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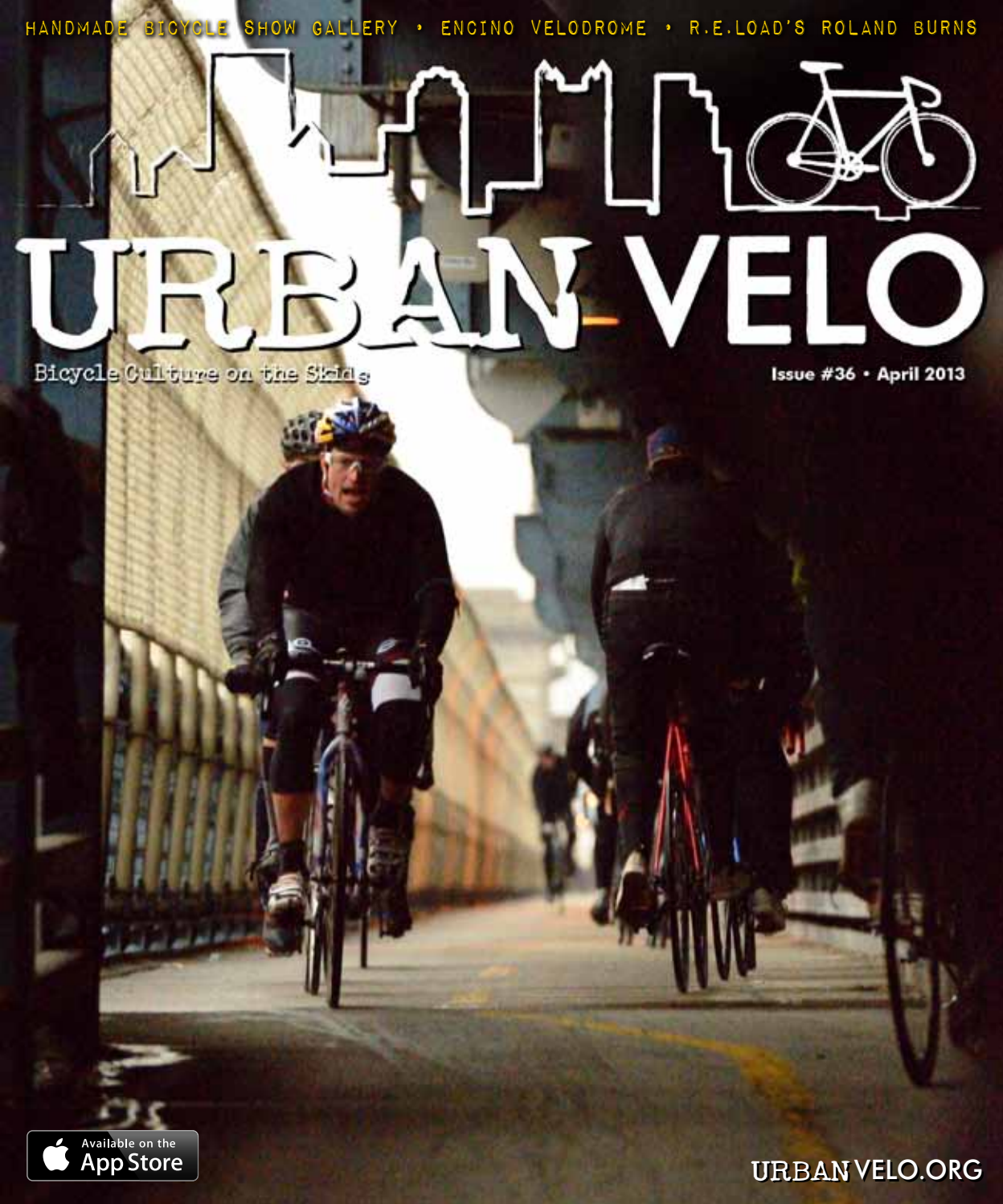
URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #36 • April 2013



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URBAN VELO

Issue #36

April 2013

Brad Quartuccio Editor brad@urbanvelo.org

Jeff Guerrero Publisher jeff@urbanvelo.org

"It's better to see them rolling spokes than rolling joints."

–Gerd Schraner

The Art of Wheelbuilding

On the cover: Monster Track 14 took place on the streets of NYC on March 16, 2013. See more on page 74. Photo by Takuya Sakamoto, www.newyorkbikedreams.com

Co-conspirators: Mikey Wally, Andy Singer, Krista Carlson, Kurt Boone, Albert Yee, Joshua Siebert, George Olden and Frank Barbella

Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Urban Velo is a reflection of the cycling culture in current day cities. Our readers are encouraged to contribute their words and art.

