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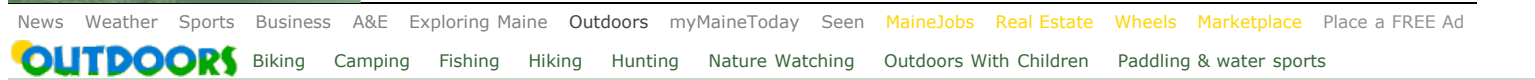
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Free Wheeling



I am not a bike racer. I am not a gear head. I just like to bike, and my two wheels have taken me to many corners of the globe. I am the author of a guidebook, "New England Biking: 100 of the Best Road and Trail Rides," and I write a bicycling column for the Maine Sunday Telegram.
- Melissa Kim

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May 29, 2007

Women's Ride on June 3

It's not breast cancer. It's not stroke. It's heart disease.

Deborah Ladner was at a cardiovascular health summit when she first heard the data: heart disease is the number one killer of women in Maine (and in the nation as well). Ladner, the Health Education Coordinator for the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, says, "I never had anything hit me so hard."

Ladner began to think about how she could involve bicycling to address the modifiable factors of heart health. Thus the Women's Ride for Heart Health was born. For the first ride, six years ago in Wiscasset, about 60 women came to ride, get lung capacity screenings, and learn more about how to improve their heart health by exercising, eating well, reducing stress and quitting smoking.

This year, for the Women's Ride on June 3 in Freeport, Ladner expects about 200 women of all ages and, she says, there are more cyclists pre-registered than ever before. Many women will be riding for the first time, she says, while others will be there for the camaraderie, scenery and to support the cause.

Hosted by the Casco Bay Branch of the Cumberland County YMCA, the event will include not just the rides but music, food, exhibits from bike shops and bike organizations, and, most importantly, lots of advice about being heart healthy.

How much do you really know about your heart and how healthy it is? Parkview Adventist Medical Center, one of the major sponsors, will be on hand with all kinds of information, presentations and screenings. Visit with the clinicians to get your blood pressure checked and get your heart health questions answered right there on the spot.

That's one of the many things that makes this group charity ride unique. Another is that it's for women only. There will be no competition, no intimidation and no worrying about how you look in a helmet (helmets are required for all riders).

Third, you'll be able to take a yoga class or get a massage after the ride. How do yoga and massage connect to heart health? Not that you need an excuse to get a massage after a bike ride, but actually, activities like yoga, massage and meditation all contribute to stress reduction, and stress is thought to be a contributing factor in heart disease. Health screenings, mini-massages and 30-minute yoga classes start at 10:00 a.m. and finish at 1 p.m.

And lastly, there's the choice of rides: participants can do a five-mile, 10-mile or 25-mile route. I can't think of any other group ride that offers a five-mile option. The route is perfectly designed for women who have never ridden, or are just starting to enjoy the pleasures and benefits of cycling. There are frequent stops and if you really just can't make it, a sag wagon will pick you up. Persevere, though, and the cheers at the finish line will make you feel like Lance Armstrong coming down the Champs-Elysees.

Starting from the YMCA, on Old South Freeport Road, the route heads down the leafy, bucolic South Freeport Road to Staples Point Road and winds down toward the ocean to one of my favorite spots, Winslow Park. This Freeport town park has a campground, playground, tidal boat launch and picnic area, all with great views of the islands of Casco Bay. You'll only get a glimpse of the

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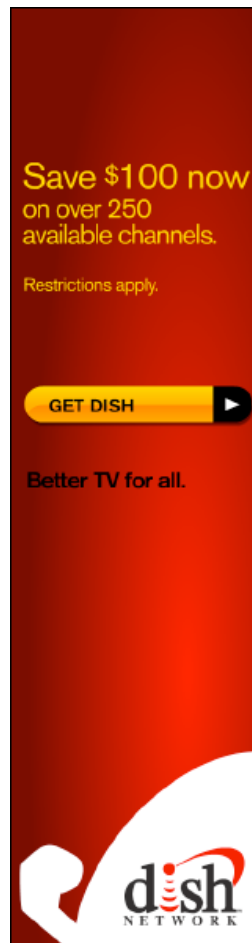
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park and the ocean, though, as you turn around here and head back. This out-and-back route is on smooth pavement and has a few gentle hills.

The 10-mile route begins with a short stretch on Route 1 before it explores some of South Freeport's pleasant roads including South Street, Bow Street, Lower Mast Landing and South Freeport Road.

If 25 miles seems at all within reach, then I would strongly recommend the 25-mile route over the 10-mile one. This is a sweet route which includes some of the most lovely roads in the Freeport/Brunswick area. From South Freeport Road to Flying Point Road (with a short optional side trip down Wolfe's Neck Road and Burnett Road, a dirt road), you'll get to curvaceous Lower Flying Point Road. Gentle rolling hills take you past some quirky cottages and long mysterious driveways where I've caught glimpses of deer leaping into the woods. Occasional ocean views, fields of wildflowers, a little waterfall at Bunganuc Landing and the tidal flats at Maquoit Bay add points of interest as you pedal northeast. Looping back, it's a long rolling stretch on Pleasant Hill Road past farms and fields to get back to the pretty Freeport roads. There's some hillwork involved but lots to look at on the way and plenty of stops if you need them.

I'll be riding the five-mile route next Sunday with my friends, eight-year-old twins Emily and Brooke Papineau. Hope to see you there!

FOR MORE INFO

What: Women's Ride for Heart Health

Who: Bicycle Coalition of Maine

Where: Casco Bay Branch of the Cumberland County YMCA, 14 Old South Freeport Road, Freeport

When: Sunday, June 3

What time: Pre-registration is encouraged but you can register on the day at 8:00 a.m. The rides begin at 9:00 a.m.


How much: \$15

On the Web: www.bikemaine.org

More: Sponsored by Parkview Adventist Medical Center and Freeport Comfort Suites

Posted by [Melissa Kim](#) at 03:25 PM

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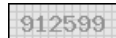
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