

urban photo  
gallery  
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# URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #3 • September 2007



THE TRUTH  
ABOUT  
TRACK  
BIKE  
GEOMETRY

YES  
YOU CAN  
START YOUR OWN  
NON-PROFIT see page 58



TOOL-FREE TIRE REMOVAL... See how on page 68 • Download this issue for free online [URBANVELO.ORG](http://URBANVELO.ORG)

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Issue #3 September 2007

# URBAN VELO

Urban Velo PO Box 9040 Pittsburgh, PA 15224



"Employee Parking." Photo by Tread, [www.gotreadgo.com](http://www.gotreadgo.com)



**Brad Quartuccio**

Editor

[brad@urbanvelo.org](mailto:brad@urbanvelo.org)



**Jeff Guerrero**

Publisher

[jeff@urbanvelo.org](mailto:jeff@urbanvelo.org)

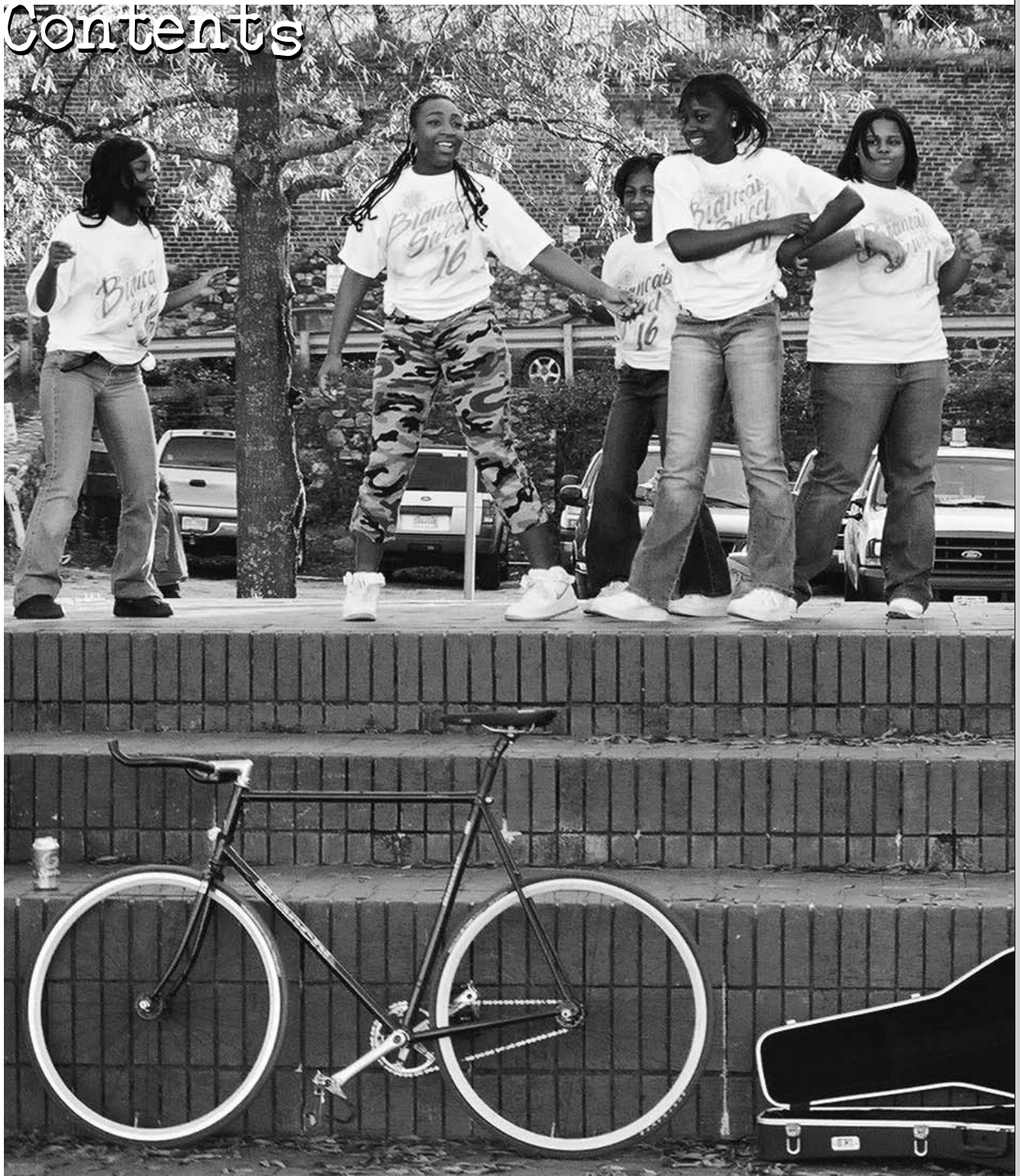
**Co-conspirators:** Tread, Joshua Siebert, Damarak the Destroyer, Chris Thomas, Dat Nguyen, Mike Pfaltzgraff, Mona Abouissa, Ted King-Smith, Erok Boerer, Ezra Caldwell, Seth Werkheiser, Julian Birch, Dan Barham, Leonard Basobas, Dave Gingrich, Chipps Chippendale, Ian Adams, Don Walker, Kelly McCord, Johnny Cumlately, David Hoffman, Andy White, Joe McManus, Kurt Morrison and Andy Singer

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# Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



Issue #3 has pulled together, and with it a hare-brained project involving the pictured three-speed hub stamped more than a decade prior to my birth. What goes around comes around, or something like that.

We hope it is clear that advocacy is close to our heart. More bicycle transportation solutions mean more cyclists, and more friends. Luckily for the bicycle community at large, our ace advocacy contributor David Hoffman was run off the road during his commute a few years back. Not so lucky for him, but we all gained a fired up and dedicated soul that is speeding up the slow march of progress. With our numbers growing by the day, we are a group worth pandering to. In Part 2 of "Starting a Local Advocacy Organization" we hope to shed some light on the rules of non-profit engagement. Between this and the track bike geometry lesson, one could think we're sporting pocket protectors these days. Maybe so, but we can spice it up after hours—just read our fictionalized tale "Don't Kiss an Elephant on the Lips Today."

But back to the three-speed. Ultimate commuter or ultimate headache? Quite possibly both. 

We want your words. Send your editorial contributions to [brad@urbanvelo.org](mailto:brad@urbanvelo.org)

willyoumaketheleap.com



# Make The Leap



**SRAM**  
**RIVAL™**

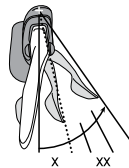
## The RIVAL Gruppo

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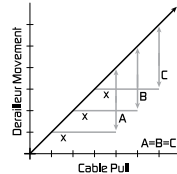
XX: A slightly longer sweep of the same inboard lever downshifts gears quickly, smoothly, and easily.



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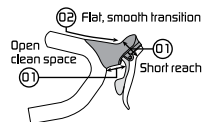
X: Cable pull is equal  
ABC: Derailleur movement is equal



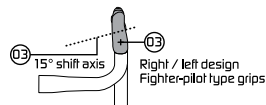
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# Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero



Nothing knocks a wheel out of true like a 2000 pound death machine. Remember, it never hurts to wear your helmet. Photo by Jeff Guerrero

Rolling effortlessly

Pedals push against my feet

Death rides on my left.



Urban Velo issue #3, September 2007. First edition print run: 1000 copies. Issue #2 online readership: 20,000+





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# I Love Riding in the City

We're looking for participants from around the world!

- ◆ **Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?**
- ◆ **What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?**
- ◆ **Why do you love riding in the city?**
- ◆ **Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city... Poetry anyone?**

Send words & photos to Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224 or email [jeff@urbanvelo.org](mailto:jeff@urbanvelo.org)

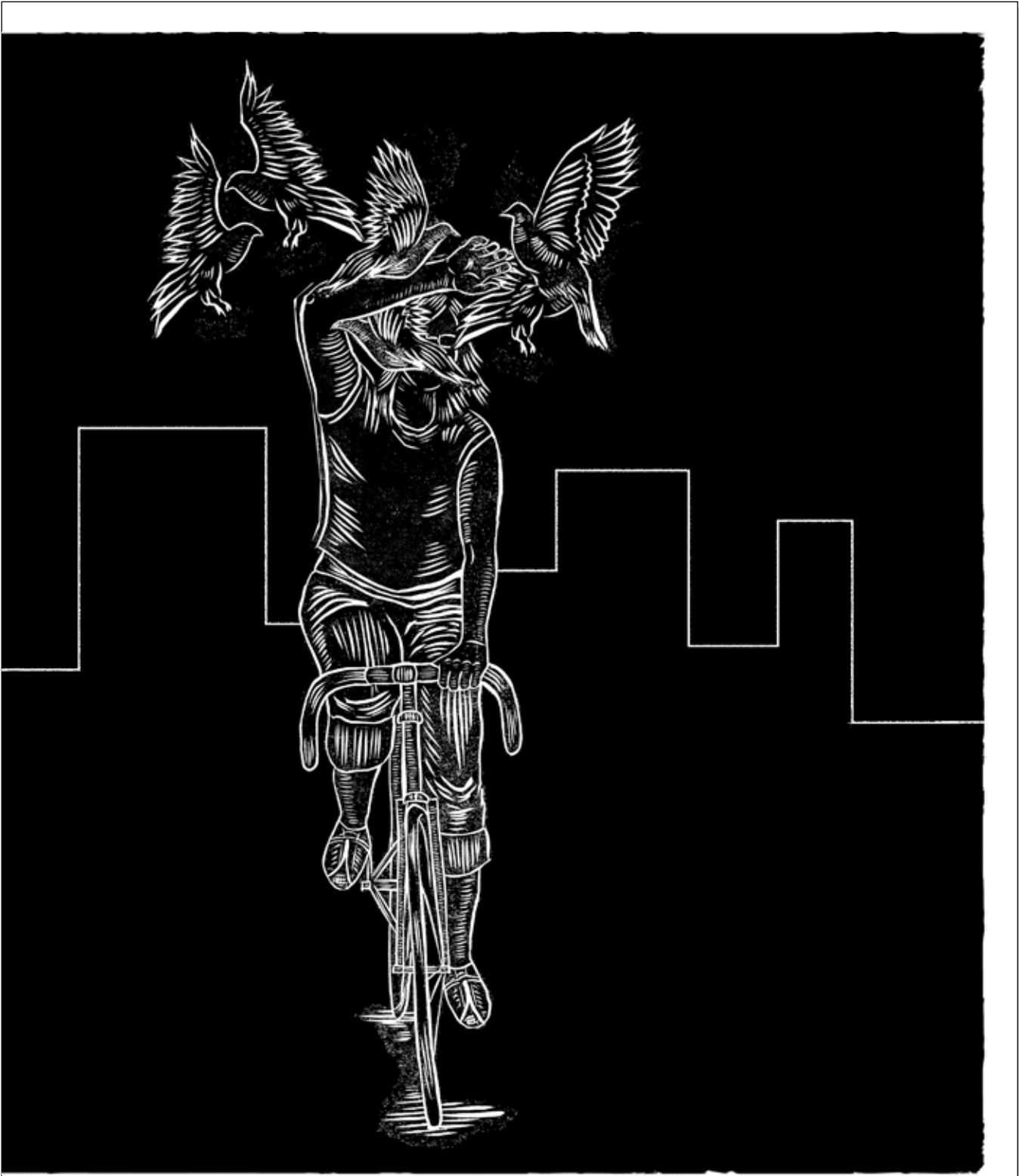


Illustration by Damarak the Destroyer - [www.damarakthedestroyer.com](http://www.damarakthedestroyer.com)

# I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Jeff Guerrero

**NAME:** Chris Moore

**LOCATION:** Anywhere I can work, and the slow places twice.

**OCCUPATION:** Talk show host

**On riding in the city:** The older I get the more I dislike riding from my home because I live on top of a hill. Leaving is great fun but after a long ride it is a bear to get back up that hill. The only problem with riding in Western Pennsylvania is the narrow roads without much shoulder for a bike. Automobile drivers don't respect you as another vehicle and that is a problem. There are still a lot of great rides though, and beautiful scenery.