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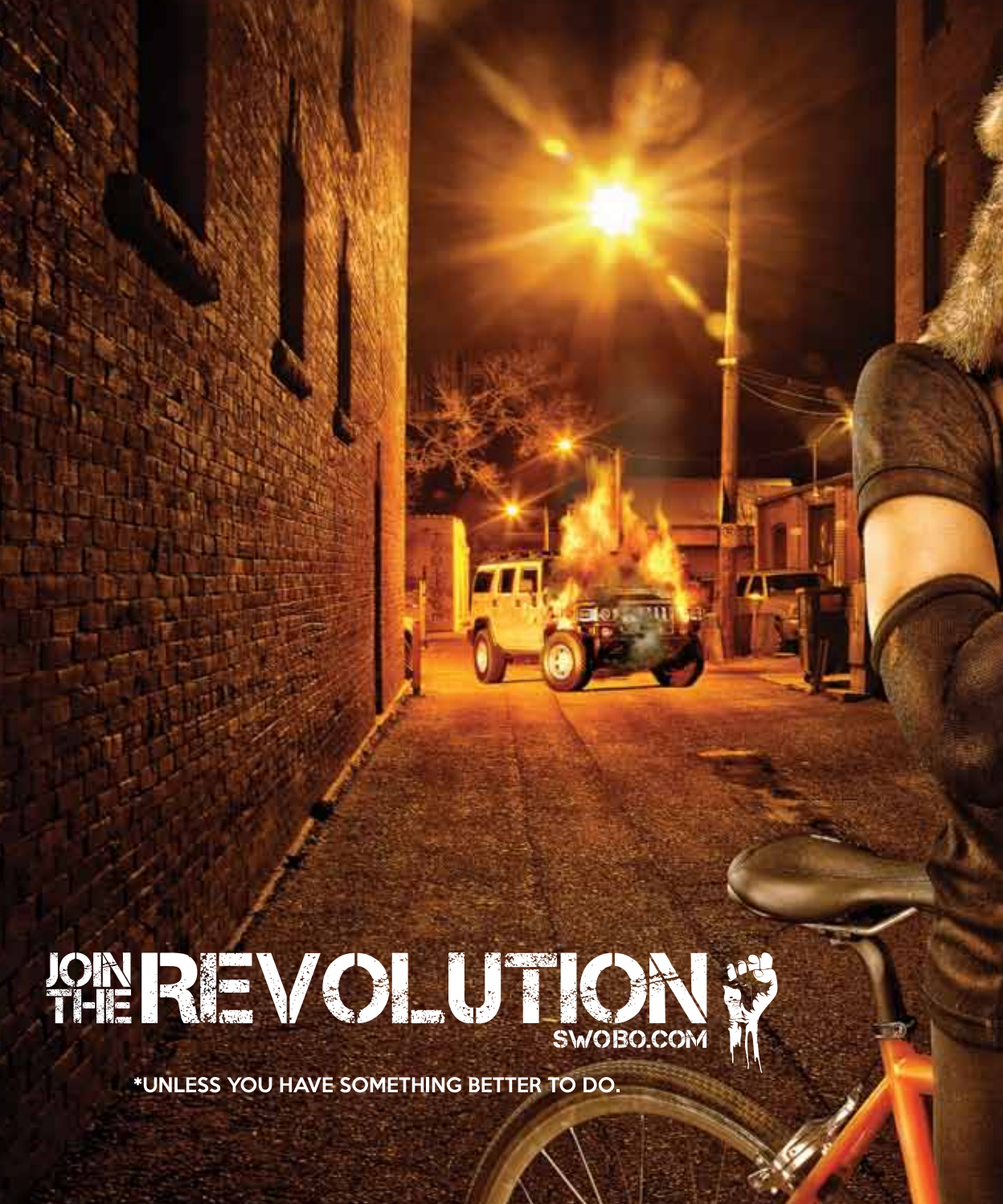
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In the pre-dawn hours of March 17, 2013 hundreds of racers set forth to vie for a set of coveted Wolfpack Hustle Marathon Crash dog tags in the world's largest unsanctioned, un-permitted race. Photo by Mikey Wally, www.mikeywally.com

