

Skatepark from B1

a leg up from those in a position to help.

The rules board at the park states that users may use a provided broom to sweep up debris, rocks and glass that may be presenting a hazard to their fun; a task that becomes much more difficult when the tool is nowhere to be found.

“The broom got stolen, then one of us brought our own, then that one got stolen too ... we used to use them to sweep up but we just don’t want more to get stolen,” said one of the BMX riders.

Some people believe the skatepark has become an eyesore, a local park not far from downtown that has fallen into disrepair. Some users believe the skatepark - in their minds, their only place to socialize and practice their hobby - has become a dilapidated hazard. It seems that a number of possible solutions could be amenable to both sides of the debate.

Despite a five-year delay before finally opening and an effort which raised tens of thousands of dollars, it remains possible that Cottage Grove skatepark was, to a certain extent, doomed to routinely relive its rocky start.

Skateboarding, BMX bikes and scooters took off in popularity in the late ‘90s and early 2000s and with them, so did the concrete skatepark construction boom. Today, there are over 100 concrete skateparks in the state of Oregon, from several in both Eugene and Portland, to Astoria, Hood River, Florence, Halsey and every other nook and cranny of the state.

Some of these skateparks were designed by professionals, often brought in from Portland. Others were primarily built and paid for by community fundraising efforts and local construction companies. Cottage Grove falls into the second category and

the design of the skatepark remains one of the users’ biggest complaints.

According to a group of users, the bowls and ramps are of an older, less vertical and somewhat outdated design. The fences are too close to the lips of the bowls and ramps, causing a sizable safety hazard when exiting for a jump on a bike, scooter or skateboard.

Users last week said a friend recently cut their ear open on the fence when exiting the bowl and most users claimed to have torn at least one shirt on a jagged piece of chain link fence. The rails need to be moved away from the fence to be usable and the pyramid at the main entrance of the park is effectively unusable due to its proximity to the southern side of the perimeter fence.

Most of the young users say the skatepark’s ideal solution would be an entirely new park, but they, along with city officials and residents, are eager for something to change and there may be solutions that serve to please all groups.

“I mean, we want a new broom. Maybe the fence could get moved back, I don’t know. It’d be nice if we had a chance to tell someone our ideas for the park since we use it so much,” said one of the older kids.

In the very first article published about the Cottage Grove skatepark in *The Sentinel* on Aug. 11, 2004, the story ended with a quote from a local mother: “I hope everyone takes care of it.”

While users see a situation where the city can do more to help them, the city sees a situation where users could ideally take on more responsibility themselves in maintaining what is their preferred activity space. The future remains unclear, but all parties involved seem motivated to find ways for improvement.

Local cyclist completes the possible on 100-mile ride

BY NICK SNYDER
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Have you ever wanted to play basketball in sandals? How about race at Cottage Grove Speedway in a minivan? Have you ever had the desire to ride a simply-designed rideshare bike over 100 miles? No? Well, on the last point, Sam McCamant can’t relate.

On Sunday, Aug. 4 at the 21st annual Greater Eugene Area Riders (GEARs) Blackberry bRamble, GEARs member and software developer Sam McCamant, 28, hopped on a PeaceHealth Rides shared-use bicycle and completed the longest of the courses available at the cycling event, the 102.5-mile Wolf Creek classic century.

“Earlier this year [GEARs] asked at one of their meetings if anyone was interested in riding a PeaceHealth bike in the Blackberry bRamble, so I decided that sounded interesting and volunteered,” said McCamant.

As bicycle rideshare programs have popped up around the country, PeaceHealth Rides is Eugene’s own local version that began on April 19, 2018. In total, the service provides a network of 300 bikes available in over 40 stations for local residents to rent for recreation or, most commonly, short-term, point-to-point commutes.

The average commute on a PeaceHealth bike is around 1.6 miles, a far cry from the 100-plus miles McCamant rode.

The primary mission of GEARs is to promote riding bicycles; whether the promotion is for transportation, fitness, or recreation. In a time where the cost of some bicycles - particularly the types of road bikes used on very long rides - approaches that of a decent used car, McCamant’s ride provided an illustrative example of GEARs’ stated goal.

“A lot of people feel that you need a light, high-performance bike in order to do things like go on a 100-mile bike ride and I disagree somewhat. So it was sort of an opportunity to demonstrate that you can do this with a heavier bike. It might take a bit more work, but it’s doable,” said McCamant.

For Lindsey Hayward, General Manager of PeaceHealth Rides, McCamant’s goal of challenging himself on this particular type of bike was perfect for an organization that’s always looking for new ways to promote their service.

“It’s definitely one of those things that’s outside the scope of what bikeshare is typically used for ... but one of the goals of PeaceHealth Rides is to really have it integrated in the community and bike culture,” said Hayward. “Sam came up and was really excited about the potential and just the concept to be able to challenge himself and show people what they can do with something as simple as a bike. So it was great to have him be interested.”

