

WHAM BAM JAM. LUNA SUMMIT. JAY HOOTS.

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feature



THE LUNA SUMMIT

BY FANNY PAQUETTE / Photos by Paul McKenzie, Snapshots by Fanny

Back in 1990, Gary Erickson was tired, hungry and out on a 175-mile road bike adventure. As he reached for his half-eaten energy bar his taste buds firmly said, "NO!" He just couldn't muster the strength to consume another bite of another bland bar. It was then that Gary decided he had to be able to create a better tasting bar. The idea for Clif Bar was born. It wasn't until a few years later that Gary and his mother finally concocted the winning recipe that would become the first Clif Bar, proving that energy and taste were not mutually exclusive. Production then moved from his mother's kitchen to a facility in Berkeley, California. A few years later, a couple of calorie-sensitive ladies at the Clif Bar office came up with the idea to create an energy bar just for them. The result was the first ever women-specific energy snack, the LUNA Bar, a tasty bar full of 100% natural and nutritious ingredients catering specifically to a woman's needs.

At LUNA they realized that a health conscious snack isn't just about their own immediate well-being but also the planet's well being. That insight is reflected in LUNA's high environmental

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values. LUNA uses only sustainable, organic and natural ingredients for their bars. In the packaging department, boxes are 100% recycled and use the minimum shrink wrapping necessary.

LUNA continued to add to their environmentally conscious female-specific product offerings. Tea Cakes are bars infused with one of three kinds of tea: White Tea promoting healthier skin, Green Tea for longevity, and Rooibos Red Tea to balance moods. The Sunrise bar is the first and only women-specific morning nutrition bar, filling the void for active women who don't always have time for a proper breakfast. Elixir is a drink mix for women to stay hydrated while obtaining essential vitamins and minerals. The drink contains only fifty calories with no artificial flavors or sweetening.

Perhaps most significant of their accomplishments is their commitment to causes like V-DAY, a non-profit organization to help stop violence towards women. Every year on February 14th LUNA and other community members volunteer their time to put on

Shonny, Chloe, Georgia, Katerina, Alison, Marla;
Team LUNA Chix on the charge.



Chloe Forsman, enjoying another day on her bike.

a production of *The Vagina Monologues*, a play created by the founder of the V-day organization, Eve Ensler. Last year the ladies raised over \$20,000 for this worthy cause. Another cause LUNA actively supports is the quest to eliminate and educate on the causes of breast cancer, including environmental factors. LUNA organizes events like LUNAFest, a short film festival with over 100 stops across America, with proceeds benefiting the BCF (Breast Cancer Fund).

LUNA promotes awareness for their efforts through the LUNA Chix, a group of women who enjoy participating in activities such as running, riding and swimming. The group has members of all abilities, ages and backgrounds. It's not

Heads up! The ladies are ready.





so much a competitive squad as a group passionate about raising awareness for the causes they support. Regions throughout the US have appointed ambassadors who organize events and activities within their area. Each ambassador has a team. The team is a family of women who support each other through the enjoyment of sport, developing their skills and training together.

On March 17th - 18th the annual LUNA Chix Summit was held in Marin County, the birthplace of mountain biking, located just outside San Francisco. The summit is a yearly gathering. The weekend includes seminars on Yoga, Bike Repair 101, Core Strengthening, Bike Fit and Recovery and Regeneration. The courses were mixed in with bike rides, triathlons and running activities.

The weekend kicked-off with dinner and introductions from the LUNA Chix Pro Team. Marla Streb, Alison Sydor, Jimena Florit, Shonny Vanlandingham, Katrina Nash and rising star Georgia Gould were all in attendance. The BCF's Executive Director Jeanne Rizzo spoke in depth on the Breast Cancer Fund. It was interesting to hear Julie speak about breast cancer prevention. According to Jeanne, one in seven women today will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Many of the women diagnosed have no family history of the disease. As many as half of these cases of cancers stem from environmental causes that we as cyclists deal with on a daily bases. Doses of toxic chemicals from car exhausts, waterproof clothing and even plastic

water bottles have all been linked to breast cancer. Our daily personal care products like shampoos and deodorants have also been known to contain toxic chemical ingredients. They are absorbed through our skin, inhaled and sometimes ingested. These chemicals travel through our bodies into our breast milk and can eventually find their way into our children. It was an eye-opening evening, to say the least.