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EDITOR'S STATEMENT

By Brad Quartuccio

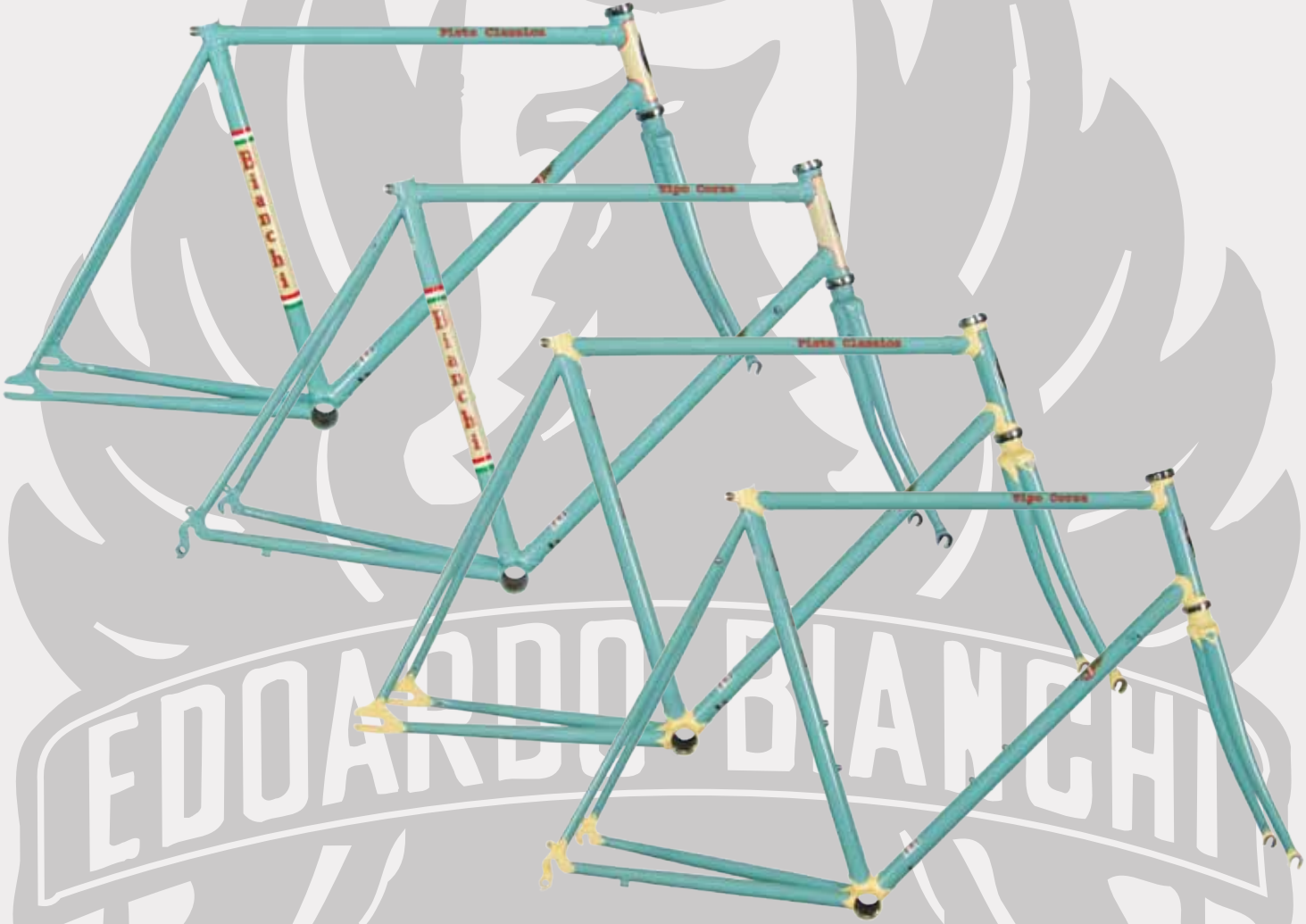
In the past few years I've grown a renewed interest in old bikes. It's always been there to some degree, I dragged home my first vintage bicycle long before I could drive. Regard for old technology was burned in early—countless weekends spent shuffling the aisles of hardware stores with both of my grandfathers led to a lot of tales of the way things used to be. New technology is almost invariably better than old, but not every good idea always makes it to the next generation. Perhaps just a sign of my times as the mountain bike parts I grew up riding are now considered "vintage," I've come to a new appreciation of long gone bicycle ways.

Design usually outpaces manufacturing technology, with some brilliant ideas never leaping from the napkin. Others find their way into production but don't work as intended because of shortcomings or design compromises. Some ideas remain forgotten to the ages, others yet doomed to the "tried it, didn't work" scrap pile. Certain pieces of old design are undeniably beautiful, even if impractical today. It can take some prodding of old timers at a swap meet or just opening a book, but there is a lot to be learned from ideas that may not have worked the first time around.

It's a safe bet that most all of the builders at the North American Handmade Bicycle Show each year are well versed in bicycle history, with some builds showing more outward reverence to the past than others. Shin-ichi Konno of Cherubim Cycle comes from a family of frame builders, Ben Farver of Argonaut Cycles is using the latest in carbon fiber to build state of the art racing bikes. Everyone at the show is putting 100+ years of safety bicycle innovation to work in different ways, history at work.

We want your words. Send your editorial contributions to brad@urbanvelo.org

Photo by Brad Quartuccio



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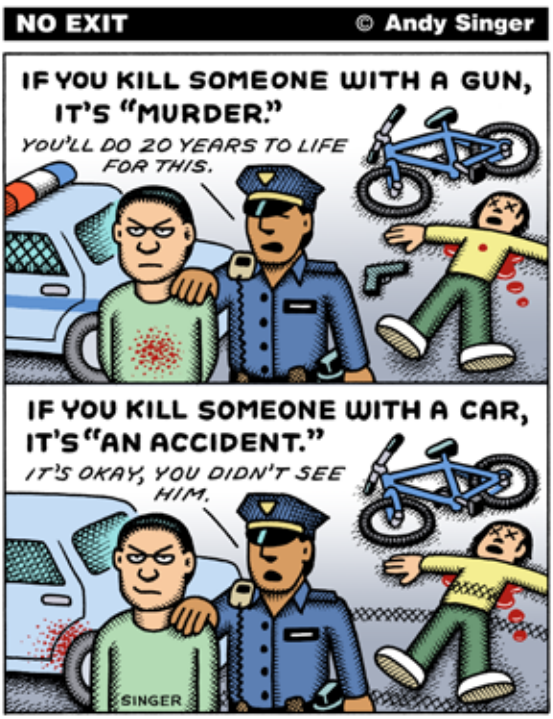
PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

By Jeff Guerrero

Until recently, the New York City Police Department officially referred to the cause of traffic fatalities as "accidents." And while bona fide accidents do happen every day, using the word as a blanket term seems to absolve anyone involved in the injury of another under the assumption that the "accident" was just that. But in many cases such occurances aren't entirely accidental. Often times there's an undenialble reason for the incident—negligance, irresponsibility, incompetence and even malice come into play. And so while the motorist who inadvertantly struck a cyclist while driving and texting may not have intended to cause injury, it's undeniable that the driver was at fault. And depending on the local vehicle codes, they could be found criminally liable. And so it's certain—accident is not the right word.



