



# SPRAD TRACKS

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Tracks #12 January 2003

## Auld Lang Syne~ TS Legends

The Holidays are over and '02 is officially in the can. It's sitting by the curb along with all the boxes, wrapping paper and pretty bows I so diligently placed on all my gifts. The tree is still up; I'll put it away on my days off at Easter.

2002 was a tough year. The end of my bike race season was full of crash stories and ER trips. My non-biking life didn't go much better. The slowing economy hit my business about the time I purchased a new truck. No bike upgrades for this year. A long term relationship of 9 years ended with a somber crash. No trips to the ER or long list of doctors could repair that one. Team LATR turned into team Lonely as most of the members dropped out of the Midwest Fat Tire points chase to attend to other responsibilities.

2002 was also a learning year. I learned that whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger, (at least as far as the bike crashes go). As far as the relationship thing, whatever doesn't kill you just sucks. I also learned that the Death Ride is still a bitch, rocks hurt, and there are a lot of things you can't do with one arm in a sling.

The Sprad Tracks newsletter went online as a web page October 18th 2002. I learned that can be an all consuming task if you let it. I am still looking at different hosts and ways of doing the web page. For now it will remain as it is. Changes will be made throughout the upcoming New Year. If you see something you like or don't like, e-mail me with your suggestions. If you have recommendations for something you think I should be doing, pass that along as well. The opinion poll section was changed to a Bravenet sponsored poll. It allows you to submit your responses, and see the poll results. The opinion polls haven't been the most popular feature of the newsletter or web page. I will continue to run it for a few more publishings. If the response stays low, that page may be eliminated.

The upcoming Events page has returned. Fat tire events are quickly filling up my new calendar. I will add certain events as possible. For a more complete event calendar go to LMBC's website, the e-ddress is provided on the links page. The promised rider bios are still on the agenda, they have just been moved to a back burner while I get other things completed.



As the days of auld lang syne pass behind us, the days of a promising new year are just beginning to unfold. In an effort to better promote mountain biking in West/Central Kansas I am attempting to unite the various small groups in our area into a larger coalition of mountain bike riders. No matter what she says, size does matter. Larger numbers of riders make it easier to promote events, initiate changes, and participate in community endeavors on a larger scale. If you have a group of riders, a few friends or just yourself and would like to become part of the bigger picture contact me, a team LATR member or one of our friends at Golden Belt Bicycle Company in Great Bend. The eastern riders have a couple of strong organizations for promoting mountain biking with LMBC and Earthriders in KC. Our Wild West Riders could benefit by following their lead, and joining forces with larger organizations such as the Kansas Trails Council (KTC) or (IMBA), the International Mountain Bike Assoc. New trails are being blazed, new events are being formulated, and new thoughts are being thunk. Join in on the fun and adventure! Join the club. See you on the trails.

T~



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## **First Blood~** Terry Spradley

January 1<sup>st</sup> 2003, LMBC members and guests converged on the Lawrence River Trails for the annual New Years Day ride. 50 riders left the visitors center parking lot for a short pedal along the levy before threading into the twisty wooded singletrack. Front runners Dan Hughes and Larry Spray set a blistering pace quickly dividing the pack into smaller groups of varying speeds.

Early in the levy run, newly crowned LMBC president, Gerard Arantowicz hollered back to inform me this group would be setting a quick pace once they hit the trails. I was already pedaling faster in a higher gear than I had planned on using all day. I was kind of hoping the trees would slow them down a bit. They didn't. It wasn't long before I decided the back of this pack was not where I wanted to (or could) be for much longer. Gerard, Tony Smith, Thom Leonard, and the rest of the group continued making tracks while my mind started searching for an honorable reason to pull over. Both tires were still up, damn, no derailleur or mechanical problems, damn and damn. A little bead of sweat started trickling down my brow. SWEAT! Of course my jacket, I'm sure none of the Lawrence riders would think badly of me if I pull over to remove this purple cat backer windbreaker.