Day two started with yoga at 7 am, followed by "Movement Prep," where we learned injury prevention techniques and how to get the most out of our strength while riding. The morning was capped with Bike Fit 101 and a basic bike repair overview. After throwing an Elixir energy drink mix and water in our backpacks, we headed out on a three-hour mountain bike ride up Mt. Tamalpais. The beautiful Mt. Tamalpais State park in Marin county has over 60 miles of trail and is a local favorite of mountain bikers in the area. The area is also home to a variety of wildlife such as bobcats, deer and mountain lions. Our committed and fearless group of ladies charged up the mountain led by Marla Streb. The vibe was positive and friendly and we made small chat all the way up. Some of the more ambitious girls took Marla's advice on how to correctly perform a bunny-hop. It was entertaining to see a group of ladies hungry for new skills hopping over every rock they came across. The views from the trail were stunning; San Francisco Bay was marvelous from here. After a quick bit of advice on removing some air pressure from our tires we were descending on a steep downhill section. Some ladies faired better than others, but



They could not have picked a better place for a ride. Marin is beautiful.

were on our way down. I was having a great time, my confidence was at a high, and feeding off my new friend's energy, I saw an opportunity for a little bunny-hop. I pointed my bike towards the obstacle, but much to my disappointment I managed a flat on the landing. With just enough time to turn around I witnessed another girl with the same idea. Unfortunately she had the same luck and also ended up with a flat tire. Before I could even pull out my tire levers, I was surrounded by girls anxious to lend us a hand. We had the tires changed in no time and were back on our descent.

When we arrived back at the hotel we gathered around the poolside for our final lunch together. We recapped the weekend and discussed the team's future plans. The LUNA Chix have a busy future ahead. They are a passionate group of ladies dedicated to supporting their fellow women. I'll be honest: When I first heard about the weekend I was a little nervous. The idea of spending the weekend with 120 women I didn't know was a little intimidating. I really had no idea what to expect. Luckily, I was pleasantly surprised not only to find a determined organization dedicated to tackling serious women's issues, but also what I found was a big family. From the minute I met my hosts I was welcomed in to the LUNA Chix family with open arms. The Clif/LUNA Bar Company bases their operations on the philosophy of building from the ground up. Every person, product and ingredient is carefully thought out and treated with respect. I really felt like I was part of the family and I could feel mutual respect from everyone attending. The Summit was a refreshing weekend excursion. When I arrived in San Francisco I was filled with curiosity.

again, the ladies provided entertainment to one another and a good ride was had by all.

When we returned we were greeted by a Recovery and Regeneration clinic. Basically this was a short class on how to take care of your body after the ride. The importance of stretching and powering up with a tasty LUNA Bar were stressed. Afterwards, we went for a swim and enjoyed a nice dinner where we continued to get to know each other. I must say it was a great bunch of girls and rarely if ever do I get to mingle with over 120 ladies passionate about riding, fitness and women's issues.

One of the ladies who caught my attention was 41-year-old Anna Catharina Berge. Originally from Sweden, Anna now lives in California. Road riding is Catharina's passion. In the summer of 2005 she competed in the Race Across America, a grueling 3000-mile road race across the US. She was the only woman to finish the race and with a time rivaling the better half of the men. She was later elected Ultra-cyclist of the Year, an inspiring lady to say the least.

On the final day of the Summit we set out for an early ride as a lot of us had planes to catch or long drives ahead. Today's trail proved to be more of a challenge with many technical sections. The girls once again fed off each other's determination and we had another great climb to the top. After a quick power up with a LUNA Bar we



Smiles were a common theme this weekend.

When it was time to leave, I left a stronger woman, armed with newfound knowledge that would directly affect my life.

The LUNA Chix is a great organization for any female who would like to learn a new sport or meet other women with similar interests. Whether you are a beginner or expert, anyone can get involved with the Chix. To get more information on how you can be involved point your browser to www.lunachix.net.

Useful Links:

www.safecosmetics.org; www.breastcancerfund.org;
www.lunabar.com.