"Collision" is the new term that the NYPD has officially begun using. Their *Accident Investigation Squad* has been redubbed the *Collision Investigation Squad*, and advocates in New York and beyond herald this as a victory in their campaign to change the worldwide view of traffic fatalities. Additionally, pressure from advocacy groups such as Transportation Alternatives has caused the NYPD to change their investigation protocol. Before the recent reforms, police routinely declined to investigate many collisions, and they've been notably hesitant to press criminal charges in traffic fatalities. Now it seems that the new protocol will be for NYPD to investigate any collision that results in a critical injury, not just in a "likely to die" scenerio.

These gains made in New York may give hope to advocates in the Twin Cities who are pushing for legislation in Minnesota to increase penalties for hitting non-motorists. The Vulnerable Road User Law would increase the maximum penalty for hitting and injuring or killing a bicyclist from $1000 and up to 90 days in jail to $3000 and up to one year in jail.

Of course, even if that legislation passes, it seems like little more than a slap on the wrist for guilty motorists. In issue #33 I wrote about the hit and run death of James Price. After several months without justice, his killer was brought into custody and accepted a plea bargain of two and a half to five years in prison. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reports that Jeffrey McClure pleaded guilty to "accidents involving death or personal injury" and "accidents involving death or personal injury while not properly licensed."

Again, the term "accident" hardly seems fitting. Jeffrey McClure *collided* with James Price and left him for dead. And then he hid from the law like a guilty murderous coward.

I suppose as cyclists and advocates we have to take what we can get. At least justice has been served to some extent, albeit not to the biblical level of "an eye for an eye" that we might wish for. And thanks to the innumerous advocates working on our behalf, things continue to change for the better.

Urban Velo issue #36, April 2013. Print run: 5000 copies. Issue #35 online readership: 55,000+

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i ♥ riding in the city

NAME: Doobie
LOCATION: Barcelona, Spain
OCCUPATION: Bicycle Rental Shop

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

I've been living in Barcelona for the past three years. It's a very bike friendly city—lots of cycle lanes, chilled-out drivers, a good climate and stunning scenery. I lived in London before moving here so all of these things were a welcome change.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I would have to say Barcelona. It's a compact city, you're never more than 30 minutes ride from anything so its very accessible by bike. There's an impressive variety of scenery, from the ordered grid system of L'Eixample to the narrow winding streets of the Barri Gotic and the village feel of Gracia. There aren't many days that can't be improved by a ride along the seafront. Then there's the Parc de Collserola overlooking the city, at 8000 hectares it's the largest metropolitan park in the world and has a great network of bike trails.

Why do you love riding in the city?

For me there's no better way to explore a new place. You can access everywhere that you can on foot but you can cover more ground, and being on a bike seems to bring out my inner 11 year-old. The other day I got chased by an attendant for riding my bike in his car park. I'm 38.

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i ♥ riding in the city

NAME: Johanna DeCotis
LOCATION: Atlanta, GA
OCCUPATION: Environmental Engineer

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

I live in the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood of Atlanta. It's one of the older neighborhoods that has great history alongside newer developments, including housing, a skate park, and the BeltLine. I live within one mile of so many restaurants, bars, parks, music venues, etc. that it makes a ton of sense to ride everywhere. It's generally pleasant to ride on this side of town, but you have to be prepared for hills! People don't normally think of Atlanta as a hilly city, but you'll figure it out pretty quickly as soon as you get on a bike. As far as bike infrastructure goes, Atlanta is still growing, but there are plenty of gorgeous side streets and alternate routes to take that aren't too dangerous, as well as a growing number of bike lanes. It's a common misconception that it's too dangerous to bike here. Untrue. It definitely helps to have confidence, but it's by no means impossible, and once you get the hang of it, there's nothing quite like it.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

My other main experiences riding in a major city are in Nashville, Boston, and San Francisco. There's so much history and variety in Boston with the bay and river that every ride is scenic. I also had the chance to ride around with my sister, who bikes in Boston, and she knew all of the shortcuts and fun ways to move around by bicycle in the city. That probably helped. I got to have a similar experience in Nashville, using a bike share service, and this was probably the most fun because the bike share was only two weeks old and no one else knew what it was. It was fun to share biking with a city that's still growing into it.

Why do you love riding in the city?

You can get such a feel for the vibe and culture of a city by bicycle that you just can't by car, bus, or train. You also have the ability to move more freely than you do walking. This combination is just incredible.