I straddled my bike alongside the trail rolling up my windbreaker and watching riders slice by on the smooth fast singletrack. Gauging the speed of passing bikes, I waited for a crowd to go by I thought I could keep up with. I saw a few familiar faces from the Fat Tire series, as JL and a few others went by. These guys obviously hadn't been on my cookies and milk diet since the series ended in October. They were all moving at a pace I just didn't feel appropriate for a cool winter ride. A couple female riders went by at a quick pace, a couple trail runners, a turtle; finally a rider went by with baskets hanging off their bike and loaded down with grocery sacks. My group has arrived! Okay so I'm kidding about the baskets and grocery sacks, but the turtle and I traded leads a

couple of times. Fortunately, I was a bit quicker on the log crossings.

The smooth fast river trails are an invigorating ride. As you become accustom to the flow of the trails, riding alone, it is easy to get into a Zen like trance.

Swooping through the rhythmic winding trails, around the perfectly bermed corners, my mind was only vaguely aware of the bright colored bikes and jerseys a few yards ahead of me. It was not at all aware of the stealthy group that had snuck up behind me. Ahead of me some trail runners were threading between the groups of bikes and heading my way. I decided to stop, then pullover to let them pass. I suddenly became keenly aware of the riders behind me, squealing brakes, a light tap on my rear tire, and a few expletives reminded me I was not alone. Oops! I'll install a brake light next time.

The trails were fast and hard packed. A little ground water made for some slippery footing at one point on the way back for a little more excitement. It was a great way to spend the first day of 2003. One rider went down drawing the New Year's first blood, and it wasn't me. A group of riders had a little verbal altercation with some misplaced equestrians, and it wasn't me. Somebody finished last, and it wasn't me! (The turtle was still struggling with that big log crossing).

Most of the group convened at Johnny's Tavern after the ride for food, tall tales, and tall brews. I met a few more of the eastern riders, and learned of a new area LMBC is looking at for developing trails.





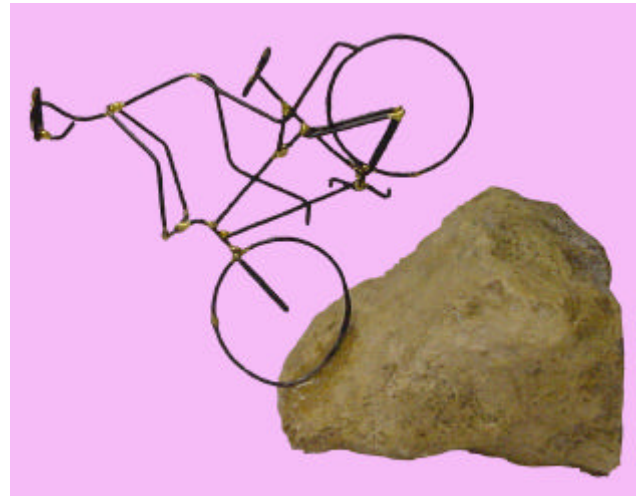
Gerard and I talked about Team LATR's proposed events out here in the Wild West, (central) part of the state. Flyers were passed out for this springs inaugural Midwest Fat Tire race. Muddy Mudskipper is the rides cartoon mascot. I hope he stays high and dry this year. I also heard rumors of a single speed Clydesdale class with a winner take all purse. Hmm, I need to gain about 25 pounds, and lose 26 gears...

## Wilson Lake's Icicle Ride

### Josh Davison's 1st Annual "Icicle Ride"

As 2002's end grew near Josh pondered the idea of winter romp through Wilson Lake's Rollercoaster. He thought the first weekend after New Year's Day would be an excellent time for it. At home, his fingers flew like granny gears on a downhill, e-mails were sent and the first annual "Icicle" ride was born. January 5<sup>th</sup> a diverse group of riders showed up to brave the Icicle's freezing 57 degree temperature, terrible sunny skies and a horrible lack of strong freezing winds. Still the hardy group of souls braved the Icicle's balmy conditions and gathered at Hellcreek bridge for a paved warm-up ride to the trailhead. At least some of them did, I drove my wimpy butt up to the top of the hill and parked in the sheltered lot near the maintenance buildings. There really was a bit of a chilly breeze early on, plus I was on the top of the hill for the start.