**Favorite or most exotic city to ride:** Exotic doesn't count in my riding locations unless you count St. Louis. My

favorite place to ride is to the Jersey shore. Nice wide roads, and in some places enough shoulder room to stay out of traffic, ride two abreast, and have a decent conversation.

**Why I love riding in the city:** Pittsburgh is one of the few places that you can take your life into your own hands and get a workout too by simply riding in the streets, dodging potholes and angry motorists. It is great sport!

I don't like bike snobs who ride very expensive bikes and refuse to speak to you when they see you because you don't have the kind of gear they have.



POETRY IN STEEL

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# I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Chris Thomas - [www.flickr.com/photos/professorchrisgo](http://www.flickr.com/photos/professorchrisgo)

**NAME:** Jessica "Tiny" Rieck  
**LOCATION:** Kansas City, MO  
**OCCUPATION:** Student

**Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?**

I live in Kansas City, MO. Riding here was difficult in the past years, but nowadays people seem to be more accepting of cyclists on the road.

**What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?**

Hmm, it'd have to be right outside of Corvallis, OR. In an hour ride we saw city, farm, mountain, valley and had our fair share of logging trucks to keep us awake.

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

The excitement. There's always something to look at, especially downtown. Actually, one of the main reasons I ride

is to take pictures of what I see on the way. Not to mention the new-found alleycat community, you guys are like a second (cooler) family.

**Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city... Poetry anyone?**

Well, I'm no poet, but there's a zen-like quality to riding in a city. I wouldn't leave it for the world. And there is no greater joy than riding the streets with a camera strapped to your back.

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Evridiki

**LOCATION:** Athens, Greece

**OCCUPATION:** Translator, editor

## **Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?**

I live in the capital of Greece, Athens. If anyone has ever visited this town, he may know that the traffic is extremely chaotic. Most roads are narrow, drivers (and especially taxi-drivers) stop everywhere and all the time on the road without paying attention to the others. Most drivers are impatient, and don't pay the proper respect to the ones who are more in danger like motorcyclists or people with bicycles. In Athens

there aren't many people who use the bicycle in the city to go to work etc. But in the last 2 years there are more and more people who use a bike. Moreover there are no bicycle-roads. I use my bike every day to go to work. I ride 10 km a day. After work or on weekends I also go for cycling with my friends. When I am on my bicycle I meet different reactions from the people: There are some who laugh at you and think cycling is only for kids; there are others who just don't pay attention to you with their cars or motorbikes (or the busses) who overtake you passing really close to you blowing their stinky gas fumes in your face; there are others who shout at you as you drive by "You are cool! Keep riding!"; there are others whom you just annoy with your (slow - for them!) speed and they just wanna overtake you. In general you have to be very careful when riding in Athens!!!! You can't cycle and relax. But I still prefer it from having to use busses, cars etc.! I love it!

## **What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?**

Munich, Germany. I lived there one year. Although I didn't like so much the city, it was perfect for cycling (as Germany in general): flat roads, bicycle roads, and many parks where you can go with your bicycle, drive around and then lie on the grass and enjoy!

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

Cause I am fast (faster than any buss or tram etc), I am free to leave from where I am whenever I want without depending on bus schedules or paying expensive taxis. I love it when the cars are (constantly in this city) stuck and I pass them by with a smile on my face! Haha. I am indeed faster than any fuckin BMW in that case! I love it when the sun shines on my face and the air blows into my face (even with gas fumes sometimes)! Cycling is also a way to contribute to the protection of the environment and stand-up against the mainstream "car-culture". And after all it is also good exercise for your body!

## **Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city... Poetry anyone?**

Maybe this song from the band ZEGOTA, it is called "Bike Song." *NO! Pedal away from global decay. Every pedal strikes a blow for freedom. Every pedal strikes a blow against global decay What will we sacrifice? What will we sacrifice for life and land? When will we understand that we're responsible for the environment? What will we justify? Making way for you... It's not your fault. Don't know what else to do... Taking the prescribed path, you'll have to wreck your life. It's not our fault, we had to wreck our lives. We wreck our lives.*





# CETMA RACKS

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# I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Dat Nguyen

**NAME:** Ben

**LOCATION:** Portland, OR

**OCCUPATION:** Computer Nerd

**Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?**

Portland Oregon, mecca of USA bike culture and rideability. It's better here than almost anywhere else, which means (as my friend Karl put it) that it sucks, but less than other places. The US is fully and irrevocably embroiled in car culture since we/ Standard Oil/GMC decided that cars were the ideal form of transportation for our country. All streets, streetscapes, signs, signals, speeds, you name it, are designed for the speedy flow of personal auto traffic. Anything else is a tough fit.

On the other hand, Portland tries really hard, with bike lanes and signals, off-street paths, signs, and encouragement. Plus, it never gets cold here (maybe three or for days) so you can ride year-round.

**What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?**

Tokyo, Japan! Bicycles were part of the normal flow there, and many many people ride them. Most memorable was probably people riding bikes while holding umbrellas and talking on cell phones, all at the same time.

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

It brings home that cities are bike-sized entities, if they're reasonably planned. It's the easiest, fastest way to get around in town, and you see the most stuff on a bike. You can go from walking speed to super-runner easily, slow down and check out a cool new store or garden, or haul ass down the arterial.

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Kristin Butcher

**LOCATION:** Everywhere

**OCCUPATION:** Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crew

## Why I Love Riding in the City

One of the hardest questions for me to answer these days is, "Where do you live?"

I've realized that there is no way to accurately answer this question without a squirrely look and 15 minutes of follow-up discussion. So, I just answer with the truth.

"Everywhere."

I'm professionally homeless. I'm in a new city every weekend. My husband and I are one of the Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crews. We travel across the country in a brightly colored Subaru with four bikes on top and our worldly possessions inside.

We teach people, everywhere, how to build trails. We show volunteers how to grow their cycling community. But, mostly, we whisper in ears about how bikes can save the world.

Besides being asked where I live, one of the next hardest questions was posed by Jeff the other day.

"What's riding like in your city?"

My city is every city. It's Asheville and Minneapolis and Akron, Ohio. Riding in my city du jour is an exercise in exploration. It's being the new kid in the neighborhood, armed with only a bike and a cat-load of curiosity. Sometimes, it's being lost and asking for directions in Chillicothe, Missouri only to hear, "Yeah, whatchyer gonna do is turn 'bout a mile before Ol' Man Johnson's barn..." A week ago, it was getting groceries in Bozeman, Montana and locking my bike between a Magna cruiser and a Playschool Big Wheel. Later that day, it was racing the mountain storm back to the hotel.

I won, by the way.

But there are times when riding in my city is more than just a pedal powered errand or a lost excursion. The best times are when I am not alone. Instead of following the whims of my instinct, I am blindly guided by the flapping shirttail of a new friend. Back roads and hidden paths are revealed with every pedal stroke. The sound of my heart pumping is accompanied by tales of old trails and stories of derbies and the occasional reference to an absent friend, now remembered by a rusty white bike affixed to a guardrail. We pass moms with kids in tow, a pack of roadies pedaling at full tilt, and a Colonel Sanders look-a-like who whistles as he rides. We finally arrive at a basement pub. There are bikes stacked outside.

And that's what I love most about riding in my city. Here, in Everywhere, USA, I'm not the only one enjoying the ride.

Check out [www.imba.com/tcc](http://www.imba.com/tcc)



— **VILLIN** —

[www.villincycleworks.com](http://www.villincycleworks.com)

# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Ana Pereira  
**LOCATION:** Oeiras, Portugal  
**OCCUPATION:** 'bikepreneur' wannabe

## Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Oeiras, a suburban area a couple of miles from the country's capital city, Lisboa. I like cycling around here because it's still a small city atmosphere. It's near the big city but there's lots of open space, fields, an occasional flock of sheep roaming through the pastures... There are no cycle paths so I just ride on the road, along with traffic. There are no parking facilities for bikes around here, either. That's a major deterrent to cycling to more places, the biggest one, actually... There's no such thing as a bike culture here. But I plan on helping change that.

## What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Friedrichshafen, in Germany, where Eurobike takes place. It's an absolutely idyllic place, the streets, the people, the beautiful paths by the lake... A must!

## Why do you love riding in the city?

Because it makes me feel more like a part of it, instead of just a passer by. I can hear the people, look at them, notice the details of the places I ride through. I can hop off and hop on again whenever I feel like it or need to. Riding my bike gets me where I need to go and makes me feel good, the exercise improves my humor, and relaxes me. I don't get traffic stress like when I drive my car.

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**NAME:** Anthony Robson  
**LOCATION:** Edinburgh, Scotland  
**OCCUPATION:** Lawyer/Editor

## Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Edinburgh and for the most part riding here is pretty relaxed (though we have more than our fair share of SUVs). The one thing you can guarantee here is a hill or seven – you'll not go more than a mile on a perfectly flat road. Oh, and the potholes, no problem if I'm on the MTB, hell if I'm on the fixed or road bike.

## What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Not really a city, but riding round Rarotonga (the largest of the Cook Islands) almost killed me in the heat. No matter what city I ride in I think there's always somewhere fun you can find to play.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

Could be any number of things. I hate taking buses, so the bike keeps me out of them. I hate sitting in traffic jams, so the bike keeps me out of the car. Above all else? I love getting places quicker than any other transport (except maybe motorbikes) and that look of bemusement concealing a slight fear when you tell people you ride to work in all conditions.

Check out [www.citycycling.co.uk](http://www.citycycling.co.uk)



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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Nicewrench

**LOCATION:** Grrreenbay, WI

**OCCUPATION:** Bike Mechanic

I love riding in the city cause its a good way to get from point "A" to point "B". It doesn't cost much, and I don't have to cut down on Big Macs. It keeps me feeling good about doing my little part, and I don't have to feel guilty about my bros getting their legs blown off. Here's my poem:

Rain, sun, snow  
One day fast, One day slow  
Sometimes it's shitty  
Sometimes it's pretty  
But check it motherfuckers  
I love ridin' in the city.





*in which to take the city down*

**knickers**

[www.swrvecycling.com](http://www.swrvecycling.com)

# I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Mona Abouissa

**NAME:** John Perkins  
**LOCATION:** Cairo, Egypt  
**OCCUPATION:** Photographer

## Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

Cairo is one of the craziest cities to cycle in. Cars never indicate, always honk, and frequently belch fumes that would choke a camel. And there are a lot of them. And potholes everywhere. Curbs are a foot high, and people meander on and off them at random. On a day where you're in tune with it, you hop the curbs, glide through traffic, avoid pedestrians, track-stand at the lights, and wave at the gawping cops. Everyone wants to check out your exotic foreign bike, and maybe see some tricks. Here, bikes are mainly used to deliver food. To use a bike to commute or for fun is considered very eccentric. But maybe it will catch on. On a bad day, traffic ignores the lights, your head spins from the noise or the heat or the fumes, taxis screech to a halt in front of you every 30 seconds, your body

is tired from constant evasive maneuvers, and you just want to sleep. Another of the downsides is lack of spare parts, finding a Presta valve or the right allen key here just isn't realistic.

