

July 24, 2006

A Sobering Couple of Days

(The following Blog entry was left in hyperspace following our move to a new server - Originally dated 19July06)

On Sunday, we were graced by 34 volunteers from REI, who along with 11 Trailblazers, descended upon the trails at the USNWC...The plan was simple: utilize the provided workforce to rough in a new (albeit temporary) access trail to join into the base of the "Trail of Joy". A quick drop into that area had been constructed last year to accommodate races at Catawba. The trail was by no means sustainable and has been a thorn in our side since its inception. Half of the work crew descended on that section and in less than 3 hours time, had constructed a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of trail! Unbelievable...The trail will be much more sustainable and at the same time, significantly safer than the previous attempt.

While that effort was under underway, the other half of the crew attacked a new trail that will be necessary to connect the south end of the park to the two miles of sweet single track on the north end of the park.

We estimate an effort of +/- 150 man/woman hours. A big thank you to the REI crew and to the Trailblazer faithful, who gave up their Sunday afternoon and flocked to the park on (very) short notice!

Our excitement was somewhat tempered as news of the death of Bill Austin percolated through in bits and pieces. Bill was involved in an accident at Renaissance Park on Sunday morning. Bill had recently joined the Trailblazers, and after reading his obituary, it seems that my life would have been a touch more complete had I known this caring individual. His wife Susan has requested riding partners though our sisters in the Dirt Divas, as this would be a significant part of her healing process. The family was kind to name the Trailblazers as beneficiaries of donations in Bill's name. We will work with the family to develop a community service project in Bill's name.

I was also saddened to learn of the passing of Adam vonOlhausen's wife Linda, also on Sunday. Adam is an employee of Joe Gibbs Racing and we've been friends for upwards of 10 years now. Adam competes on occasion in the SuperSport division of the Summer Race Series and is a lover of two wheels.

Two painful losses in such a short period of time.

The Charlotte cycling community is one of a tight knit group that rises to the occasion when one of our own is in need. The "Ride for Recovery" to benefit Vance Price who was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident and "Cycle Charlotte" in memory of Todd Weaver, killed when struck by a city bus, are just two examples of the strength, love and care that local cyclists have for their own. Let's keep the families of Bill and Linda in our thoughts and prayers and not forget the healing process takes time. Let's not forget Susan and Adam after the dust settles. Take some time, contact them, let them know that you and our entire cycling community care.

Tom Mathews

Posted At : 5:02 PM. | Posted By : tom