Great Bend had 2 riders in attendance with trail builders Doug and Cameron Chambers. Salina had two riders with new *Tracks* readers Ryan Cole and Dave Swanson, both riders I hope to see on the Team LATR roster for 03. Team LATR had 3 returning riders from last year in attendance. Brian Holdsworth and I represented the team's homelands, while western chapter rider, and ride organizer Josh Davison rolled in with his up and coming protégé, Landon Heward. Hays participants win the best attendance award for this trip with three riders. Sara Kay Carrell, Bill Kennedy, and Bob Nicholson rolled the course while Bob's wife Sandy hiked the coaster's climbs. I heard she did it in 2hrs.



Face Plant Fred the Wirehead

I ride it in 2hrs some days. (When I'm alone and nobody is watching.)

The group started the ride at the hillclimb trailhead for a good burn right at the beginning. After getting everyone's heart rate up gaining elevation, the coaster rewards you with some speedy wide-open descents. It tends to end like a real coaster with a long semi flat section. Since we started on the backside the flats came early, Cameron, Doug, and I put on some speed through the twisty flatlands. I discovered you go a lot faster if you stay on the mowed part instead of crashing through the 3 foot tall prairie grass, but some habits are hard to break. Dave was struggling with a chain that had about seen the end of its useful life, so he was having no fun on the climbs. I think the downhills still made him smile some though. Bob zipped up behind our lead group while I was mowing grass. Ryan, Landon, Brian and Sara followed along at a safe distance with Bill riding clean up and Josh bouncing between the groups.

After regrouping at the official start/finish line, and waiting for Grandma Josh to adjust her stockings, garters, and whatever else we headed for the coaster's punishing start. Like any amusement park roller coaster Wilson's starts with some small grinder inclines, a short rest and then another climb. I fell in chasing Doug with Cameron scampering off far ahead.





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Dave was discussing his displeasure with his chain to the bike gods as I passed by. By the time we had bounced through some of the coaster's bumpy small climbs the group had spread out considerably. Ryan demonstrated some good basic riding skills climbing tower hill well and impressing me with a wheels up ledge drop on the back part of the trails. He told me later it was more self preservation than motivation that got the air.

We regrouped at various road crossings to rest and share stories, most riders completed 1 to 2 laps. The first annual brrrr, frigid Wilson Lake Icicle ride was on the books. Most of the group gathered at Hellcreek bridge after for some treats, and presentation of my Christmas Trophy. John McClure with Josh's help fashioned up a comical wire mountain biker in the early stages of a face plant, mounted to a nice size native Kansas rock. It was great! Sara broke out some excellent no bake coconut fudge cluster thingys that were also great. If you were thinking about coming and didn't, or weren't planning to come at all you should have. It was a nice day, on a nice trail, with a nice group of people. I hope it was another omen of a good year to come.

Interesting story about Sara Kay, I didn't realize it at first, but I had met her previously. A year or so ago I organized a Full Moon, Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Midnight ride on Wilson's trails. Sara and another Hays rider John Schlitter, had been riding the asphalt roads in the area prior to everyone's late night arrival. A misplaced skinny stray dog drifted out of the moonlight's darkness to tag along at their heels for the night stroll. I joined them and we rode around for a bit before they headed off to decide what to do with the well mannered visitor. Sara told me at the Icicle ride that "Moonlight" went home with her that night. He is still there, doing great and no longer a "skinny" stray. After sampling Sara's treats I can guess why. Moon must have saw a Midnight ride flyer and just came out for the stroll. Glad to hear he ended up in a good home. See you on the trails.

T~

## Golden Belt Bicycles' "New Years' Day Ride 2003"

By Brian Holdsworth

As I was walking out in the gently falling snow tonight, needing to do my write-up of the Great Bend Bicycle sponsored River Trail Ride on January 1st I wondered if I could manage to convey the conditions of the day. Hmm.. COLD.. yep, comes right back to me. Having originally planned to meet up with T. Spradley in Lawrence for their similar event on the Kansas River I found the nearer destination and the challenge of an unfamiliar trail too enticing to pass up. I had mustered a couple of other Lindsborg area riders into making the trip, namely Mark Flynn and Cale Holdsworth, so we set off in time to make the 10:00 a.m. start time. We arrived fashionable early which wasn't apparently what the local riders wished to do given the overcast, blustery and chilling wind conditions. Fortunately Doug Chambers had his shop doors open to welcome us, and our toes, for the impending ride.

