



Close to 8,000 people, youth and old alike, were entered in the 24-hour marathon.

Pedalers push 200 miles

They pumped and pushed. Some even pounded. And when it was over they dumped their vehicle with rubbery legs and tired bodies, off to collect proof that they had indeed ridden a bicycle 200 miles in 24 hours.

Approximately 8,000 of them gathered last weekend when the annual Pepsi Cola-Wolverine Sports Club bicycle marathon went into full swing on Belle Isle. Close to 1,100 completed the 200 miles.

The rest rode until their legs fell off, or felt like they would. And even if they didn't make the big 200 they

did more than the guy who stayed home.

The entrants arrived in all shapes and sizes and from all over. Steve Guerrier, 30, of Farmington arrived with Julie Mingo and her family. Aubrey Strickstein, 15, of Southfield met some friends at the island. Jeff Gaunke, 18, also of Southfield, rode pretty much on his own. They all came to please themselves.

"I rode because I thought it was a challenge," said Strickstein. "I wanted to see if I could do it. I like bicycling and I got a lot out of it."

Said Mrs. Wayne Gaunke, Jeff's mother: "He said 'I'm going to prove something to myself' and he did. We're so proud of him."

While both Strickstein and Gaunke completed the 200, Guerrier finished only 50, and with reason. All 50 were ridden in a tuxedo and top hat, an unusual ensemble for an event where sweat and discomfort are expected ingredients.

"I don't know why I wore it," he said. "It seemed like a good idea at the time."

This year was Guerrier's first in a

tuxedo, though his third at the marathon. "It's a good way for me to start getting in shape," he said. "But it comes too early in the year for me to do too many miles."

Of his group of 30 friends who trekked from downtown Farmington only one made the 200 miles, the exchange student at Harrison High School and, said Guerrier, "He had a bet going with someone."

Bets or not, the marathon in itself is something of a dare. It's an endurance test and if nothing else, causes a certain amount of pain. Even one lap of the five mile course produces the beginning of what, after 40 laps, becomes an agony of body parts, rusted from winter inactivity.

"I felt like I was dead," recalled Strickstein. "I felt like I had just gotten through being beat up."

He also felt like doing it again, next year.

Conversely, Jeff Gaunke, felt terrific at the end of his ride. "I felt fine. I was sunburned quite badly, but I ride a lot."

Gaunke admitted though to times when he didn't think he would make it. "At first, in the first couple of laps everything was so tight, but after awhile I loosened up." He finished his ride at 9 Sunday morning.

The marathon has a peculiar draw (See BIKES, next page)



Walter Barowka takes a short break



A refreshing ice cream proves very satisfying to Dave Neuman.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
GARY FRIEDMAN



Long hours of bike riding around the 5-mile course takes its toll.