## What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?

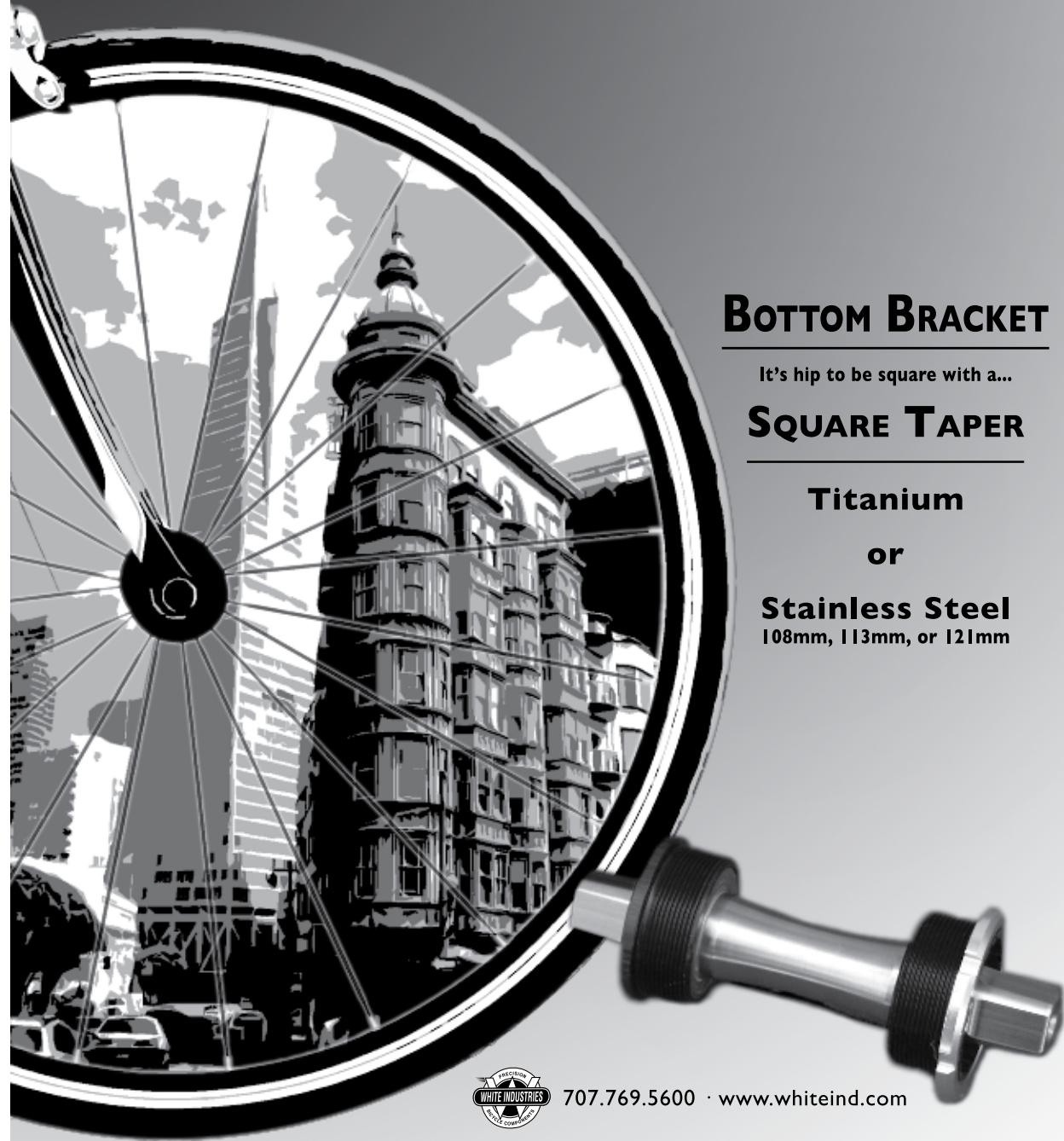
My favorite city to ride in is probably London. There are so many bike cultures there, messengers, commuters, roadies, BMX/trials tricksters. And I miss the days when I could wander into a bike shop and gape at the shiny parts.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

Whether you're going from A-B or working on a fancy trials line, cycling in the third world isn't just about staying fit or enjoying yourself. You become a kind of ambassador, not the kind who rolls around in an armored Hummer, but one who's always stopping to chat. I've met a lot of people through riding here, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

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# 24 Hours of Bike! Bike!

By Ted King-Smith

The familiar sight of **Pittsburgh Filmmakers Institute** has become mutated into a giant bike rack bedecked with road bikes, tour bikes, mountain bikes, track bikes and tall bikes. The typically calm café has taken on the air of bus station with sleepy punks and their packs jammed into every corner commiserating on their night of spandex debauchery while drinking coffee and trading flyers. I'm excited to partake of Sunday's round of workshops now that I have an elusive day off.

First up is a presentation by Guatemala's **MayaPedal** a group utilizing imported bicycles in the construction of *BiciMaquinas* (pedal powered machines) to aid local farmers. Machines such as grain mills, corn shellers, coffee depulpers, water pumps, washing machines, tilemakers and blenders are all fashioned from familiar bicycle components. Mad genius, Carlos Marroquin, showed slides of his designs, as well as demonstrated, in person, the action of his pedal-powered corn sheller which could shell and grind an ear of corn in seconds and could be adjusted for a wide range of users. Carlos attested to MayaPedal's openness to visitors from the north so consider yourself invited to spend time in Guatemala with their fantastic machines!

Next up on my hit parade was "Bike repair in the African Bush" with David Peckham of **Village Bicycle Project**. David also used slides to demonstrate the resourcefulness of cyclists in Ghana who could utilize any means to keep their bicycles, a valuable commodity, on the road. Some novel repairs include spoke nipple washers, machete-fashioned from a tin can, and brake shoes replaced with mutilated flip flops. Bicycle


Project has made it a priority to supply American bikes and bike materials—much of which get thrown on the scrapheap—to those in Ghana who could use them most.

In a similar vein, "Bike Projects in Africa" showcased Philadelphia's **The Power Exchange** and **Neighborhood Bike Works** joint efforts to provide bicycles, tools and skills to people in Tanzania, a place where bicycle transportation can be the difference between making a living or not. Presenter David Cicero Bevacqua utilized a split-screen video to visualize the economic discrepancies between his home of Philadelphia, and urban Tanzania, juxtaposing American wastefulness with African resourcefulness. David's presentation focused on his attempts to share bicycle skills and materials with community groups in Tanzania and an assessment of his successes and failures with the project. To those of us who think they know a good deal about the bike trade, it's refreshing to find ways in which every piece of material can be utilized from delivering someone to distant employment to ingenious labor-saving devices. In reality, nothing needs to be wasted.



Photo by Erok Boerer

The last hurrah of the Bike!Bike! conference, a moonlit bike ride to watch the Pleiades meteor shower, meandered off around midnight. The ride was highlighted by anarchist history lessons courtesy of Erok Boerer, Mister **Bike Pittsburgh** himself.

Overcast skies nearly kyboshed our meteor-shower viewing, but a courageous crew set forth for a night of pool-jumping and fast riding through the north side of the city, eventually ending up at **Jo-Jo's** diner where piles of home fries and coffee were sacrificed to the newly formed **Lucky 7** gang (featuring members of **Free Ride**, LA's **Bike Kitchen**, NYC's **Time's Up!**, and more Chicago bicycle projects than I can name). After an impromptu workshop on cycling, gender and politics, we sallied forth to our respective lodgings where I bid my out of town guests a fond farewell at 6:00 am on Melwood Avenue, provisional bike center of the universe. 



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Self-portrait by Ezra Caldwell - [www.flickr.com/photos/fastboy](http://www.flickr.com/photos/fastboy)

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# Click Click Clique

By Seth Werkheiser

[www.buzzgrinder.com](http://www.buzzgrinder.com)

**O**n the upper west side of Manhattan lives Ezra Caldwell. A wiry little guy with a stable of bikes, an inviting smile and a wrench. He'll adjust your brakes over coffee, then tweak your chain line and take you around the block. This is what Ezra does.

"When I was in college I had just one bike. I used to ride road bikes. You know, with tights on. I worked as a messenger in Philly for a while, like 12 or 13 years ago, and couldn't really see using my Carbon Fiber road bike as a work machine, so I built up a Raleigh Technium fixie conversion. It's sort of been a slippery slope since then."

Now with eight bikes of his own, plus bikes he's building up for friends, a spare room near the front door has become a stable for his two wheel creations. With an Xtracycle and an assortment of fixed gear and single speeds rides it's like a show room enticing any friends who stop by and haven't ridden a bike in years.

"I try not to be a bike zealot," says Ezra, looking at his feet. "I really really try. But in my experience, anyone that has a bike that they really like—and that's an important part—will end up riding it, and love doing so."

He'll find a frame for his friend, throw together some parts and hook them up with a ride just for them.

"I think it really improves your quality of life to ride a bike. It improves everyone else's quality of life too when you ride a bike. I guess I'm just trying to spread that around."

I met Ezra from the combination of bicycles and cameras. He'll post photos online ([www.flickr.com/photos/fastboy](http://www.flickr.com/photos/fastboy)) of his new builds or latest finds. There's a budding community of bike nerds posting pictures of their bikes, their routes, their lives with bicycles.

"The internet in general has made wild things possible," says Ezra. "I'd say most of my friends at this point are people I've met on Flickr."

Maybe he's half joking, though he says, "I don't get out much. Well... to be honest I go to bed pretty early most nights."

Though not quite "plugged in" locally (Ezra admits, "I'm pretty shamefully unconnected to the NY cycling scene.") the online connection between so many who share a love of lugged steel, fixed gears, and classy paint jobs runs deep.

"There's a culture of people out there that really get into the entire aesthetic experience of being involved with a bike. How the thing looks, of course, but I think a little more profound than that too. People who really have a relationship with their bikes."

Couple this relationship with cheaper digital cameras and you have an explosion of bicycle photographers sharing their bike porn for everyone.

"With the digital revolution in photography, it turns out all these bike lovers are photographers. I'm not being snarky, by the way. And the result is this amazing gallery of bikes and the lifestyle that surrounds them."

That lifestyle extends beyond some nice photos and hip cycling caps, of course. Skipping the subway and riding to work counts, too.

"I live in Harlem," says Ezra. "Work in Tribeca. I take the west side bike path just about the whole way down. Not much traffic at all, though I still get a kick out of riding in the city, mixing it up with cars. It's about an 18-mile round trip, but I only work down there three or four days a week."

As if cycling isn't enough, Ezra's day job burns a few calories as well.

"Yeah, I teach dance. Kind of a weird job," smirks Ezra. "I don't even really like dance. I'm a pretty good teacher, though. Modern dance. You know, the arty-farty stuff that no one really ever goes to see. I train pros mostly. I'm the guy that people go to when they want to get strong. It's a hard class."

It may be hard, but the allure of bicycles seems to have crept into the studio.

"A lot of my regular students are riding around on bikes that I built now. I guess that's an up side."

His girlfriend works at the same place, but works six days a week.

"She never takes the train," says a proud Ezra. "A little over a year ago, before she was my girlfriend, I put her on a single speed Rob Roy (the IRO psycho-cross bike) and she looked funny as hell starting and stopping—you know, a real rookie. A year later now, and she commutes over a hundred miles most weeks."

So many miles, so many bikes. Surely things break down. Over the years, though, Ezra has kept things rolling smoothly.

"I always took care of my own bikes in the past. I would tinker, and make changes. It's really been in the last two years, though, that my disease has entered this new phase. The bike gang bought me a really nice two-headed Park repair stand.

My Grandmother got me a massive collection of tools. Pretty soon I had a bike shop in my house. I've put something like 20 people on bikes in the last year and they almost all maintain their bikes in my shop. It's like a completely disorganized bike co-op."

Besides putting together some nice bikes and putting smiles on friends faces, Ezra has started building and selling wooden fenders. What good is a sexy bike if you're just going to throw some cheap plastic fenders on it?

"I grew up in Vermont. Worked on construction crews as a kid. I built furniture," says Ezra.

"At some point someone mentioned wanting wood fenders on their bike, and I thought 'Shit... I could make those.' Started out just doing it 'cause I could. Giving them away to friends. But enough people asked about buying them that I finally buckled and decided to put them out there. Business is pretty good."