Cameron Chambers and a host of other Great Bend area riders had put a substantial amount of effort into getting this trail opened up specifically for this day and generally for the enjoyment of single-track enthusiast's. The trail-head is a few blocks due south from the doors of Golden Belt Bicycle and heads west from there, which is where we headed with the wind predominantly at our backs or so it seemed at the time. This was probably pure optimism at the time. That familiar feeling of exuberance for just getting the heck onto the bike and going clouds most any other feelings or thoughts of subsequent time or responsibilities.

Beginning on the north side of the river we had the option of taking the "high road", an easy flat double track, or the "low road" which had us winding through some of the typical city-deposited erosion control 'technicals' (concrete) and of course, trees. Throughout the next few miles the trail connected back and forth between trees on the banks and numerous double track sections well-worn from the 'quad's' that apparently frequent this resource of public-use space. These double-track trails eventually play an integral part of the total length of the trail giving a variety of path's to follow as one rides on west.



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Having never ridden on quad-tracks I found it to be quite exciting in that they are well-worn, relatively hard-packed and prone to provide an exhilarating sling-shot effect if cornered with grace. Not that I always managed the graceful part. After a few close calls, I did find that taking the outer wheel rut did keep my head from rebounding off the ever present tree just a hair's-breadth away from the inner rut. A water crossing puts the last half of the trail on the south side of the river with much more of the quad-tracks to ride, mixed with single-track. It tends to be at the riders' discretion which to take. Having lost the groups ahead of and behind me I stopped at about the 10-mile point, took stock of my feet and decided to turn around. Within yards I encountered Mark and Cale and we decided to head back east not knowing how many of the two dozen riders were planning on finishing the entire trail. We did meet up with a few more riders still headed west but "cold" and "toes" typically were heard in the conversation. Now we began to get a taste of that originally optimistic tail-wind. Not being a ferocious wind it was relatively bearable although Cale found his contacts tending to water (and freeze up without eye protection). *He knew there was something that he'd neglected to bring for the day* Once we were back in the shelter of Golden Belt Bicycle there was hot chili (as much as you could eat) and drinks for the participants. Food always tastes soooo good after a lengthy ride and I relish that feeling of being warmed up from the inside out, sniffing while managing to talk about the rides' highlights and eating at the same time. What a way to begin the New Year!



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My synopsis for the River-trail at Great Bend, Kansas is that it's a great resource to have. Plenty long to make for a very decent work-out. The trail that broaches the river banks has a fair amount of sandy sections that can be frustrating for continuities-sake but rarely so lengthy that a healthy effort from an average rider can't power through it (which is something to cheer for). The double-track trails enhance the capacity for multiple riders to spread out a bit and play around, attempting different "lines" to follow and the whoop-tee-doo's are a blast no matter what.

This trail is very reminiscent of the Lawrence River Trail, but deviates more-so do to the different dynamics of the water channel in general. Great work, Cam and crew, we'll look forward to making the hour drive there when we've just had enough of this damn hill in our own back yard!

Editorial Note: About 22 local riders joined Brian, Mark, and Cale, for Golden Belts New Year's ride. The Arkansas river trails near Great Bend are 12 miles each way with a little low water river crossing, some concrete technicals, and something very lacking out west, trees! It is a fun loop, definitely worth the time to ride. Contact Golden Belt Bicycle shop for trail access information. Great Bend also has a couple other short training loops and a new area opening up soon on the north shores of Barton County Lake. More info on the G.B. Trails will be added as it becomes available. ED~  
Check Out Golden Belt's new website  
[www.goldenbeltbicycle.net/](http://www.goldenbeltbicycle.net/)

**Watch Tracks Online for News of the new Central Kansas Bike club. To become a member use one of the site's many contact links!**

*Ride safe, hope to see you all...  
On the trails!*

T~