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i ♥ riding in the city

NAME: Francois Fortier AKA @JohnnyCanuck
LOCATION: Montreal, QC
OCCUPATION: IT Mobility Specialist

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

I live and work in Montreal, on the island proper and love my daily ride in the city. It's a 25 km commute along the Lakeshore and the Lachine Canal. When the weather is nice it's amazingly beautiful and full of life, but when the weather turns or it's windy it can be one of the best workouts you'll have on flat land. Riding in the city is great, there are loads of bike paths and thanks to the popularity of the Bixi bikes, the cars are finally starting to take notice. It has become a lot safer and more pleasant to ride in the city.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I loved riding in Europe, France and the UK have some of the most amazing rolling country sides. But when I think about the types of rides I can do just by wheeling either the fixie or the road bike out of the garage, it still has to be Montreal. You don't even have to leave the city for a hill climb, but riding out over any the bridges will take you through bendy country roads to various mountain trails and road climbs. Whether you are looking for 40, 80 or 120 km road rides this city has you covered. Circling the island itself will give you a 125 km ride without ever crossing a bridge or doubling back.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I ride into the city to avoid public transport, even if the trains and metro are pretty good in Montreal, I'd rather just get on the bike and get a bit of a workout on my way to work. You can pretty much get anywhere you want in under an hour.


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i ♥ riding in the city

NAME: Kaytea Petro
LOCATION: San Francisco
OCCUPATION: Marketing Director

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

I live in San Francisco, so hills and headwind are always part of my reality. Despite these facts, since moving back to the US from China seven years ago, I've supplanted the bulk of my city car trips with bike trips because its much easier to ride in the city than to drive or take the bus. Being on my bike, I'm out, I'm connected with my neighbors and fellow citizens and I get to see the city at my pace. Pushing into the wind through the Panhandle home, I see folks playing music, bike polo and walking their dogs.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

The first city I bike commuted in was Beijing in 1998. At the time it wasn't so polluted and the bike lanes were still primarily used for bikes, so it was a fast cheap way to get around. Unfortunately, Beijing isn't what it used to be, people barely bike any more; the cars are the cause of so many problems there.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love hearing the sounds of the city.

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

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ABUS Locks

Building great locks requires having great ways to destroy them. Anyone with some street smarts realizes that professional thieves can be ingenious in their craft, and that staying a step ahead of their attacks is a constant struggle. The ABUS test facility is built with one purpose in mind—to compromise every lock around in an effort to build a better mousetrap.

Since 1924 ABUS has staked their reputation on making the best locks possible, pioneering and perfecting many of the designs now ubiquitous in bike shops and hardware stores. ABUS makes all manner of locks, from simple padlocks to window and door locks, and onto a number of locks for securing boats, motorcycles, and of course bikes. If it can be broken into or stolen, ABUS likely has a way to lock

Markus Reeh, ABUS Test Laboratory Manager. Words & photos by Brad Quartuccio

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it down. One may not guess it from the size of the operation, but to this day ABUS remains a family owned company based in the small town of Wetter, Germany. The stereotype of German manufacturing holds true with spotless facilities and precision machinery throughout, a mix of state of the art computer controlled production and ancient factory machinery humming along. ABUS creates much of its own tooling, maintains tight control of the metal alloys used throughout, and keeps a well stocked test facility to ensure their locks live up to their own standards, and the various metrics set forth by countries throughout Europe and around the world.

Markus Reeh is the Test Laboratory Manager, and it is his duty to (scientifically) destroy whatever locks pass through his hands. The jaws of the myriad bolt cutters in the lab are scarred, the hammers and punches dinged, the prybars tweaked. Many a lock has met its demise at his hands in the test lab, both from common street level brute force attacks and more methodical testing on sophisticated hydraulic machines able to pull, twist or otherwise force any lock into two pieces.

Freezing locks with liquid nitrogen or Freon canisters is more fable than street tactic, but nonetheless tests are carried out at room temperature and after a chilling deep freeze far more thorough than any spray attack. The warning to "only touch the plastic" was made clear before handling, no need to prove the tale of Flick and the frozen flagpole. Mechanisms are set to pull a u-lock with the force of a small truck and more until the shackle alloy reaches yield, or twist until the lock mechanism releases. Hydraulic jaws cut the shackles that even the largest bolt cutters can't tackle. It's an impressive operation to ensure quality and that given lock standards are met, enough so that other manufacturers and independent testing organizations have been known to lease it out for their own evaluations.

German manufacturing has a reputation for a certain attention to detail and level of precision, and the ABUS manufacturing and test facility lives up to the lore. In some ways it is disheartening to witness the work and testing needed to keep up with ever evolving attacks, but theft can have powerful motivations. Locks thus occupy a long chapter of human history, and today are a bigger business than ever.

View a full ABUS factory tour photo gallery at www.urbanvelo.org/abus-factory-tour

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TRACK OF AGES

By Krista Carlson

Photos by Mikey Wally

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***"Encino Velodrome is like Bad News Bears,"** Kieron Menzies says of the outdoor track and its place in the world of Southern California track cycling. A recording engineer 70-plus hours a week, 31 year-old Menzies spends much of his few free hours at the velodrome, where he has recently inherited the seat of board president.*

VITAL STATS | **DISTANCE: 250 m** | **SURFACE: Concrete** | **BANK: 28°** | **BUILT: 1961**

The Encino Velodrome is one of those places that will always be quietly legendary. The concrete surface is punctuated by patched up cracks just below the rail, scars of the perpetual maintenance done to keep the track in riding condition. Faded blue bleachers glisten in the sun and glow under the floodlights, recently restored just in time for the season's start.

