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**Contact:** David Severson,  
Ride Organizer  
**Phone:**

**2004 Paralympic Gold Medalist to Speak at Northwest Tandem Rally Banquet**  
*Opportunities for non-sighted children to ride tandem bicycles to follow*

Yakima, WA – The 2007 Northwest Tandem Rally (NWTR) to be held in Yakima over Memorial Day Weekend (May 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>) will feature Karissa Whitsell, 2004 Paralympic Gold Medalist in Tandem Cycling, as the guest speaker at the Sunday Banquet on May 27<sup>th</sup> at the Yakima Convention Center.

Karissa Whitsell, a blind cyclist from Springfield, Oregon, and her sighted captain, Katie Compton from Colorado Springs, Colorado won medals in every event they entered in the 2004 games in Athens, Greece. In the process, they set a world record in the Women's B1-3 Tandem 3km Individual Pursuit with a time of 3:36.816. The team had previously broken the old Paralympic record in the qualifying round. The Karissa and Katie team went four-for-four in Athens, winning gold medals in the tandem road races and 3km pursuit on the track, silver in the 1km time trial on the track and a bronze in the track sprints.

Whitsell plans to use the routes in the 2007 Tandem Rally to train for the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing, China with her new partner, Lana Atchley who hails from San Diego. Whitsell will share her life experiences in cycling and international competition at the NWTR Sunday banquet.

In addition, Whitsell and the Apple Valley Kiwanis will host an experience for sight impaired youth on Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007 from 9:00 to 9:30 AM at Children's Village. Children will meet Whitsell, and have an opportunity to ride tandem bicycles with 2007 NWTR participants. For more information or to confirm participation in this event, please contact David Severson at (509) 972-8803 or Gailon Gentry at (509) 966-4475, or email [YakimaRides@yahoo.com](mailto:YakimaRides@yahoo.com).

The NWTR is an annual tandem cycling event that rotates to a different city within the Northwest every year. Apple Valley Kiwanis proudly hosts the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual event in its first visit to Yakima. Corvallis, Oregon served host to the 2006 rally. For more information on the event visit [www.nwtr.org/2007](http://www.nwtr.org/2007).

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