



TIME FOR A CHANGE

The reporter's pad on my desk contains notes from July 25 to August 16, 2007. Its pages are smeared with bike grease and chocolate, and there are a few coffee stains on the cover. The whole thing is contoured to the shape of my butt because I fell asleep with it in my rear pocket on a two-hour truck ride across the Namibian desert. It's one notebook, but it contains the seeds of three stories, all of which give me hope. ■ July 29: The 2007 Tour de France limped to a close on the Champs Élysées not two hours ago. In a narrow room on the fifth floor of a small Parisian hotel, Team Slipstream director Jonathan Vaughters tells a handful of reporters that in 2008 his team will compete in several big European races, and that he is "pretty damn hopeful" his squad will get a wild-card invitation to next year's Tour. Riders such as David Millar and David Zabriskie have signed with Slipstream and have agreed to abide by the team's hard-core antidoping policies. Vaughters is asked what will happen if the team doesn't win races. "I don't know if we'll win, and at this point I don't care," he replies. "The point is to play the game correctly." I write in my notes: I'd rather watch a clean rider finish two minutes back than a doper win off the front. ■ August 2: Anna is 35 years old, tall and lean with a firm, calloused grip, but like most women I've met in Namibia, avoids making eye contact with me. She's showing me around Liselo, her village in the Caprivi Strip, where 43 percent of the population is HIV/AIDS-positive, as is Anna. Liselo is what I, as a little kid, thought Africa would look like: mud huts, smoky wood fires, elephants wandering the roads. Anna has her disease under control thanks to the drugs provided by the Mapilelo Project, a nongovernmental organization funded by the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation. Anna is one of Mapilelo's 85 "buddies," HIV-positive people who visit other HIV-positive people in their homes to provide a measure of care and friendship. We are here to give Anna and the other Mapilelo volunteers Kona bikes as part of BICYCLING's BikeTown Africa initiative. "I walk 10 to 15 kilometers to visit some of my patients," she tells me, eyes fixed on the sand at her feet. "When I get there, all I can think about is walking home. With this bike, I can stay longer and think about the patient. And I can see more people now." She looks up at me to make sure I understand. ■ August 16: John Burke, CEO of Trek Bicycles, stands on the stage of a convention center in Madison, Wisconsin, and tells 1,000 Trek dealers that his company is going to put a lot of its money where its mouth is. "For every full-suspension mountain bike we sell in the next three years, we'll donate \$10 to IMBA," he says. "And for every helmet we sell, we'll donate \$1 to the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Communities program." Burke says this will amount to at least \$1.6 million in donations from Trek, with the goal of increasing trips taken by bikes in this country from a paltry 0.5 percent today to more than 5 percent by 2017. Sure, more people on bikes is good business for a bike company. But what Burke is talking about is instant leadership. ■ Someone's going to change things from the way they are now. It might as well be us.

ON MY WORKSTAND

The only Park Tool product I use more than my three-way hex wrench—nothing's better for snugging down a loose seatpost bolt—is the bottle opener, product number BO-2. Named like a bike tool, looks like a bike tool, and works like a charm. But hey, guys, where's the Park Tool corkscrew? \$8, parktool.com



THE CAUSE ON MY BACK

We Fat Cyclists (fatcyclist.com) have to stick together (see above). So when alternative apparel maker Twin Six came out with the limited-edition pink Fat Cyclist jersey, designed to support the battle against breast cancer being waged by Elden "Fatty" Nelson's wife, Susan, and many other women, I rocked it proudly, even though my size large is a little tight around the middle. The good news is that they're available from size small up to triple XL on the Twin Six website. All proceeds go to the Lance Armstrong Foundation. \$60, twinsix.com