Built in 1961 on land leased from the Army Corps of Engineers, the 52 year-old outdoor track was founded by four bike shop owners in the San Fernando Valley area: Charlie Morton, George Garner, Jack Kemp and Bob Hansing. Hansing, who had gotten his first taste of track riding in Japan during his Navy tour, would be the one to pose the "what if" question, setting the wheels in motion. (Hansing would later go on to found Euro Asia imports and head Shimano America in the 1970's, while Garner's Valley Cyclery would become the model for Schwinn's "Total Concept" stores.) The group formed the Southern California Cycling Association (now SCNCA) to build and run the velodrome, electing Morton, a member of the 1936 U.S. Olympic cycling team, as president.

Former board president Ken Avchen (bottom) appreciates the concrete surface.

"Originally the track was asphalt and then, the first summer, it got hot out here and the track just went 'bloop' down to the bottom," says former board president Ken Avchen. "This year will be the 50th anniversary of the cement track."

Tucked away in the Sepulveda Basin, the track itself is something of a hidden treasure today; you wouldn't know it was there unless you went looking for it. But the track is so beloved—and a little bit mythical—that cyclists will descend upon the track after hours to ride under the light of the full moon, a sort of unofficial pilgrimage.

"When I was a kid we used to sneak in with our BMX bikes and ride around," recalls Jonathan Tessler (better known as JT from www.bicycle.net), who grew up near the track and now brings his own kids out. Tessler's is a familiar story, echoed by many fellow devotees of the Encino Velodrome.

The track's accessibility is both good and bad. Periodic break-ins every three to four months make for an unnecessary added expense at a track operating with a shoestring budget and less than a dozen regular volunteers. And while regular repairs are done to the track when needed, the biggest expense is running the lights.

"My long term goal is to install a more efficient lighting system at the track," Menzies says. "It's pretty much a pipe dream. There's not a huge chance that we'll raise enough money to install a more efficient


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> When I was a kid we used to sneak in with our BMX bikes and ride around.
> –Jonathan "JT" Tessler

lighting system, but if we can find it then I would totally go for that to try and cut down on the electric bill—because it's huge."

While most states are lucky to have one velodrome, California has four. The Encino Velodrome is Southern California's oldest standing velodrome, built to what has since become the Olympic standard length of 250 meters. Despite its distinction, this track suffers slightly in its proximity to the newer, sleeker tracks in Carson and San Diego. And at under 35 miles away on the 405, Carson and Encino bear the curse and blessing of being the closest pair of velodromes in North America.

"One of the reasons I came to Encino to live was because of proximity to the velodrome," says track regular Stefan Mayer. "I wanted to live near the track. Although I came here as a student I was also a bike racer. "...Encino probably had the biggest program in the country," Mayer explains. He recalls days of great turnouts and huge crowds in the early '80s, "Part of the Olympic team used to race there; it was one of the two biggest tracks in the country [along with the Northbrook Velodrome]. And then Trexlertown came into existence. It was credited as a huge success, to everybody else's detriment. It killed track racing in Los Angeles because the top riders all went to T-Town."

Even after T-Town opened in 1975 and pulled away many high-profile track racers, the Encino Velodrome still retained prominence in the West—that is until a new track was built in Carson for the 1984 Olympics. That track, which was also outdoors, was torn down in 2004 to make way for a new sports facility—including the Velo Sports Center, a slick and shiny $15 million-dollar indoor track with 45° banked turns, another draw away from Encino.

"It's nothing like it used to be," Mayer says, "but we're trying to build it back up."

"Velo Sports Center is such a gorgeous and beautiful track; a privilege to ride. It kind of dilutes the crowd a little bit." say Menzies. "On top of that, in beautiful, sunny Los Angeles—Hollywood, glitz, glamour—there's a lot of other things that you could be doing besides riding your bike in circles."

Regardless of its limited use as a major race venue, the Encino Velodrome still sees plenty of action. Training sessions are held throughout the week year-round—even on windy 45° F nights. Steady attendance from track vets like Mayer, who began racing track as a child in Australia, and Henry Shibata, who got his start in the on the Japanese keirin circuit, has been a boon to newer track-goers who are eager to learn the nuances of the velodrome.

Just a few years ago, Menzies was himself among the uninitiated. At first, he can't remember why he started coming to the track, but upon rumination he recalls the beginner's class he took with friends in 2008 as part of a group buy purchased by the UCLA cycling team. "At this point I'd been riding fixed gear on the street for five or six years," he says. "What happened after the beginner's class was my best friend and I kept coming back to the track because we kind of got into it. We were coming through the winter when it was just us two. We'd be there 'til one in the morning just training, riding around and having fun. At that point I started inviting more and more friends, by text, by word of mouth, and getting together carpools.

"Word started spreading. Eventually we got a dozen, then two dozen people to come on a single Wednesday training night... so I started putting together a program of how to learn all the different track events for different races that you can compete in at the track." Menzies' six-week introduction to track racing class provides in-depth training on specific types of races each week; this season his class has drawn another two dozen students.

