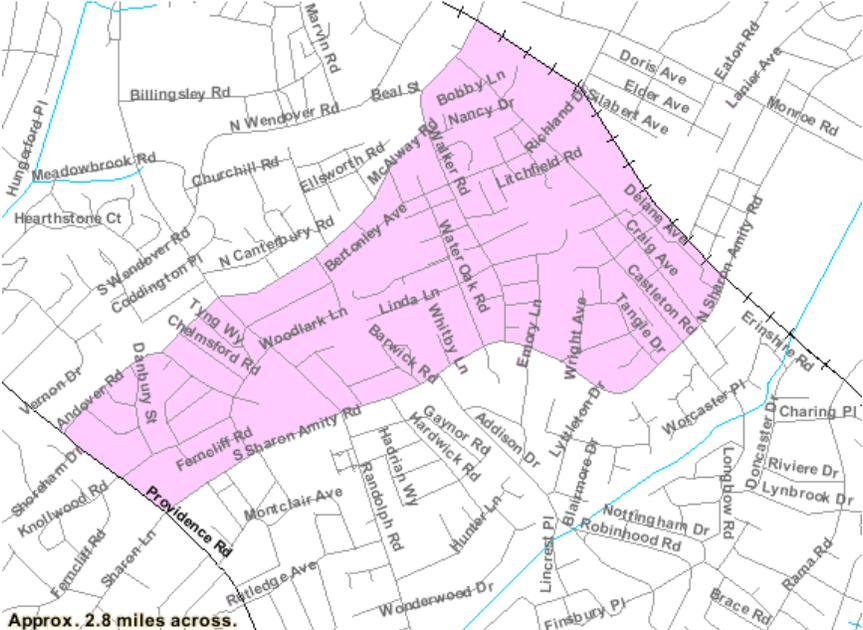


another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



Approx. 2.8 miles across.

CAUGHT WILD IN COTSWOLD

by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) April 2014

It was a mild early spring Saturday morning when I approached Agent 32 with an actionable question. “Monique, how would you like to bike it to Panera Bread in Cotswold?”

“How far is that, Parkaar?” [my ailing alias] she asked, knowing my penchant for long bike rides.

“Just a shade over six miles, one way,” I replied, hoping that she would consent to a pedaling adventure.

“Sure! I’ll pedal a dozen miles for that tasty broccoli cheddar soup.”

We got our cycling stuff packed and loaded drink bottles on the bikes. We were soon rolling out of the northeast quadrant of the large Windsor Park neighborhood in east Charlotte. *This low-50s-Fahrenheit weather sure feels great.*

Eight minutes later, we were at the Central Avenue intersection, waiting out the red light on Rosehaven Drive. I looked over at the crosswalk sign, and then at Monique.

“Six, five, four; get ready to go, mahal.” [love in Tagalog]

Monique nodded. “Ok, 33.”

The light turned green and we pedaled safely across Central. We stayed on Rosehaven until it came to a T-intersection. *So far, so good.*

We then made a left on Winterfield Place. Then a quick right on Driftwood Drive at the 4-way stop. We crossed Edwards Branch. (The short story, *The Edwards Branch Legend*, takes place on this creek about a mile downstream.)

Then we began to climb the hill. Next, we made a right on Campbell Drive, followed by a left on Greenbrook Drive, and a right on Briarfield Drive. We took a water break at the first speed hump.

“How do you feel, Monique?”

“Feeling great, Parkaar.”

“Excellent, 32. We’re already about halfway there.”

We recommenced our two-wheeled journey. At the 3-way stop, we made a soft right onto Pierson Drive. After a big descent and a steep rise, we were passing under the Independence Expressway. The new Super Walmart emerged on the other side of the overpass with the glistening Charlotte skyline behind it, about five miles to the west. *Man, this burg sure has grown over the past four decades.*

We stopped on the old metal footbridge that spanned an unnamed tributary and took another drink break. I began to clear some of the untrimmed vines that went from railing to railing, blocking our transit.

“Well, Monique, we’re a little past the halfway mark now.”

“How far past it?” she asked.

“Oh, we’re probably 3% past it.”

“So, we’re exactly 53% of the way there.”

“Yes, that would be my final answer.”

“Sorry, that wasn’t the big-money question, Parkaar.”

“The story of my life, 32.”

After guzzling down several fluid ounces of some energy concoction, we began walking our bikes up a steep, muddy, leaf-covered trail in the woods to the very short segment of Pierson Drive. We walked up to Seifert Circle, saddled up, and continued our ride. *This sure is great exercise.*

As we rolled onto Chippendale Road, I noticed an old, stone-and-mortar-housed, shrub-shrouded, granite sign that read: Amity Gardens 1936. *Wow. 1936. That was put up before World War 2.*

Soon we were crossing Monroe Road on Richland Drive in Oakhurst. We bounced over some railroad tracks. My bike’s steerer tube almost snapped. The headset lock nut had

worked its way loose again. *Those threads must be stripped. Need to fix it when we get back home.*

At the stop sign, we turned right onto Craig Avenue. Traffic was light. Less than a half-mile later, we turned left onto McAlway Road and had to deal with a few cars, but nothing too hairy. *This is going pretty good. Monique doesn't seem too fatigued.*

A couple of stop signs later and we were on Walker Road. We turned right onto Bertonley Avenue. Then we took a right onto Faulkner Place for a block, followed by a left back onto McAlway. Finally, a left onto Woodlark Lane got us to Randolph Road.

“Well, once we cross this street, we're essentially there, Monique.”

“Let's not get run over just before the goal line, 33.”

“Yes, let's not.”

We waited a minute for a gap in the traffic. Then we dashed across the four lanes and rode the sidewalk up to the renovated Cotswold Shopping Center. *Ah, we made it.*

We rode past Harris-Teeter to Panera Bread, which had taken over a failed restaurant's space in the courtyard area.

We locked the bikes in front, went in, ordered, paid, and took a seat outside at a round, black, metal table that had a reeled-in parasol. I cranked it open for shade. The day was quickly warming. It was a cool 53° F when we left the house; now it felt like 83° F from all of the heart-pumping exertion.

Our soups arrived six minutes later. The 20-something Caucasian waiter - you guessed it - looked like a hipster. He was ogling the nearby olive-skinned waitress with an earnest eagle's eye.

"Looks like our boy is after some tail, Agent 32."

"You think they're pumping, Parkaar?"

"I think he is still in the size-up phase, Monique."

"How long will it take him to enter the approach-and-ask phase?"

"I don't think we have that much time, 32. Better eat up before your soup gets cold."

"I don't like it as hot as you do, 33."

"Oh, yeah."

"Your French onion soup does look delicious, though. Who invented such a strange soup with croutons and cheese

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