The Wolf Creek Classic Century Route that McCamant followed began near Amazon park in South Eugene, traveled West through downtown before reaching almost as far North as Junction City, West out to Noti around the entirety of Fern Ridge Reservoir, and as far South as Lorane before heading northbound back to the starting point.



Sam McCamant poses with a PeaceHealth rideshare bike during his training. PHOTO C/O SHERI MCDONALD

Luckily for most people, 100-mile bike rides are a rare if non-existent occurrence throughout a lifetime. But, for those who were reticent to make use of the PeaceHealth Rides bikes in Eugene, McCamant’s accomplishment should erase most doubts. After all, the 1.6-mile average trip is slightly less daunting than 100.

“You maybe want to avoid some of the steeper hills because of limitations with the brakes in going down, but you can go quite reasonable distances with them and the ergonomics on them are actually pretty nice. Before I’d ridden on one I thought maybe I’d need to swap out the seat, but it was actually pretty reasonable,” he said.

McCamant next plans to take on a 250-mile plus ride from Pacific City to Brookings, Oregon, but worry not, Sam plans to be back on his own bike for that even more daunting journey.



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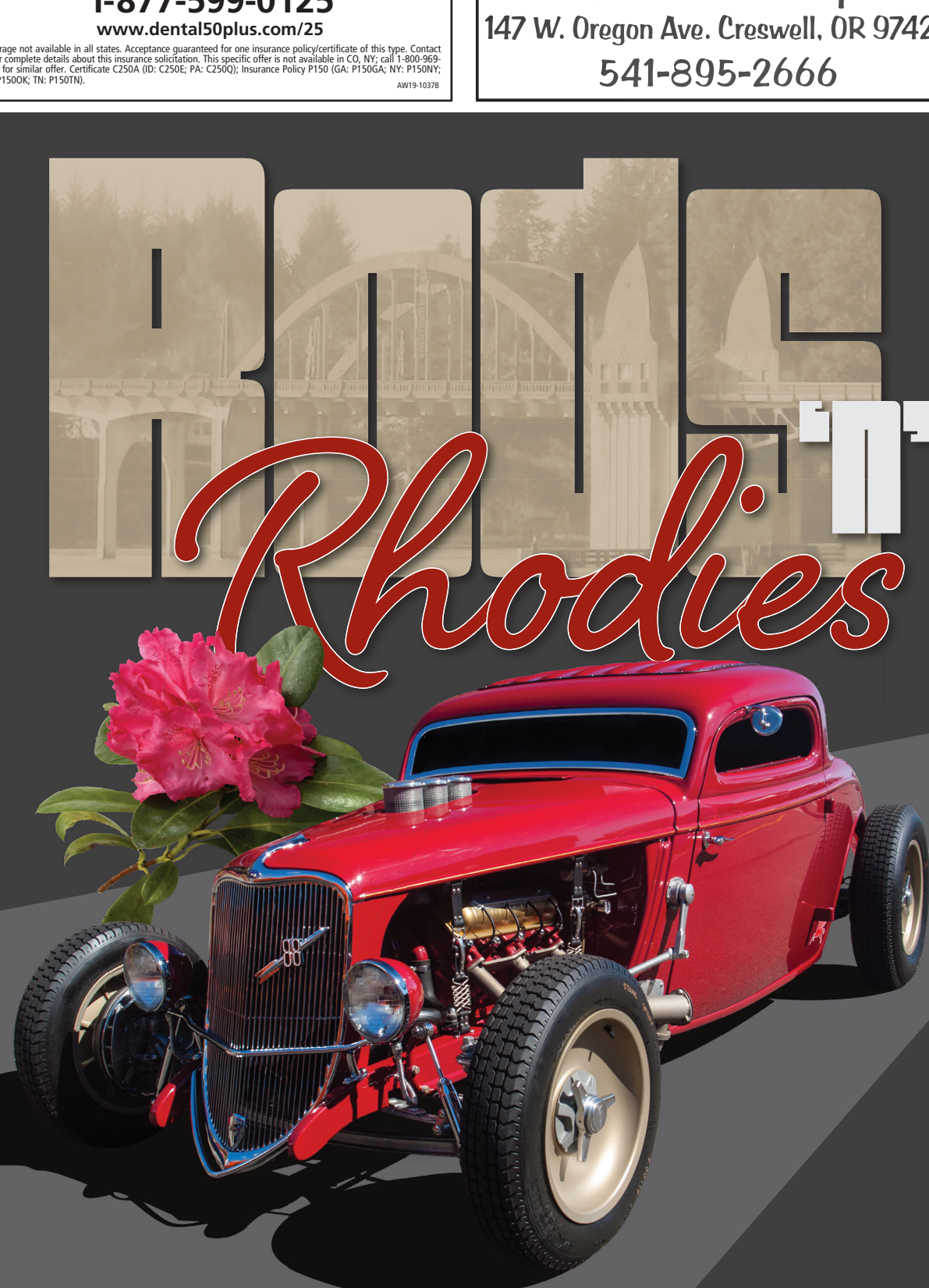
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