"For another year I was volunteering and running the race introduction classes, building a lot of momentum. Suddenly I had three dozen kids that were coming consistently. They liked to practice racing but they didn't ever actually do any real racing. These were kids, who, for the most part were just like me—they got addicted to it through riding fixed gear on the street and started to come to the track. They were getting stronger and getting more hungry to race, but a lot of


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them didn't want to pay the $60 annual fee that USA Cycling charges to be able to race at the races that Encino Velodrome offered at the time."

This situation led to the establishment of the Ride the Black Line Summer Series—beginning in June and held every other Wednesday at 7 pm, the series encompasses six races over three months and allows racers outside the USAC circuit to feed their competitive urges.

"Some people tell me—people who are 60-plus, who are still riding at the track—they tell me they haven't seen racing at the track like this in 30 years," Menzies says. "It feels good to get things moving again because sometimes you can find an old picture of Encino Velodrome from the early '90s or the early '70s and there's literally people lining the track, all spectators, watching the action, and you don't really see much of that anymore at most tracks."

While track bikes have evolved into high-tech mechanical marvels, the sport has ironically experienced significant attrition since the days when thousands of spectators poured in to Madison Square Garden to watch Major Taylor lap the field, having lost participants and spectators to the vast array of younger cycling sports.

"Polo is awesome for all the good times that you have and sportsmanship; cyclocross is great for all the beer and and costumes; road riding is great because it just looks epic—when you conquer a mountain, that's really cool—on track it's a different thing. It's a little more abstract," Menzies says. "There's only so many times you can watch someone go around in a circle, but the way that it gets cool is when you're actually on the track racing and you're trying to tell yourself to go a little bit faster, a little bit harder. There's like a mountain to be conquered like on the road but it's actually inside your body."

One of Menzies' goals as president is to get more school programs involved with Encino Velodrome. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of youth under 18 have participated in the free juniors program over the years.

"The youth program has been going on a long time," Avchen says. "No idea when it actually started, but after the '84 Olympics there was an organization called the AAF, or Amateur Athletic Foundation. The Youth program was partially funded by the AAF for many years."

The AAF, now called LA84, was established from the landmark surplus of the 1984 Olympic Games. Receiving 40 percent of the surplus, Los Angeles had over $90 million dollars to invest in athletic programs. The velodrome was one of numerous grant recipients. Although the track no longer receives funding from LA84, Avchen and Shibata continue to run the program every week.

We will take a beginner on any Thursday," Avchen says of the program's open-to-all format. "Usually I have Henry teach brand new riders the ropes while I work with the more experienced kids. We have had kids go through the program and go to the Olympics, become National Champions, race in Europe and win many many State Championships."

Being the little fish in a big pond—track racing and cycling in general in Southern California—has its benefits. While it might not be in the most convenient location, as an environment it's incredibly accessible to novice track riders.

"Encino Velodrome is amazing for the people," says Tim McGee, who came from a background in bike polo and, at first, didn't like all the rules associated with track cycling. "My first impression was, 'This is crazy.' I had to learn about paceline and stuff; then they told me that there's a keirin race, that you could bump people and stuff like that. Then I got really interested.

"I've learned a lot of things. Life lessons, mostly. It's a whole 'nother sport where you have to commit to something—take care of your body. Plus all the people I'm around in cycling—there's a ton of good people in cycling! I was surprised at all the stuff they know and all the stuff you can learn from them." In the time since he began coming to the track, McGee has won three state track titles and earned a set of coveted Wolfpack Hustle dog tags in the 2012 Drag Race.

"This place means a lot to me," McGee says. "It's like a part of my family now. It took care of me when I first started and I plan on giving my input on things to teach other riders because I learned a lot and I went far with it."

For more information on races, training and open sessions at the Encino Velodrome, visit www.encinovelodrome.org.

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ROLAND BURNS

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CO-FOUNDER OF R.E.LOAD BAGS

By Kurt Boone

Photos By Albert Yee

R.E.Load Bags was one of the early companies to make custom professional messenger bags and pioneered complex appliqué courier bag graphics. When Roland and his partner Elle Lum started R.E.Load Bags back in 1997 messenger bags had largely yet to leap into popular culture, remaining primarily in the hands of working couriers and a small but growing number of urban cyclists. Today messenger bags are part of the culture, from street fashion to the runway and are sold by all number of makers large and small. Indeed messenger bags sales have exploded around the world and I wanted to see what the history of R.E.Load Bags meant to the courier bag business and cross-over into pop culture.

ON ENTERING COURIER WORK

"I grew up in New York and worked at Toga Bikes, actually in high school. I moved to Philly and worked at Bike Lane here. I had been working at bike shops through high school and college. Graduated college and kind of got tired of working in shops, so I just started messengering. I met Elle and she moved to Philadelphia and started doing messenger work, so I kind of slid in with that."

ON THE START OF R.E.LOAD

"I had a bag that I got at Canal Jeans in high school. It didn't have any waterproof lining, it was very simple, I got it for 20 bucks. But the Velcro was kind of coming off and wasn't waterproof. When I started working as a messenger I wanted to get something different and I had met Elle and I knew she knew how to sew and so I asked her could we maybe pick up some stuff here and there and fix up the bag a little bit. We started to look at stuff and we just decided to try and make our own bags, just for ourselves.