If it's building bikes, getting friends on the road, or just entertaining cyclists online Ezra Caldwell is one of those stand up characters within the bicycle community that will keep you smiling.



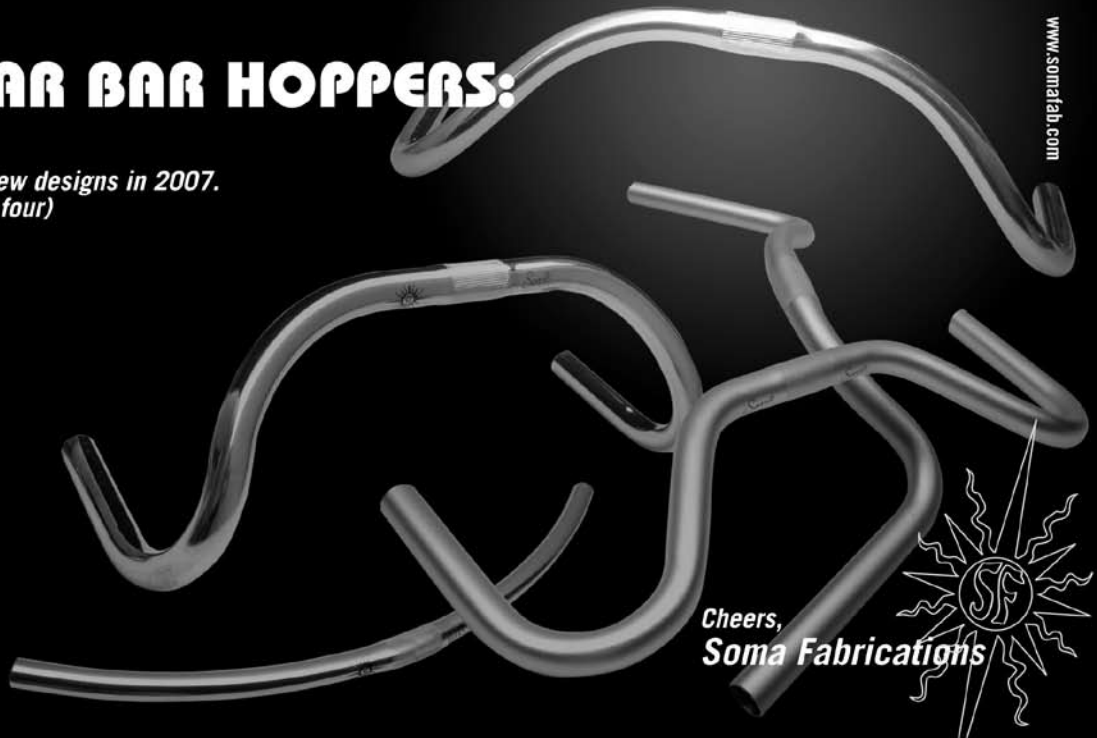
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# Into the Arena

Words & Photos by Julian Birch

There are at least a hundred reasons to commute by bike and there's no need for me to preach to the converted by exploring them all here. There are common reasons that we can all relate to but everyone has their own personal motivation too.

I've been commuting from the boundaries of East London into the City itself for a couple of years now, although I've been working in 'The Smoke' for longer than that and riding a bike for much longer still. It makes a lot of sense to commute by bike but (and it's embarrassing to admit) I'd talked myself out of it for a long time. There was always a raft of excuses but when it boiled right down to it I was just scared.

However, the arrival of our first child made me sit up and reconsider a few things I thought I knew. It also had the happy effect of recalibrating my fear and anxiety settings. Besides it would've been irresponsible to keep wasting £1,200 a year on the dubious pleasure of travelling by London Underground in conditions illegal for transporting livestock. Which was scarier: Mixing it up with all those predatory black cabs, red buses and white vans with abstract interpretations of the rules of the road or being faced with that first meconium filled nappy staring back at me like living black tar? There was no contest; a tonne of red metal paled into insignificance beside a few ounces of baby's first pooh.

So the clarion call was getting louder and louder. However, jumping on the bike and riding to work seemed far too simple. A little preparation was needed first. For starters skinny tyres were required; part of the logic being new kit always helps get me on my bike – no, motivational Guru I am not. Then I had to research, choose and memorize a likely route before doing a dry run and putting all the theory into practice.



A sunny Sunday morning was chosen for the obligatory reconnaissance trip. The intended route (nicely folded) together with a mini A to Z (emergency back-up) were both stuffed in a jersey pocket before I cautiously set off for the City. Despite all the meticulous 'planning' my clumsy route finding, bad memory and hesitation didn't mix well with mouthy, impatient Sunday drivers seen at uncomfortably close quarters. The experience bore little resemblance to the freedom of the open road or flying down dusty singletrack. Where was 'The Joy of Bike'? With little time and even less room for dithering two-wheelers on the city streets I wondered how I'd deal with the cut and thrust of the Monday morning rush hour.

An insistent beep ushered in Monday morning, waking me at an ungodly hour. Clumsily I fumbled for the clock but, remembering why I'd set the alarm so early, I pushed myself out of bed. It was my last heroic act of that day. I'd laid out kit and packed lunch the night before but, bleary eyed, I fumbled around for too long. My lack of urgency meant the last thing I did was to wheel the bike out only to find a flat tyre (a self-tapping screw had burrowed deep into the heart of new rubber). Instantly my spirits deflated too, intentions crumpled, I checked my watch and capitulated disappointingly fast. Deciding to jump into work clothes and march to the station I shamefully locked the bike away again.

Wednesday followed Tuesday and still my timid soul provided excuses for not riding in like having to buy shoes, then a suit for a family wedding. I told myself perhaps it wasn't such a good week to start commuting by bike, maybe next week. But the eyes of this guilty pedestrian were constantly drawn toward those brave, 'ordinary' souls riding their bikes through the Capital's streets. So what was my problem? Was I really such a lightweight? I'd been a (laughably) serious cyclist on and off-road for nearly twenty years, surely I was up to it? Cycle couriers may be a breed apart but if those other 'ordinary Joes' could do it, day in day out, then so could I. No more lame excuses or tired apologies to my bike. The next day I'd be prepared, the next day I'd ride.

Thursday morning I rode; finally possessing my two square yards of tarmac.

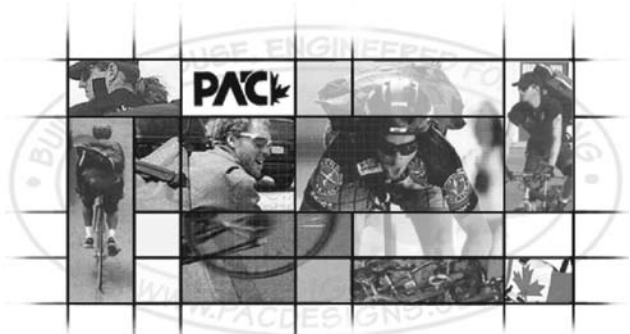
Thousands of miles have rolled under my wheels since and nowadays it feels like I kind of own the journey. Who said, "Do something that scares you everyday"? Well commuting frequently fits that bill yet that's part of the buzz; every trip presents a new set of challenges. When the day is done there are more highs than lows and yet another tale to tell by another ordinary cyclist.





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# Gallery

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The Pacific Northwest sees its share of rain, but that doesn't stop the hardcore cyclists of British Columbia from participating in or spectating at Vancouver's Tour De Gastown ([www.tourdegastown.com](http://www.tourdegastown.com)).

Photo by Dan Barham

[www.danbarham.com](http://www.danbarham.com)

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# Gallery



Chicago's CoolGlobes public art exhibit, which includes more than 100 sculpted globes, aims to draw attention to the problem of global warming, and encourages environmentally friendly practices. Check out [www.coolglobes.org](http://www.coolglobes.org) for more information..

Photos by Leonard Basobas



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Oscar Swan and the Pittsburgh Masters Velo Club ([www.pittsburghmastersveloclub.com](http://www.pittsburghmastersveloclub.com)) keep track racing alive in a town without a velodrome. Swan instructs racers in the different track events such as the Madison, Keirin, Match Sprint and Snowball races. Here we see Nick ready to race his wooden-wheeled six-day bike.

Photo by Dave Gingrich

[www.ndanger.org](http://www.ndanger.org)

# Gallery



London's Paddington Station connects commuters with the London Underground, Heathrow International Airport and a host of railway destinations. It features bicycle storage racks on platforms 8, 9, 10 and 11. Apparently, the U.K.'s legions of bicycle commuters could make use of even more amenities.

Photo by Chipp's Chippendale

[www.singletrackworld.com](http://www.singletrackworld.com)

Presented by **IRONCITYBIKES.COM**

Coley was photographed with a Mamiya 645 AFD, Provia 100 120mm slide film and 120mm macro lens. I'm a photography student and I love my bike. I don't profess to know as much about bikes as I do about cameras, but I wouldn't want to live without either.

Photo by Ian Adams

[www.ianadamsphoto.com](http://www.ianadamsphoto.com)



# The Truth About Track Bike Geometry

By Don Walker



**W**hat makes a track bike ride, handle and be a track bike?

In hindsight, I really wish that I hadn't agreed on the subject matter. I have a set way of doing things. I'm opinionated. Very. I don't always play well with others.

Now, please bear in mind that I *am* a former Cat. 2 track racer from California's "good ol' days". In the 1980's, I competed as a Junior against the likes of Knickman, Oravetz and Schommer. I've ridden and constructed many steeds in my time, and have set opinions on how track bikes should ride.



Road Neutral

## Frames

### Mass Start Frames

A "Mass Start" frame is one in which the frame is used for all mass start races, i.e. Points Races, Scratch Races and even Madisons. The general handling characteristics of these types of frames is stable and smooth, with just a touch of twitchiness.

### Sprint Frames

A "Sprint" frame is one in which the frame is used for Match Sprints or Keirin racing. The general handling characteristics of these types of frames is twitchy and fast.

### Pursuit Frames

A "Pursuit" frame is one in which the frame is used for timed events only on the track, usually solo or against one other rider. The general handling characteristics of these types of frames is a bit slower than those of Mass Start frames.

## Vocabulary

### Headtube Angle

The angle of the headtube in degrees, from parallel with the ground.

