

Dan Henry, one of the grand old men of American cycling passed away on March 7 in Solvang, just a few days shy of his 99th birthday and the Solvang Century.

Many of the locals remember him and his wife Trudi riding their tandem nearly every day around the Santa Ynez Valley until she passed away five years ago. And of course there is the Dan Henry Bike Route on Alamo Pintado and Grand Avenue in Los Olivos.

But few know the wide range of his exploits As a young pilot he was a skywriter, towed advertising banners, and was an aerial photographer when he was in his twenties. He then spent 25 years as commercial pilot for American Airlines, starting in 1939 flying first DC-2, DC-3's and finally the Boeing 707 the, first passenger jet..

His biking interests were wide-ranging. He participated in and led cycling tours through the eastern US and Europe with the International Bicycle Touring Society. Those route markings you see for the Solvang Century and other rides are called Dan Henry Markers. Dan was an innovator. He designed and built a road bike with a front and rear suspension, and a "sling" saddle that he used for years.

He also was an early advocate for biking facilities in Santa Barbara County and promoted and wrote poetry celebrating the benefits of cycling.

In 1992 the League of American Bicyclists awarded Dan their prestigious Paul Dudley White award for his efforts on behalf of cyclists over the years.

Dan was one of a kind and will be missed.

-John Sherman,
Local Cyclist and Friend of Dan Henry