

SHIFTING SECRETS REVEALED

bike

VIRGIN DIRT

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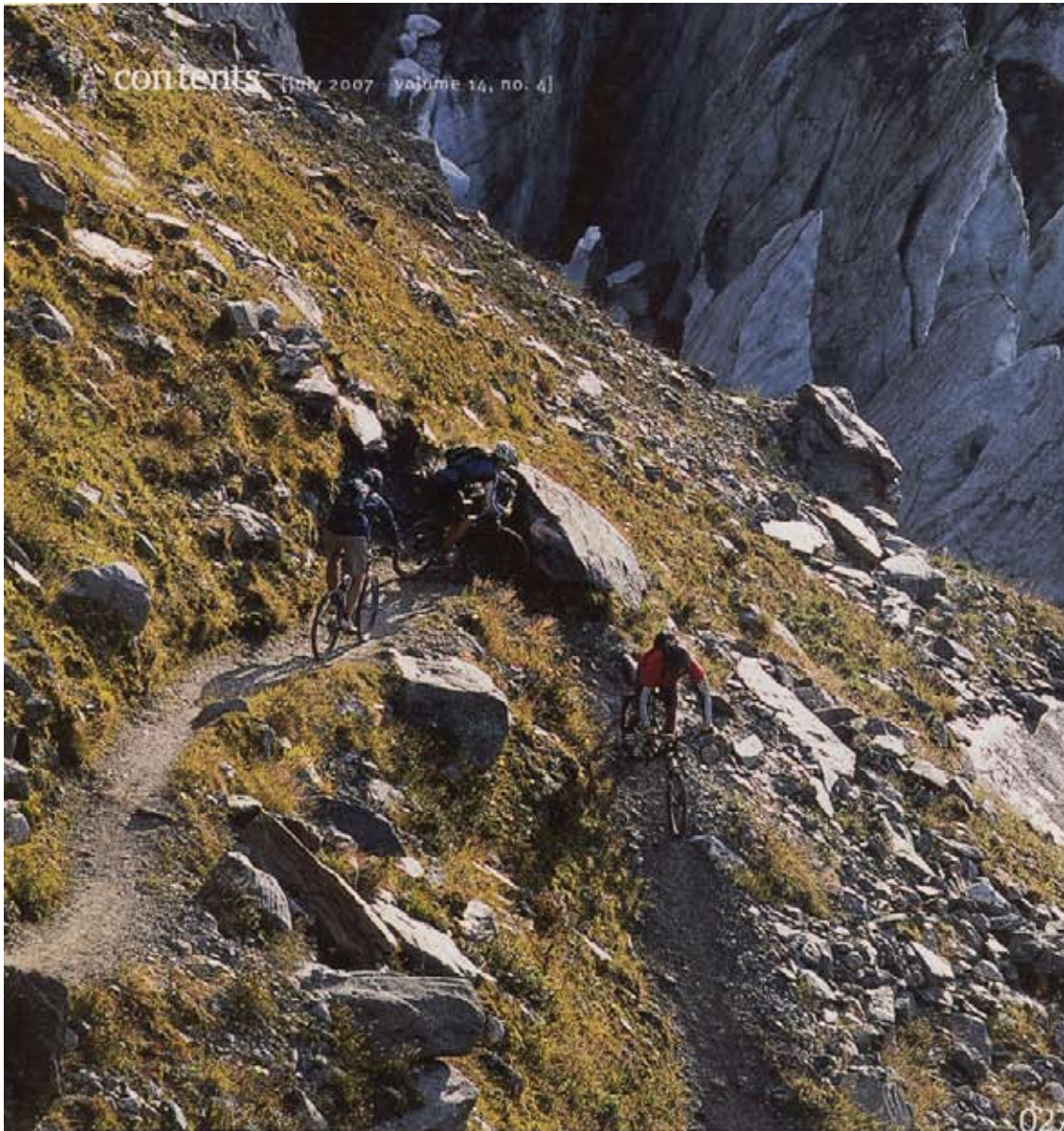
7,000 MILES OF PAIN

A blistering journey through Africa

Crankworx, Downieville and B.C.'s new stage race

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reasons why GREG WILLIAMS SHOULD BE THE MAYOR OF DOWNIEVILLE

As founder of Downieville's Yuba Expedition bike shop, Williams has helped put his town on the mountain biking map. In 1992, he co-promoted an event called the Downieville Descent and in 1995 he held the inaugural Coyote Classic bike race, which later became known as the Downieville Classic.

He packs them in. This year, the classic will be held July 13-15 and more than 600 riders will enter the cross-country race. The downhill race sold out its 200 available slots in about 10 minutes. Altogether, more than 3,000 racers, spectators and sponsors will flood the town. "Not bad for a town of 200," Williams says.

Downieville currently doesn't have a mayor. At the peak of the gold rush, the town nestled in the northern Sierra Nevada Mountains boasted a population of 10,000 and was a potential candidate for state capital. "Now, there are 240 houses total and half are empty, according to the Downieville Public Utility District," Williams says. The town could use some help.

Mountain biking = New Gold. According to the Sierra County Tourist Occupancy Tax committee in 1998, mountain bike riders accounted for about 80 percent of all revenue brought into Downieville.

In 2004, Williams founded the Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship (www.sierratrails.org), to maintain and enhance access to the trails around Downieville. "We currently employ four locals, have 125 active members, have contributed over 12,000 total man-hours of volunteer labor and received \$195,000 in federal funding since we began," Williams says.

Family history. Williams' great grandfather settled in Downieville in the mid 1800s. "He and his family ran pack mules," Williams says. "They were responsible for building many of the original trails above town."

He can float a pretty clean wheelie.

—Mike Ferrentino