### Front Center

The distance from the center of the bottom bracket to the center of the front axle

### Rake

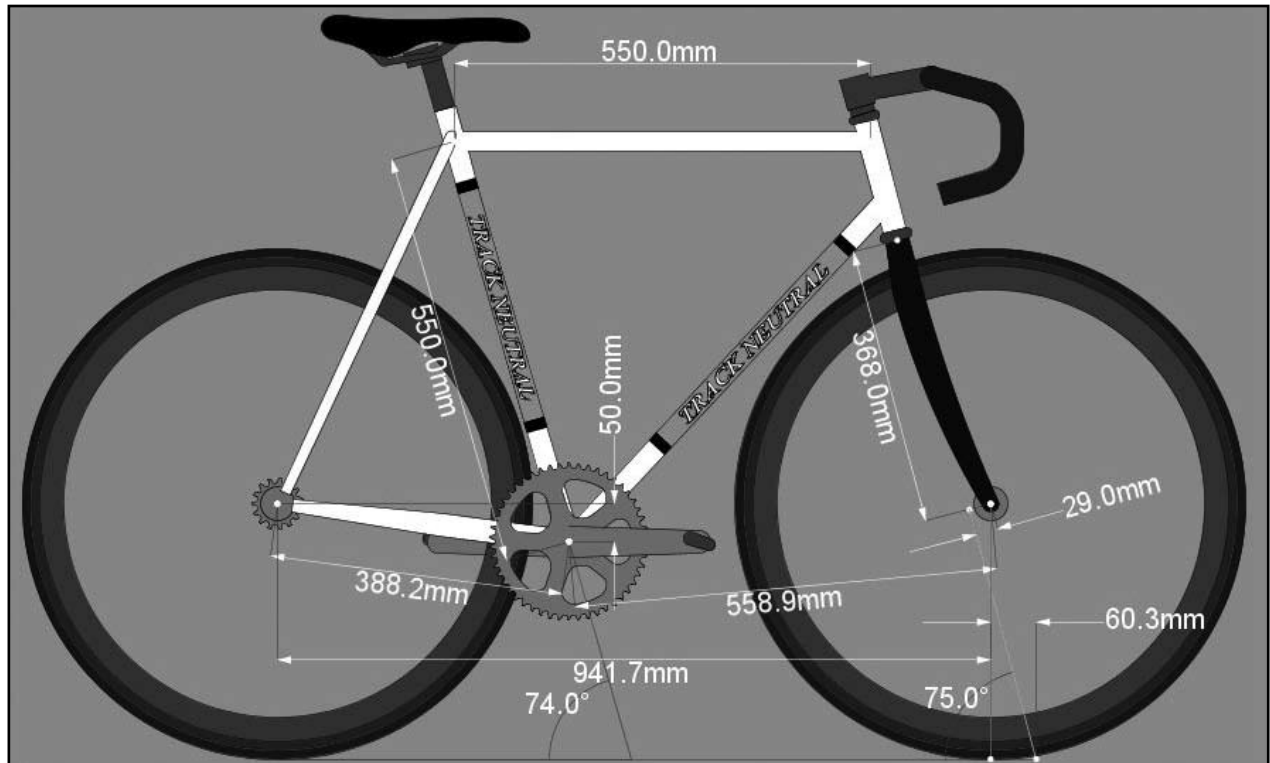
The offset of the fork

### Trail

The measurement on the ground between the straight line of the fork and the imaginary line dropping down from the front axle center. The distance between those two points is what affects bicycle handling.

### Fork Length

Exactly what it says, measured center of axle to top of crown.



Track Neutral

While you can race pretty much all events, including pursuits, on a mass start frame, you might not have exactly the handling you would need in other events. The same could be said for a sprint frame. Here's why.

Mass start racing is usually done at more constant speeds than match sprints or keirins. The handling of the bike doesn't need to be as twitchy as a sprinter's bike. For example: if you are going 30 mph around the track with few accelerations, the only steering you really need is to be able to not hit the riders around you (which would be an issue of bad bike handling, not necessarily a bad handling bike) with the exception of a crash. On the other hand, a match sprinter needs a fast handling bike to maneuver his way around his opponent while at slow speeds and avoid a quick hook or elbow from his adversary at high speeds.

Steering on bicycles is comprised by a set of variable measurements. Among these measurements are the following: headtube angle, fork rake and trail. The constant factors for handling are the wheel diameter and fork length.

The headtube angle and fork rake produce the trail mea-

surement. There is no real formula for making a track bike handle the way you want it to, yet I know where my comfort zone is for design. Below I am going to create what I feel my ideal mass start bike, which could be used in just about every event, including sprints, keirins and even pursuits.

Let's start off with a standard for all intents and purposes. The most common size bike ridden, at least in my experience as a framebuilder, is a 55cm. So our theoretical bike is comprised of a 55cm seat tube and toptube with 700 x 21c tires (a standard on most racing track bikes) and standard diameter tubing, which is 1.125" down tube and seat tube and 1" toptube.

The baseline for handling is called neutral steering. This is where the bicycle will handle neither twitchy nor sluggish; it will handle the most stable. This is when the end result of the combination of rake and headtube angle yield 60mm trail. This primarily works for road bikes with the combination of 73.2 headtube angle and 40mm of fork rake (See Illustration Road Neutral). For track bikes it is a headtube angle of 75 degrees and 29mm of fork rake (See Illustration Track Neutral).



Just Twitchy

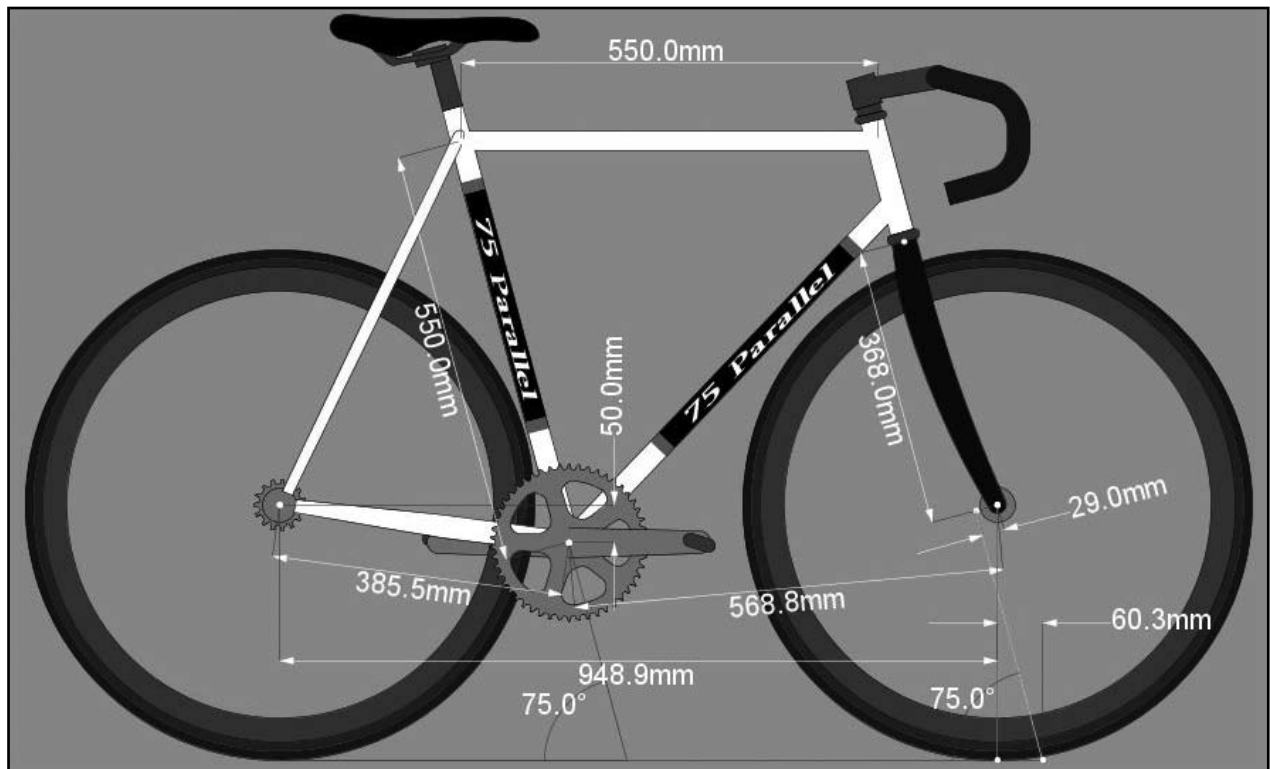
So, what's the difference you may ask? For starters, a slack headtube is more inclined to absorbing road shock whereas a steeper headtube is more apt to making a rider feel every bump.

This is one of the reasons why you see most road bikes with slack headtubes and most track bikes with slightly steeper headtube angles. The variables here are wheelbase and front center. When you steepen a headtube angle and shorten the rake, you have effectively shortened the wheelbase in the front of the bike. This may affect the balance of the rider on the bike as well, because one of the handling characteristics is how the rider's body sits between the wheels. Balance between the wheels is almost as important as the geometry and wheelbase in the handling of the bicycle. Having too much weight for or aft of the bike will most certainly make the bike handle either twitchy or sluggish. For example, if you take a sprint frame and attach aero bars to it and put a rider in the aero position, the bike will certainly be all over the place because there is too much weight forward.

Now, let's visit the twitchiness ideology. Some twitch is actually a good thing. Why?

If you are in a bunch and someone inevitably crashes in front of you, what do you do? Natural instincts and good handling skills will tell you to go up track (I feel for you if you chose option "B" which is to go down track to avoid impending carnage). You will need a bike that is just twitchy enough to pull this off without becoming too unstable and going down yourself. Now, what I have found works for steering in this situation, and is applied to our 55cm model, is a 74.5 headtube angle and 35mm of rake. This works out to be 57mm of trail, just shy of neutral steering. While it isn't the prescribed 60mm of trail, it's just that little bit of twitchiness that is needed for such escapes (see the "Just Twitchy" illustration).

Using the sample above, we have made the wheelbase just 11mm longer than in the track neutral example, which actually adds to the stability of the bike. It may not seem like much, but all things considered the co-relation between steering geometry and wheelbase, at least to me, makes the




## 75 Parallel

most difference in the handling of the bike. Now, I feel that the increased wheelbase in this frame doesn't affect the bike in a negative way, but enhances the comfort in a long event, or even a road ride.

Lately I've noticed the trend for some framebuilders to utilize the 75° parallel geometry. This geometry isn't really suited to everyone's body and the events they might ride, nor for road riding. The wheelbase on this bike is now at a short 949mm, the equivalent of a bit more than 37 inches! (See the 75 Parallel illustration.) If you don't ride your track bike on the track, this is probably why your body is sore after a long ride. The combination of added rake and a slightly slackened headtube would make all the difference in the world, increasing the wheelbase therefore creating a more forgiving ride. Something we all seem to forget is that riding a bike is supposed to be fun, not painful.

One thing that sprint and mass start frames have in common is a higher bottom bracket height. The typical road bike has a BB height of 265mm or the English equivalent of 10.45 inches. Due to the track having a steep banking in the turns, if you rode a regular road bike on the track you have a much

higher possibility of scraping a pedal in a turn at low speed. Therefore on both mass start and sprint bikes, the BB is raised to 11 inches or a bit higher to eliminate the threat of a scraped pedal, although it still happens on occasion. This raising of the BB contributes to a bit of instability in the bicycle, which can be corrected with proper geometry. Pursuit bikes are kind of the exception to the rule, since they are rarely going slow during competition. They can have a lower bottom bracket, which also lowers the center of gravity making the bike more stable when using aero bars.

In closing, I would like to say that not all track bikes are created equal. I hope this handling lesson helps you understand modern track bike geometries and the differences between them. 

*Don Walker would like to thank Brent Curry at Bikeforest.com for the ability to use his program to illustrate this article.*

*Don Walker is a framebuilder and the founder of the North American Handmade Bicycle Show, which takes place in Portland Oregon this year, February 8-10, 2008.*



  
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# The Organic Urban Cyclist


By Kelly McCord



In his book “The Art of Urban Cycling” Robert Hurst tells us there are three major schools of thought when riding in the city. First there’s the rider who thinks, “I am a vehicle and therefore shall act like one.” Usually you see these riders geared up in helmet, spandex and cycling shoes. They wait on every red light and hand signal even when there are no cars behind them. This person will never ride on the sidewalk even when the prospect seems more logical than riding in the street. This thought process is pretty old school, and most of these riders started commuting during the boom of the 80’s. Riding like a car does have its advantages. Cars in traffic have rules, and if everyone follows those rules, we will all get home safe. And if a driver sees a cyclist consistently acting like a car they can anticipate your movements. Seems like a great plan, one would think...

The next discipline is that of the stealth rider. They slip and dip sliding effortlessly through traffic. Cars don’t even notice them as they go between rows with grace and agility. Neither a car nor a bike, they’re on their own plane of existence. As you can imagine this type of rider has a lot of skill and years of experience riding in the city. Mostly you see messengers and people who just don’t give a damn ride in this manner. No helmet or brakes, maybe a headlight and a blinky affixed to their messenger bag. These riders are usually felled by the unexpected. Meeting their end when a driver doesn’t turn like their signal said they would. This type of rider usually avoids sidewalks, but more for the fact that it slows them down than any adherence city ordinance. This style of riding is risky and takes set of titanium ovaries to master. I’ve also seen a lot of drivers get angry when they see you pass them unexpectedly.

