands' head office.

Tiger and its subsidiary Adcock Ingram organized the visit to kick off its "Unite 4 Health" campaign. They couldn't have found a better person to do it, considering his universal appeal and the fact that he recovered from cancer, against all odds.

Lance was scheduled to address the media at 07:30am. I arrived early, thinking it wouldn't be that well-attended. How wrong can you be? It was mobbed at 06:45am—hardly a parking space was available.

He arrived just after 07:00am, signing a cycling enthusiast's wheel. He's taller and generally a lot bigger than I imagined from seeing him on TV. He's not the small, wiry type of cyclist

that I associate with local cycling (no offence to local cyclists!).

There was a palpable buzz in the Tiger auditorium—people were standing, sitting, waiting for Lance's arrival. It was a huge media circus, with hundreds of people waiting to see him.

He arrived about 5 minutes late and was interviewed first by Noeleen Maholwana-Sangqu and then by Arnold Geerds.

Asked about the suspicions surrounding his alleged use of stimulants, he replied "If you dominate any sport, there will always be questions and doubts. It's impossible to prove a negative"

On more than one occasions, he stated that he'll come to ride a classic race in South Africa, though he didn't specify whether it would be the 94,7 or the Argus, He'd have liked to have met Nelson Mandela on this trip but time just

didn't allow for that.

Maybe next time.

He's exceptionally eloquent, a welcome relief from the monosyllabic morons who all too often typify sports stars these days.

Asked about his disappointments, he said "maybe I should have paid more attention during Spanish classes".

Apart from his mother, who's undoubtedly the greatest inspiration in his life, Andre Agassi stands out as his single greatest sporting hero. He's not wild about golf though, having quit the game a while back. "Golf's not exercise—any game where you can smoke a cigarette on the course is not a sport", he said.

He had respectful words for his arch-rival in many Tours, Jan Ullrich. "You gotta love him—he's a scary competitor. Our training was based on and around him—we were obsessed with beating him", said Lance

"If you dominate any sport, there will always be questions and doubts. It's impossible to prove a negative"

Blast from the Past

For all you Cresta veterans out there, here's a lovely little fax I received from Denis Braithwaite, long-time member of Cresta Wheelers. It was written in a Cresta Wheelers newsletter in 1995 and refers to the result of the 1985 Argus Cycle Tour, as it was then known.

- There were 2 445 finishers
- Hennie Wentzel (then 35) was first solo rider over the line in a new record time of 2:44:38
- This time beat Ertjies Bezuidenhout's old record by over three minutes.
- Second was Rodney Fowler (then 28 and in the same Southern Sun team as Wentzel) in the same time as Wentzel.
- Marius van Zyl (then 29 and riding for Northern Wheelers) was fifth solo rider, 3:23 down on the winner.
- Lisa van Riet Lowe set a new women's record of 3:06:21, although Cathy Carstens did 3:02:49 on a tandem. Of note at the time was that the solo lady winner beat nearly 2 000 men. I wonder how many men Cathy Carstens beat this year?

Other riders associated, then or now, with Cresta Wheelers who we have been able to identify from the results list include”

Rider	Position	Time
Ian Kernick	147	3:13:29
Denis Braithwaite	153	3:13:31
Paul Shoebridge	197	3:17:51
Ian Pollack	471	3:17:59
Don Woodburn	682	3:51:10
Nic Zoomers	838	4:01:00

However, we have obviously failed to identify the Cresta stars of that era because the Cresta “A” team is shown coming 7th in a time of 9:31:46 so there must have been at least two other riders faster than Ian Kernick. Can anyone help?

- Braithwaite Jnr (Alan—yet to be seen on a Cresta club run) came 2 384th in 6:49:58, at the age of 10 after an hour or so's visit en route to the hospital that the bend is named after.
- Braithwaite Snr is reported to have been particularly proud that year to have beaten Douglas Ryder by 6 minutes (Ryder was 13 at the time)
- More noteworthy is the fact that Marius beat Alan van Heerden by about 30 places and 4 minutes (Marius—did van Heerden puncture that year?)
- 65 riders, including tandems, got under 3 hours.