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Pump Stories

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Rob van der Plas, Bicycle Author and Engineer

By Keith Larson

Rob van der Plas (1938-) is a professional engineer and a long-time bicycle enthusiast now living in San Francisco, California. He founded his own publication company and has authored more than 42 titles since 1983 on bicycling, bicycle technology and bicycle repair, bicycle racing and also cycle history.

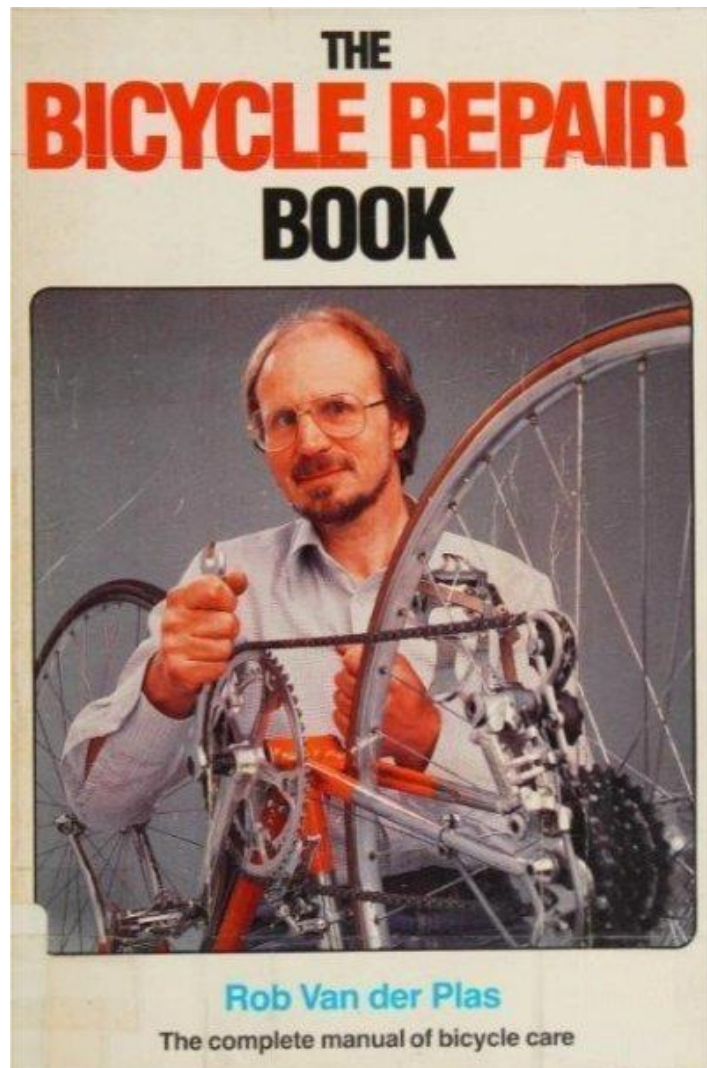


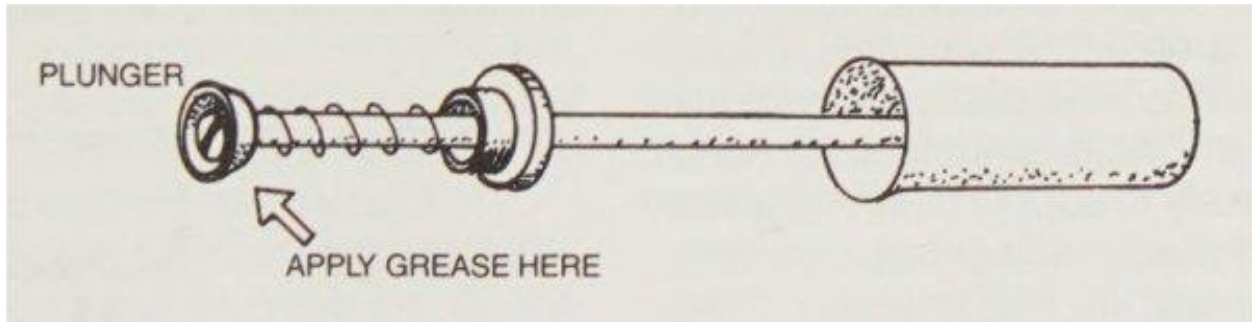
Photo Credit: Van der Plas, Rob. *The Bicycle Repair Book*. San Francisco, CA: Bicycle Books (Publishing) Inc. 1st edition 1985.



Photo Credit: Van der Plas, Rob. *Roadside Bicycle Repairs: The simple guide to fixing your road or mountain bike.* San Francisco, CA: Bicycle Books (Publishing) Inc. 3rd edition 1995, cover photo.

BICYCLE TOOLS AND PUMPS

His bicycle books are noted for easily understandable instructions and photographs of key repair actions. Standard for the period is that he makes no mention of brand names for bicycle tools and accessory items he uses, so you have to examine his hand drawn images and photographs to connect his fondness for the **SILCA Impero** framp pump with the Campagnolo steel pump head.



Drawing Credit: Van der Plas, Rob. *The Bicycle Repair Book*. San Francisco, CA: Bicycle Books (Publishing) Inc. 1st edition 1985, page 119.

From my review of other period published books on bicycle repair, I believe Rob should be credited with first sharing these pump maintenance tips:

- > Replacing pump head rubber washers when worn
- > Lubricating pump leather gaskets with grease
- > Troubleshooting frame pump leaks and maintenance
- > Including in your kit of spare parts the rubber grommet (seal washer) for the pump

Pump Maintenance
Cycle Repair Step by Step

Above: Even the pump can be serviced: parts of the head.

Pump Maintenance

If the pump doesn't work properly, the leak is usually at the head of the pump (the part that is put on the valve) or at the plunger inside the pump. On some pumps, the head can be replaced.

Tools and equipment: screwdriver
lubricant

Procedure:

1. Tighten the screwed bushing that holds down the rubber sealing washer, or grommet, in the head of the pump.
2. If this doesn't solve the problem, unscrew it and check the grommet, replacing it if necessary (inflexible, cut, frayed or enlarged hole); then screw the bushing back on.
3. If still no luck, unscrew the other end of the pump and check the condition of the leather or plastic plunger washer. If it is no longer flexible, impregnate it with any kind of vegetable or animal fat and make sure it is screwed down tight. If necessary replace the plunger washer.

Photo Credit: Van der Plas, Rob. *Roadside Bicycle Repairs: The simple guide to fixing your road or mountain bike*. San Francisco, CA: Bicycle Books (Publishing) Inc. 3rd edition 1995, page 92.

REFERENCE

Rob van der Plas remains active publishing new editions of cycling maintenance books and cycling history. You can see his many titles at Van der Plas Publications.

<https://www.cyclepublishing.com/cyclingbooks/index.html>

Here are several of Rob's key books useful to classic steel bikers:

The Bicycle Repair Book, 1st edition 1985.

Cycle Repair: Step by Step, 1st edition 1988.

Roadside Bicycle Repair: The simple guide to fixing your road or mountain bike. 3rd expanded and updated ed. 1995.

Simple Bicycle Repair: Fixing your bike made easy, 1st edition 2004.

Bicycle Technology: Understanding, Selecting and Maintaining the Modern Bicycle and Its Components, 1st edition 2010.

His bicycle books can also be viewed at the **Internet Archive Open Library**

https://openlibrary.org/authors/OL2951113A/Rob_van_der_Plas