Finally we have the third type of rider—the organic urban cyclist. This style is a compromise between stealthy and vehicular cycling. As an organic cyclist, you ride in traffic and use pedestrian thoroughfares when its convenient. I’m not trying to be contradictory but know that jumping from sidewalk to traffic and back again will seriously get you hurt. We must always remain vigilant and think two steps ahead of cars and pedestrians. Remember drivers feel most at ease when they know what to expect. An organic urban cyclist will flow in traffic when its not too thick and ride the sidewalk when its clear of pedestrians. I opt for this style of riding and obviously it works for me.

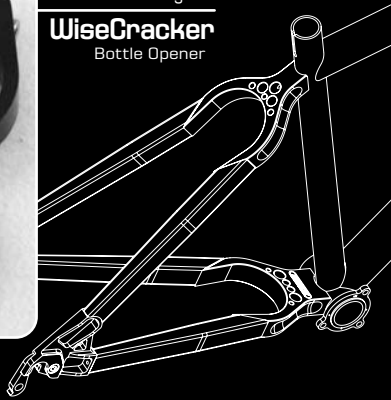
Whichever type of rider you choose to be doesn’t matter, just ride. 

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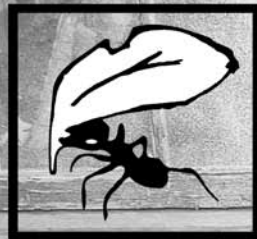


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# Don't Kiss an Elephant on the Lips Today

*"Frankly, I was horrified by life,  
at what a man had to do simply  
in order to eat, sleep, and keep  
himself clothed. So I stayed in  
bed and drank. When you drank  
the world was still out there, but  
for the moment it didn't have  
you by the throat."*

*– Charles Bukowski*



Words & Art by Johnny Cumlately

**I**t's a good thing cycling is such a healthy lifestyle. If it weren't I'd be dead already. I know that sounds melodramatic, but guys like Kerouac, Thompson and Bukowski had "the cockroach gene". That is, the unique ability to thrive on poison. Or they lied for effect. What you're about to read is no lie.

## 1.

She calls me by name though I've never met her before. I've been known to forget a name, but I never forget a face like that. She's a natural beauty, with features sharp enough to cut glass and no need for makeup. I've got a thing for girls who shave their legs and wear dresses—especially ones who ride bikes—and her shining eyes more than make up for the bushy armpit hair.

Fourteen hours later it's her turn to be critical, gleefully pointing out the fact that my waterbottle full of merlot has stained the inside of my lips. Suddenly a gesticulating gang-banger's fist nearly clips the back of her head, and it's more than obvious that we should get out of the late-night diner before something goes horribly wrong. It's too bad—I could have gone for another plate of bacon.

I let her lead the ride across town. While it's true I've got a propensity for the female hind quarters, I'm really more concerned with making sure I don't lead her through any red lights she's not ready to run. She runs them all. Given the choice between dissecting the ghetto and climbing one mother of a hill, she picks the hillclimb. We lumber up Tange Street and I swear I taste mint juleps and mojitos at the same time.

Ever since I lost my health insurance, I've been making do without my lithium. Though I've had as many drinks as I've got digits, without my anti-anxiety medication it's impossible to silence the little voice in my head saying, "Forget it, loser."

We wind our way to her street and nearly topple over each other rounding the last bend, going shoulder to shoulder like a pair of race rivals. With a throat full of chalk, I manage to betray my failing nerves and ask for her phone number. I don't even try to follow her inside, but the memory of her body pressed against mine keeps me warm for the entire ride home. That, and the sun coming up...

## 2.

They say you can pick your friends but you can't pick your relatives. True as that may be, I can't help but think fate plays a role in certain friendships. Left to my own devices, I'll gladly stay in bed with a hangover, fighting to fall asleep again until the sun goes back down or my guts drive me to the bathroom. The latter usually prevails, but it's still a damn good thing I've Buddy to call me mid-afternoon to go mountain biking. After procrastinating as long as possible, I begrudgingly pull on my cycling shorts, shove a handful of leftovers in my mouth, and pedal off towards some of the best trail-riding in the country. Oh, of course everyone's got a thing for their home trails, but I can say one thing with authority—you don't need mountains to have great mountain biking. I've been to Moab and I've been to the Alps...I've ridden in swamps, beaches and on all manner of manmade obstacles. Still, despite my travels I'm always happiest when I'm back home riding our rolling, green, tree-covered hills.

A ride is a ride, and that's what we do until the sun starts to set. As we round the corner near the cemetery I remember that the local high school kids like to party just off the trail. Today's no different, but out of the corner of my eye I notice there's not just a run-of-the-mill trash fire. They've got tiki torches—a brazen move considering the relative chances of getting busted by any number of authorities. I'm about to shoot down the hillside when the kids call out to us, "Hey biker dudes, you want a beer?"

"Does a fish want water?" I think to myself. As I turn around, Buddy is already laying down his singlespeed. After all, we're no authority figures. We're handed big foamy cups of Miller Lite and I survey the scene—two kegs, six torches, one makeshift beer pong table and a "happy birthday" banner stretched between two trees. I'm a bit nervous about being two thirty-something's in a sea of 17-year olds, but I suppose I would be even more nervous if I were one of the three girls in the group of nearly forty high-school boys...

Three beers in and we're having our photo taken with the girls, showing off our bikes to genuinely interested kids and I'm wearing glow-stick jewelry on both wrists. Rather than push our luck with Johnny Law, we saddle up and ride one last technical descent—buzzed and in the dark with no lights. Later that evening we go to work on a case of beer, and around 5:00am we consider strapping on some lights and heading back out to the park. Instead we polish off a bottle of bourbon and laugh about drinking with the Class of '08 until the wee hours of the morning.

### 3.

Mountain biking is like chicken soup for the urban cyclist. You might hit a tree, but the trees seldom hit you. Nor do they honk, scream, gesture wildly or cut you off. They sure as hell never drive up on the sidewalk after you.

Another appealing thing about mountain biking—especially within the city limits—is that you never know who or what you’ll find in the woods. Sure, the streets are filled with far more opportunities for road swag, but there’s something about the cover of foliage that causes people to get clumsy and reckless. Concomitantly, you could find a pair of sunglasses, or run across a bum shitting on a tree stump. Latent homosexuals leave behind remnants of their first encounters, and of course drug addicts make regular use of every city park in the nation. And you know what they say—only users lose drugs.

Buddy hits the beginning of the trail like a man possessed, gliding over the root section in anticipation of the impending drop. Stone cold sober, he’s suddenly pitched into the classic “yard sale” position, with his chin taking a divot out of the loamy trail surface and his bike splayed out to his left. I contain my laughter and roll down to help him up when I see his nose is just inches away from the end of a rainbow—so to speak. The plastic sandwich bag’s tightly knotted around a golf ball sized lump of plant matter, and the discarded cigar wrapper leaves no question as to the schwag’s authenticity. Though neither one of us cares a whole lot for the stuff these days, it’s decided that I’m more likely to put it to good use and I shove it in my pocket before taking the lead down the trail.

Buddy and I are pounding a few cold post-ride beers when my old roommate calls from the bar. It’s not everyday that I hear from old Wild Bill, and it doesn’t make me the least bit sad that he’s just calling to see if I can find him some fresh oregano.

“You’re in luck,” I inform him, and we settle on meeting for a beer after having one for the road. After another tough day on the trail, the slow, fuzzy road ride across town is like massage therapy for my throbbing legs. Against my better judgment I help Wild Bill test the herb’s quality out on his front porch. Buddy just looks on, contentedly knocking back another can of PBR.

We hatch a plan to take a joyride through Henry Park and then through the cemetery. I stuff our last three beers in my messenger bag and inform Wild Bill that he’s leading—him being the former professional cyclist and all. Unfortunately he takes his riding a little too seriously sometimes, and within ten minutes of entering the park I’ve lost sight of his blinking light. I keep looking back to see Buddy grimacing up the climbs, and I regret not taking the lead myself, if only to slow things down a little.

**“In all the excitement, I don’t even realize there’s a six-ton elephant lurking in the shadows.”**

We reach the very top of the park, and with our fearless leader nowhere to be seen we bomb the hill at mach speed, hoping to regroup for a beer break. We reach the bottom and there’s still no sign of Wild Bill. Calling his cell phone ends up being a waste of time, so we turn around and climb back up to the top of the park. Unsuccessful, we turn tail near the very top and decide to go for pizza and beer. Thank God there’s a place in Sunnyside that serves both until 4:00am, because I’ve got a serious case of the munchies.

### 4.

I get a text message shortly after noon, “I wrecked pretty bad last night.”

I suddenly feel like the world’s biggest asshole—I was cursing Wild Bill up and down last night for ditching us on the ride. I’d assumed he got tired of waiting for our slow, half-drunken asses and headed off to chase skirts at some Sunnyside watering hole. As it turns out, one of those rare vindictive trees stepped out of the dark and clocked Wild Bill right in the nose. I stop at the store on the way to his house and cram as much comfort food as I can fit into my messenger bag. He comes to the door and it’s all I can do to keep my jaw from hitting the porch. A jumble of butterfly bandages, stitches, cuts and bruises runs from his hairline to his chin.

In the interest of kindness I tell a ball face lie, “You don’t really look that bad.”

It’s hard to look him in the eye. Thankfully we’re both more than happy to keep our eyes on the television while we replay the previous night’s events. I apologize profusely with each subsequent beer I pull from his fridge, and when I ride home after midnight, I do so very, very slowly.

### 5.

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## 6.

I regain consciousness as the first rays of sunshine fall on my cheek. The cool grass invites me to stay down for a standing eight-count, but what little sense I have tells me it's time to get up. My surroundings are unfamiliar at first, but as I lift my head off my arms I realize this well manicured lawn is my own. I see my bike lying to my left, and as I turn to my other side, the unbolted wheel tells me something really went wrong. That notion is confirmed momentarily, as I become aware of a dull pain that starts above my left cheekbone and courses down to my chin.

I reach for the strap of my messenger bag, and while I'm relieved to find it attached to my person, the movement makes me aware of another flesh wound—this one on my shoulder. I slap myself on the ass to check for my wallet, and I'm relieved to find everything I left home with. Except for my helmet...and my pride.

I hastily install my front wheel and circle the block looking for my helmet. The old man down the street snickers as he bids me good morning. I wonder how many people saw me in such a compromised state? I check my phone for the time and find a voicemail waiting for me. It's my friend Neil.

"Don't forget to tighten your front wheel before you ride," he cautions me. Unfortunately, at 6:00 am it's a few hours too late. I rationalize that if the only things I've lost are a bit of skin and a cheap bike helmet, I must have someone looking out for me upstairs.

I call Neil back and the story comes together—even though I still have zero recollection. The long and short of it is whiskey. Whiskey makes me do stupid things, and apparently one of them is insist on riding my bike home when I shouldn't.

The rest of the day is wasted, and early in the evening I am, too. With safety on my mind, I remind every cyclist at the bar to be careful not to drink and ride. My words have little effect given that they're coming from a drunk with fresh facial injuries. Maybe they need to see Wild Bill...

## 7.

I'm awake before noon, but I don't bother moving for three more hours. My neighbor catches me stumbling out onto the porch en route to the coffee shop and offers to buy me breakfast—well, lunch—at the Chinese buffet. I look like I could use some solid food, and his Eastern European upbringing won't allow him to see a friend go hungry. I wolf down plate after plate of unrecognizable fried rice and noodles, then I get

the most unusual message in my fortune cookie...

