

Larry Black is a cyclist, a SLBC member and owner of two bicycle shops in Maryland. He is our featured presenter at May's monthly club meeting at the Eisenhower recreation Center, 3560 Buena Vista Blvd., The Villages FL 32163 on Monday, May 7th at 7 PM.

This is Larry's story told by Larry:

Thin Air Repairs

Since I was a teen, I've been found in bike shops, bike classes and making bike presentations. I have enjoyed inspiring people to get more out of their bikes and their riding with what has been called Larry's brand of stand up mechanics.

For the SLBC I'd like to go over some of the tricks of the trade and demonstrate some 'thin air repairs' that get people back on the road when they are about to call for a lift. I'll blow apart a few myths, cut through some senseless hype, and present some shortcuts for a more enjoyable outing on a bike.

Because the SLBC and TVBC are the most safety-conscious groups with whom I've ridden, I'll go over a few safety tips that have kept me alive and out of trouble. I'll discuss hygiene, health,. and nutrition as well.

My background:

I started hanging around bike shops about 1960. When the other kids grew taller and bigger, sports were out for me with the exception of baseball where even lefties had limited positions. Too small to pitch, too short for first, I was sent to centerfield where flies were all that was in the air.

I turned to bicycles when I was just 10. Being small I wanted to motorize my bike. I barely survived the whipping I got when I took dad's lawnmower apart for the engine. However, I eventually made a 50 mph bicycle when I was 12.

I eventually got a job fixing engines, chainsaws and bikes at a bike and mower shop. During Bike Boom 1, I settled into the bicycle section. It was the hip thing to do during the flower power, back-to-the-land movement in the late 1960's

After college, the Bike Boom really took off and I jumped in. Since then I've raced, coached, repaired, instructed and been immersed in the trenches of all that is bicycling. After having worked with other people's bike shops and making them successful, my wife, Linda, and I opened our first shop in 1979. Today we have our own two busy bike shops in Mt Airy and College Park Maryland.

Linda and I met in a bike class when I was teaching at the University of Maryland. Other students in our class encouraged us to open a store. We took their advice and opened our first store in 1979 and second in 1991.

We continue to work in our stores shoulder to shoulder with our team. In addition Linda and I ride our tandem all over the planet, provide mechanical and moral support for organized group tours and support out local events. We even sneak down to our home in The Villages in order to ride with the bicycle clubs every chance we get.

I've always wanted to do things for myself and have come up with ways to make things work that others cannot or do not want want to figure out how to do. I've been helping people at their bicycle shops and on their bicycle rides for a half century.

At the meeting I'll show you some of the tricks of the trade, talk a little about some riding techniques, expose some of the hype and myths that too many have come to worship and present a couple new kinds of Kool Aide. We think retirement seems better than 're-tire-ment', since I estimate I've fixed over 10,000 bicycle tires.

Larry Black

www.bike123.com

larry@bike123.com



College Park Bicycles
7301 Belmont Avenue
College Park MD 20740
301-804-2211
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Mt Airy Bicycles
1510 Old National Pike
(Rt. 141)
Mt. Airy MD 21271
301-831-8181
410-795-2929
Hours