

Ride your bike; enjoy the tulips

There are many things that are best done on a bicycle. The annual Tulip Festival in Skagit County, Wash., is one of them. The event (www.tulipfestival.org) draws thousands of visitors each April – a majority of them in motorized transportation.

Riding a bicycle has significant advantages. For starters, traffic is not an issue. On the Saturday that we pedaled between Mt. Vernon and La Conner, vehicles were backed up for more than a mile west of Conway near Interstate 5. The substantial shoulder, and polite motorists, made it possible for us to continue on our way unimpeded.

Parking was a cinch for our Bike Fridays. They take up less room than a regular bike. When I wanted to take pictures of daffodils, tulips etc., I just put my feet down.

While there was a long wait at the Calico Cupboard, we were able to continue our “wandering” away from the main flow of traffic in La Conner to a Thai Restaurant that had ample parking and excellent food.

The wide assortment of petal colors makes for fantastic photographs or backdrops for cyclists. Even if one chooses to pedal in Skagit County when the tulips are not in bloom, one still is in for a treat. Close proximity of the various towns and relatively flat terrain in the area make for excellent touring.



accommodated our bikes.

From Mt. Vernon, the route took us along rural roads for eight miles before pedaling into Fir Island. The Rexville Grocery Store came into view at 17.6 miles. La Conner was 24 miles from the start.

Tulip Town and Roozengarde were on the 15-mile return route, which saved the most spectacular splashes of color for last. The two stops also meant two more porta potty options and chances to procure more “carbs” in the form of fudge candy, kettle corn etc.!

Free maps of the area help guide visitors to key tulip fields, including Tulip Town on Bradshaw Road and Roozengarde on Beaver Marsh Road. Another excellent source is *Biking Puget Sound* by Bill Thorness. Route No. 40, “Skagit Flats and Tulip Fields”, outlines a 39-mile ride that avoids a majority of the traffic from Mt. Vernon to Conway to Rexville to La Conner and back to Mt. Vernon. We chose to stay at the Tulip Inn (www.tulipinn.net) in Mt. Vernon. The room easily