"Don't kiss an elephant on the lips today," it reads. I'm perplexed. After all, what could be dumber than laying a liplock on a 12,000-pound wild animal?

The party at The Bicycle Junkyard is nothing shy of a barnburner. The kegs are arranged in grand fashion behind the service counter, and the beer line starts way back outside of the warehouse. The entire crowd is decked out in cycling gear—half in streetwise cutoffs and t-shirts, the rest in gaudy Lycra and spandex. It's no secret that bike activists like to dance, and the crowd doesn't miss a beat, even when the speakers blow out.

I'm content sipping on a waterbottle full of some good dark beer, mingling with the out-of-towners and catching up with a few old friends. Unfortunately "catching up" with some of my old friends means taking their car keys or turning them on their side so they won't choke on their own vomit. But I'm not passing judgment.

In all the excitement, I don't even realize there's a six-ton elephant lurking in the shadows. Just fifty feet from the end of the beer line sits an innocuous table with handmade placards that read, "Whiskey, \$2.00."

I take it as a sign, and I relinquish my spot in the beer line. I don't put a whole lot of stock in organized religion or soothsayers, but I trust in fortune cookies. I make a beeline for my bike, down half a bottle of water and saddle up for another slow ride home. As I pedal through the parking lot a shooting star rips a shimmering swath across the night sky.

## 8.

I wake up early to a clear head and the sound of birds chirping. It's the first time this has happened in months, and for a moment I wonder if I've died and gone to heaven.

No such luck.

Some people drink for inspiration. Some people drink because their friends drink. Most just drink for something to do. While I seldom need an excuse, the truth is I mostly drink to forget. I've got problems and I've got issues. I've even got issues with my problems, and problems with my issues. But I won't get into that here.

Still, this past week's brought about a certain amount of clarity. I can only hope the small lessons I've learned stay with me long enough to keep me from joining the ranks of some of my less fortunate friends. I can't say I'll ever stop drinking, but I do know Wild Bill and I were lucky—just ask Toothless Tom, Brokeback Jim or One Eyed Pete. And that's to say nothing of the people who aren't just dealing with lifelong injuries, but who've lost out on life itself.







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# Starting A Local Advocacy Organization

Part 2

By David Hoffman



In this multi-part series on bicycle advocacy, Urban Velo gives you the tools to make a change in your community. This is the second installment, focusing on some aspects of what it means to be and operate as a “non-profit.”

## What is a Non-Profit Organization?

Strictly speaking, a non-profit organization is one whose goals are not financially (profit) driven. Non-profits can take many forms, however, within bicycle advocacy the 501(c)3 variety is by far the most common. The advantage of obtaining formal non-profit status is two-fold: 1) non-profit status provides an exemption to the organization from certain taxes, thus allowing more money to be applied towards the organization's cause, as well as providing a tax advantage for individuals who make charitable contributions, and 2) provides an additional layer of credibility as a "bona fide" organization when dealing with decision makers and bureaucrats.

### **Most non-profits have some common elements, regardless of the structure:**

**Purpose:** To provide services, generally of a charitable nature to people or the community. These are often found in Mission, Vision, Value, and Goals statements. Bicycle non-profits are almost always focused on education, outreach, access, and design issues (or some combination thereof).

**Outreach and Education:** Most non-profits reach out to the community to involve, engage, and educate those that they are serving. For example, a bicycle non-profit may engage in activities such as teaching safe road riding skills, soliciting input on upcoming road projects, or finding out where it would be most advantageous to install bike racks.

**Governance:** If you're going for 501(c)3 status, you'll need a governing body, such as a Board of Directors. This governing body often doubles as non-paid staff in the early stages of organizational development, and should eventually transition in to a policy and visioning group once your organization begins to grow and mature.

## Assembling the Pieces

Filing for non-profit status is one of the most daunting tasks that any new organization will face. The application form (Form 1023) is currently 28 pages long – and this does not include all of the various attachments and additional forms that you'll need. However, taken step-by-step the filing process is actually not that complicated. Think of it this way: the IRS wants to make sure that you're serious about what you want to do; if the form to file as a 501(c)3 were too easy (think Form 1040EZ for your taxes), everyone would be filing. So without further delay, here is a simple list of the things that you should (generally) have in order before you attempt to fill out Form 1023:

**An Employer Identification Number (EIN)** – you need one as an organization even if you don't plan to have any employees in the near future, or at any time for that matter – and it's free – perhaps the easiest thing to get on this list!

### **Articles of Incorporation**

### **Board of Directors**

### **Bylaws**

### **Budget (estimated)**

### **A rough idea of what you plan to accomplish in your first couple of years.**

As we've mentioned in the previous article, there is a great resource for getting information and sample documents for many of the items listed above: The Thunderhead Alliance – [www.thunderheadalliance.org](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org).

Getting your EIN – go out to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and do a search for "EIN" – it should come up as the top search result. You can apply online for free.

Downloading Form 1023 – go out to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and do a search for "Form 1023" – you'll find a link to download the Form. Also head out to: [www.irs.gov/publications/p557/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p557/index.html) for a good overview of the form.

## Getting Professional Help

Confused? Put off on the idea of starting a local organization? Ready to move on to the next article? Wait! Help is on the way! If you're not interested in getting your hands dirty with all of the steps and paperwork necessary to form a non-profit, here are some suggestions on ways that you can find somebody who is:

Find a local lawyer or law firm to help you. Many law firms have a public outreach component as part of the firm charter, and as such, may be committed to providing free or very greatly reduced legal help to charitable causes. One of the easiest ways to get this information is to simply find a lawyer. Any lawyer. Find out if their firm would help you form a non-profit on a pro-bono (free) basis. If they can't help you, they'll likely know another firm that does do this type of work.

Post an ad on Craig's List or in your free local weekly. Be sure to indicate that you're looking for someone who has already had experience setting up a non-profit. This will help to weed out the folks who are only mildly curious. Remember, the difference between a really good Form 1023 application and one that was done "on the quick" could be months of

back-and-forth with the IRS before they grant you provisional 501(c)3 status!

Get students or a class to help. Reach out to your local university and find the professor who is teaching classes on non-profit policy or management (graduate level preferred). See if any of their students would like to take on helping you to form your non-profit as a real project. This is a good option, as students are both motivated (by their grade) and you can put a set of time boundaries on the project (must be completed by end of term or semester).

<b>1023</b> Form (Rev. June 2009) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service	<b>Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code</b>	OMB No. 1545-0046 <small>Note: If exempt status is approved, this application will be open for public inspection.</small>
<p>Use the instructions to complete this application and for a definition of all bold items. For additional help, call IRS Exempt Organizations Customer Account Services toll-free at 1-877-829-5500. Visit our website at <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a> for forms and publications. If the required information and documents are not submitted with payment of the appropriate user fee, the application may be returned to you.</p> <p>Attach additional sheets to this application if you need more space to answer fully. Put your name and EIN on each sheet and identify each answer by Part and line number. Complete Parts I - XI of Form 1023 and submit only those Schedules (A through H) that apply to you.</p>		
<b>Part I Identification of Applicant</b>		
1 Full name of organization (exactly as it appears in your organizing document)		2 c/o Name (if applicable)
3 Mailing address (Number and street) (see instructions)	Room/Suite	4 Employer Identification Number (EIN)
City or town, state or country, and ZIP + 4		5 Month the annual accounting period ends (01 - 12)
6 Primary contact (officer, director, trustee, or authorized representative)		
a Name:		b Phone:
		c Fax: (optional)
7 Are you represented by an authorized representative, such as an attorney or accountant? If "Yes," provide the authorized representative's name, and the name and address of the authorized representative's firm. Include a completed Form 2848, Power of Attorney and Declaration of Representative, with your application if you would like us to communicate with your representative.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8 Was a person who is not one of your officers, directors, trustees, employees, or an authorized representative listed in line 7, paid, or promised payment, to help plan, manage, or advise you about the structure or activities of your organization, or about your financial or tax matters? If "Yes," provide the person's name, the name and address of the person's firm, the amounts paid or promised to be paid, and describe that person's role.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
9a Organization's website:		
b Organization's email: (optional)		
10 Certain organizations are not required to file an information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ). If you are granted tax-exemption, are you claiming to be excused from filing Form 990 or Form 990-EZ? If "Yes," explain. See the instructions for a description of organizations not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11 Date incorporated if a corporation, or formed, if other than a corporation. (MM/DD/YYYY)		/ /
12 Were you formed under the laws of a foreign country?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If "Yes," state the country.		
For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see page 24 of the instructions.		Form 1023 (Rev. 6-2009)

## Well, What Are You Waiting For?

Once the IRS acknowledges your application (Form 1023), you can begin soliciting for charitable contributions. It is extremely important to note that these contributions become retroactively charitable when you receive provisional 501(c)3 status. You'll need to say something like, "We are currently in the application process for 501(c)3 charitable status. Money donated to us during this time will become a charitable contribution once we have been granted 501(c)3 status." Keep a record of everyone that donates to you, including their contact information, date of contribution, and amount! You'll need this information in the future – the IRS will want to review your organization's records especially during the "provisional" period of your 501(c)3 status.

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## Communications... Don't Reinvent the Wheel

While we would never advocate ripping off any other organization's materials, we can recommend closely imitating some of the best. You'll need two important ways to communicate with everyone: 1) a web site, and 2) a newsletter.

Good websites tend to be friendly, accessible, and easy to navigate. Although the urge may be great to bash the local decision makers, avoid negative or accusatory language. Remember that everyone will be going to your website – your constituents, policy makers and politicians, the media, etc! Here are some examples of some particularly good websites:

**Bike Pittsburgh (Local - Pittsburgh, PA) – [www.bike-pgh.org](http://www.bike-pgh.org)**

**San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (Local – San Francisco, CA) – [www.sfbike.org](http://www.sfbike.org)**

**Bicycle Colorado (Statewide, CO) - [bicyclecolo.org](http://bicyclecolo.org)**

**Washington Area Bicyclist Association (Local – Washington, D.C.) - [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org)**

**Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (Local - Chicago, IL) - [www.biketraffic.org](http://www.biketraffic.org)**

**Transportation Alternatives (Local - New York, NY) – [www.transalt.org](http://www.transalt.org)**

Newsletters should be kept short and to the point. We'd recommend signing up to receive samples of the newsletters from any of the organizations above. They all feature timely articles that keep people up-to-date on the local issues and developments. As a general rule, try to keep between three and six newsletter items in each issue. More than that and it becomes hard to quickly digest the information. If you have lots of information to give, write a short summary, and then direct the reader to your website for more information.



## In the Next Issue

Show Me the Money! Get started on the path of organization stability by learning where and how you can find funding to keep your organization healthy.



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**T**he heart is a funny thing. Like Billy Bragg said, “She cut her hair, and I stopped loving her.” True love isn’t so fickle.

I’ve tried to stop riding bikes. To see if it was really love. Just like coffee, a week down the road, I’m grumpy, anxious, and distracted.

In the year 2000, I traveled South America for nearly 5 months. Argentina to Colombia. Had a cumulative week on the bike in that time. I hung out with Alastair (Gravity Assisted MTB) in La Paz, Bolivia, and not content with riding the world’s deadliest road, I wanted a real challenge.

Alastair didn’t want to take a mtb ‘muppet’ out of his depth, so I had to prove I could ride the type of terrain we’d be facing. At the time I WAS out of my depth, but didn’t show it.

His guide would take us to the top of the mountain pass in his rickety Toyota 4WD. Mountains of some 4000+ metres. Fucking spectacular. I don’t say ‘fuck’ lightly. We’d find a trail head, which was a lama track cut into the steep side of these monoliths. I held on, grimaced, leaned back, let go. YEHAaaaaaaar!

This was primitive mountain biking, at least by today’s


standards. V-brakes, short travel forks, hardtails, flat pedals, flat out for three hours of descent into the valley below, where a steak bigger than your plate and a bowl of mash awaited you.

The exhilaration of being limited by your equipment and using your skill to compensate for the terrain is the same reason I love riding track bikes. As I split trams on Collins st I’m taken back to the narrow ledges you’d be forced to ride along, and massive trees you’d squeeze between. Skipping metal tracks on the road, like finding the jagged line through a rock garden. Or when it’s turn two and you’re bumping elbows with thighs on the bank at 60kph at the end of a motor pace, it’s the same ‘shit scared’ feeling of launching a gap and hoping to you land it.

Beyond all the fun that bikes provide, the people I’ve met through bikes far exceed any piece of glorious single track. Bikes even introduced me to my wife.

It is perhaps why even if I wanted to quit, it’d be like cutting off my arm to feed myself. Stupid.

In the recent population census, as my religion I put “cycling”. I pray every day. My love grows.

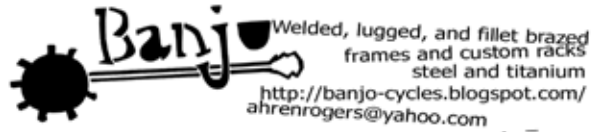
Amen. 

## BICYCLE MESSENGER EMERGENCY FUND

The **Bicycle Messenger Emergency Fund** is a non profit organization that provides emergency compensation to bicycle messengers who are hurt on the job. Currently the BMEF allocates a \$300 (USD, Euro, Can, Lbs, etc.) emergency cheque to help messengers anywhere in the world during the first week of injury. This provides a boost, to both the financial and the mental/emotional state of the injured messenger. The goal is to help the injured cope and recover.

[bicyclemessenger.org](http://bicyclemessenger.org)

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## HOW TO TENSION YOUR SINGLESPEED CHAIN



### STEP ONE



Singlespeed drivetrains are a beautiful thing. Simple, efficient and durable. Unlike a geared system that has a derailleur to keep the chain taught, a singlespeed drivetrain relies on the wheel position within the dropouts to tension the chain. Easy to understand, not so easy to get right.

**With the chain fully over the chainring and cog, pull the rear wheel all the way back in the dropouts.** Hold the wheel in place, ever so slightly pushing the tire towards the driveside chainstay. This forces the leading edge of the axlenut to bite into the dropout just a hair further back than otherwise possible. Tighten down the driveside axle nut, allowing the wheel to straighten itself as you go.

The wheel will be off center to the driveside, not so much that the tire is touching the chainstay however. **Center the tire between the chainstays and tighten the non-driveside axle nut down, resulting in a tensioned chain.** You can vary the final chain tension based on how far towards the driveside you push the tire in step one.

### STEP TWO



Gently spin the cranks around and check that the chain is tight enough to not throw, but is also not binding at any point. If the drivetrain feels notched at a given location it is too tight and requires adjustment to prevent premature bottom bracket or hub bearing wear. At the tightest point, loosen the axle nuts and repeat the above steps. If there is excessive variation in chain tension when all is said and done, something is likely out of round – could be the cog, chainring or chainring spider of the crankarm. Or the chainring may not be centered on the spider. With the chain at its tightest point, loosen the chainring bolts and tap around the outside of the chainring with a mallet in an attempt to better center it upon the spider. If that still doesn't do the trick, something is out of round and needs replaced - I'd swap out the chainring first and move on from there. –Brad Quartuccio

# TECHNICAL GUBBINS



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## TECHNICAL GOBBINS



Photo by Brad Quartuccio

### USE A BELL

I commute through a city park and a college campus.

There are people on the trails, people with cell phones, dogs and iPods. So the old, "Hey mind if I pass" doesn't always work. Actually it almost never works.

Instead, I've been using a bell. Most of the time the bell is met with surprise and a smile. They think its a 6-year-old girl coming at them when it's actually a grown ass man ringing a bell... And it cuts through cell phones and iPods nicely.

But one in every 20 rings it's met with anger. They yell or make some smart ass comment. Its weird. It's just an example of how you can never please everybody. And some people are just bitter motherfuckers.

I think I'll keep using the bell, though. Most people smile.

—Joe McManus, Pittsburgh, PA

Check out [robonza.blogspot.com](http://robonza.blogspot.com)

### CHEAP LOCKING SKEWERS

Here's a quick and cheap solution to prevent wheels/seat from getting ripped off by opportunistic passer-by thieves – hose clamps. The trick is getting them as tight as absolutely possible. You could still get 'em with off with a ratchet and a screwdriver head, but who wants to do that? It's easier to just steal from the bike next to it. Safety in numbers. Hose-clamps cost about 25 cents each at any given hardware store, and are a proven deterrent to wheel theft. At least as effective as bolt-on hubs.

—Kurt Morrison, Edmonton AB



Photo by Kurt Morrison

## TECHNICAL GOBBINS

# THE OUTCAST

it's a singlespeed thing

Third. Not first or second. Bronze. Podium scraping. That almost but not quite feeling. A glance and a gesture that suggests paradise and delivers just friends. Or just empty wank. Some kerb scraping taste of victory but mixed with diesel and car fumes and cheap food from dubious sources. A taste of sweat and tears without the elation. It's two green lights on your favourite stretch suggesting smooth legs to a glorious beer only for amber and red and a solid white line. And that fuck-off truck coming left discounts the jump. Don't jump. Wait your turn. Your green light and your top step. A next step. The sun-drenched park bench for a lunchtime break. A coffee and passing delights, enveloped in fabric with contours beneath. Contour lines. Chat-up lines. Random pace lines. Convoluted commuting. Changes of pace. A place and time. Third base stutters on a home run blast. And the final position is as everyone else. Streets and people and just cycling through it. All to a very similar place. A different pace perhaps but the same synthetic race. You can keep third, second, first and all such objectives. It's enough to persist with some subtle resistance. Dance on your own podium and bask in your glory. Wholesome. You win. Some you lose. Let it go. Ride your bike. You're a cyclist. Aren't you?

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## TECHNICAL GUBBINS



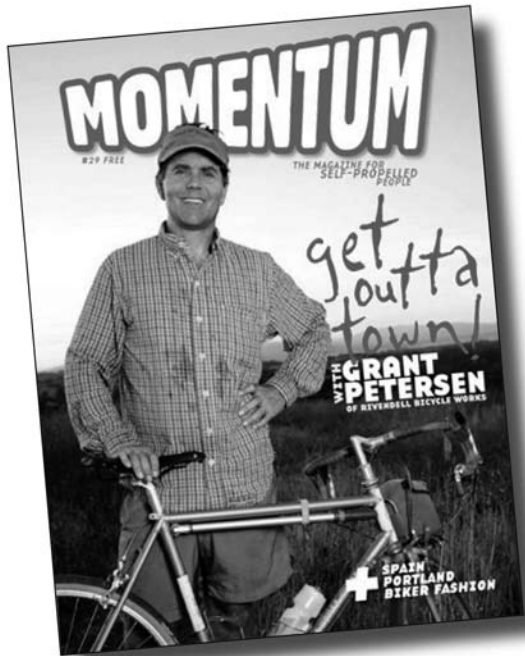
### TOOL-FREE TIRE REMOVAL

*Removing a tire from the rim can be a bear. Make it easier on yourself.*

Firstly, make sure all of the air is out of the tube. Then work around the tire and push the bead of the tire towards the center of the rim. Notice in the inset photo that the inside of the rim is concave – pushing the bead to the center creates some slack in the tire to work with. Starting at the valve stem, go around the tire in opposite directions forcing any slack in the tire towards each other. Once opposite the valve stem, roll one side of the tire bead off the rim between thumb and forefinger. If it's really on there you may need a tire lever to help pry it off. Not a screwdriver or anything else with a sharp edge. Once one section of the bead is off the rim, the rest is easy. Seating a tire on the rim is done in much the same fashion, simply in reverse. –Brad Quartuccio



## TECHNICAL GUBBINS



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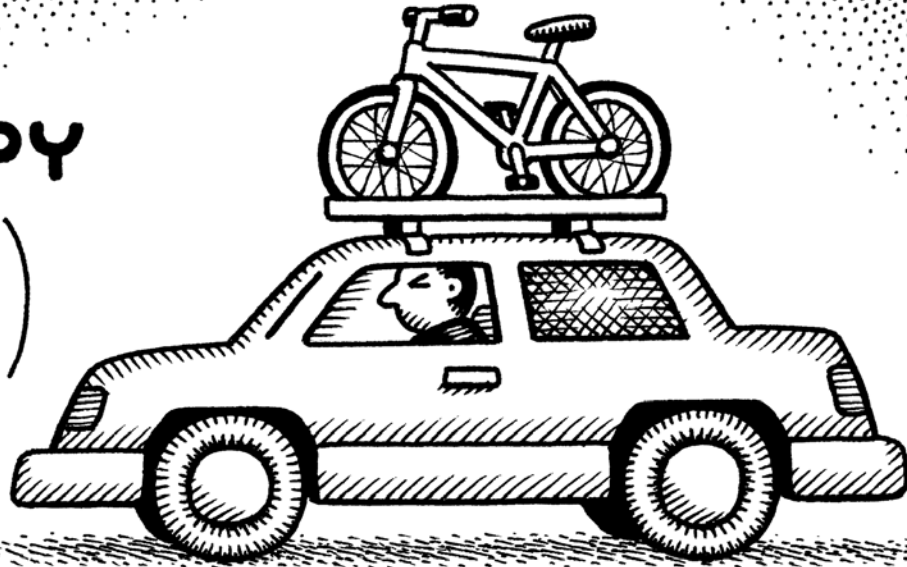
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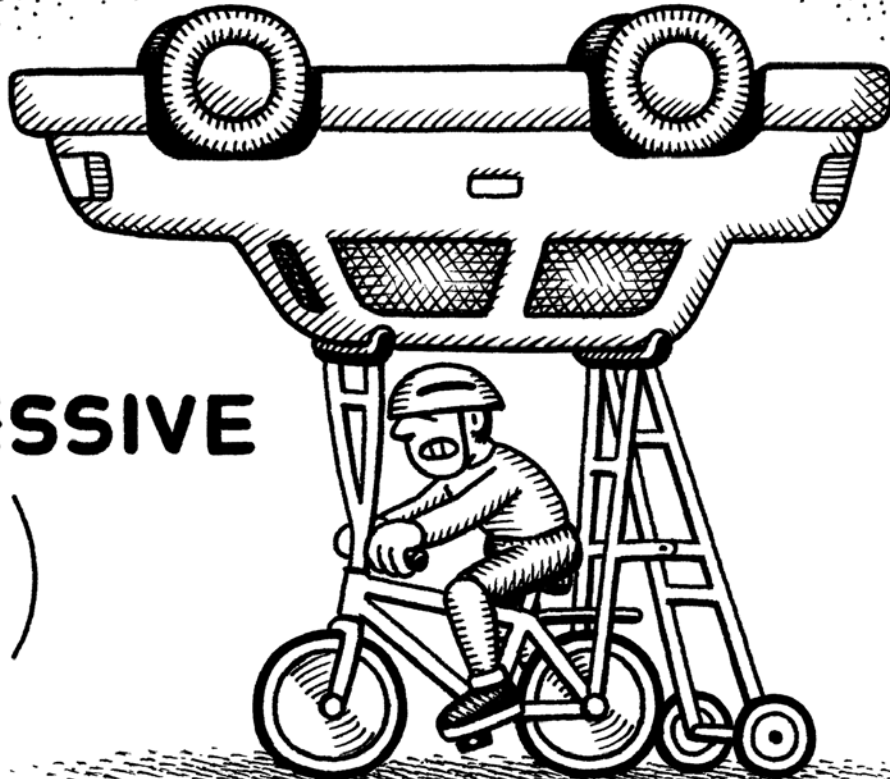
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