Philly is an incredibly supportive community. A couple of people saw them and started asking us would we make bags for them. We were also going to alleycats as much as possible at the time. So we just started going there and telling people we could make them stuff. And that pretty much how it started."

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME

"We took a long time trying to think of a name. I am Roland, Elle is Elle, that's R.E. and then we were thinking *reloading*, you are always taking things in and out of your bag. Figure it kind of fit as our name as it fit the function of the bag. That's where the name came from. We started in 1997 kind of making stuff for ourselves and then we decided to start to actively trying to sell bags in early 1998."

ON EARLY SALES

"We probably sold a couple of bags a month, all completely local and all completely word of mouth. What really turned it around for us was when the CMWC was here in 2000. That brought tons of people, all these people from other countries came in and at that point we were really happy with the bags we were making. I think the quality was there, customization was already there in a lot of ways. At that point no one else was really doing that."

ON THE EXPLOSION OF BAG COMPANIES

"It is hard to imagine back then that it would spread out so much. I think bag company-wise it was us, Timbuk2, Chrome was around, Manhattan Portage, BaileyWorks, PAC and I remember PUSH. Now there is a bag company in every city."

ON ALLEYCAT RACES

"That has gotten kind of crazy, in my mind. When it first started, there would be alleycats once a month, maybe. Now there are events happening every weekend somewhere. We get requests for all that stuff."

ON THE MAKING OF A RELOAD BAG

"What the company is based on is the skills of the people who work here. There is no crazy machine that does stuff for us. It's all done by hand and it's all controlled by hand. By individual people, which is what I think sets us apart."

ON THE FIRST MESSENGER BACKPACKS

"I remember Corey [Hilliard] got one. It must have been 2000 or 2001. At the time you'd see a lot of Ortliebs, like for the CMWC here. The German teams all had Ortliebs. People, if they wanted a backpack, they would use the Ortlieb, but in my mind they were too small. I didn't see the point of having a backpack that couldn't fit at least one cargo box, if not multiple cargo boxes. Then Ortliebs didn't have pockets. They had that one removable pouch, so it didn't seem like it had enough features. So Corey had us build a crazy back pack that I think was actually too big, but he rocked it and still uses it to this day. That was pretty much the start of us trying to figure out a real useable big capacity back pack. I am pretty sure we were the first company who started thinking about messenger back packs to fit real cargo."

ON MOVING FORWARD

"Our main focus is in continuing to keep up the quality of what we have and trying to expand our image in terms of actually being artisans. We consider ourselves artists and craftsmen rather than just manufacturers."

Check out www.reloadbags.com


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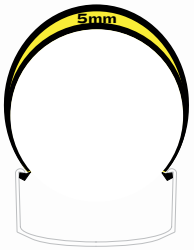

PANARACER

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www.panaracer.com

Festka

Prague, Czech Republic

The seamless chrome treatment on this bike from Festka hides the multiple materials at work. That's a steel frame under there, with a carbon fork and bar, in-house built carbon disc wheels, and an aluminum stem.
www.festka.com

Check out www.urbanvelo.org/NAHBS for more photos.

Breadwinner Cycles
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Ira Ryan and Tony Pereira have joined forced to create Breadwinner Cycles, an effort to overcome capacity issues and grow a sustainable domestic framebuilding business that can be scaled beyond what any single builder can create.
www.breadwinnercycles.com

Cherubim Cycle
Tokyo, Japan
Shin-ichi Konno shows unparalleled creativity and construction skills in his show builds. The nephew of Yoshi Konno, founder of Cherubim Cycle and 3Rensho, Shin-ichi now instructs the next generation at the Tokyo College of Cycle Design.
www.cherubim.jp

Check out www.urbanvelo.org/NAHBS for more photos.

Argonaut Cycles
Portland, OR
Ben Farver transitioned from traditional steel to full custom monocoque construction using hand laid continuous carbon for a fully customizable ride without that joints typical of custom carbon, or the limitations of ferrous materials.
www.argonautcycles.com

Surly Karate Monkey

But I thought this was a track bike magazine? Nah, we ride it all—fixed gears and road bikes, geared wünder mountain bikes and cheap single speeds. Bikes, they're cool. Surly wanted to send in the stock Karate Monkey with slick tires for ripping around town, and I was like, "Here's the address."

These days mountain bikes are not in fashion for city riding, even if in some ways they make a lot of sense. This was not always the case, at one time in a more renegade city riding age it was fairly common to see mountain bikes tackling potholed streets. The single speed, disc brake Karate Monkey with giant 29" x 2.35 Schwalbe Big Apple slick tires is an unorthodox choice as a city bike, and not really the best choice for long distance commutes, but you'd be hard pressed to find a more fun bike to shoot through alleyways and parks with on your way to hang out and ride some more. Riding the Karate Monkey throughout town took me back to when I first moved into the city during college and had a fleet of mountain bikes quite different than my current selection. I regularly rode my pre-Surly 1x1 Rat Ride single speed to campus, hopping curbs, hitting staircases, navigating forgotten alleys and small bits of greenspace devoid of cars. The Karate Monkey has taken me right back, and I've found myself finding different ways to ride the neighborhood I've

called home for almost ten years.

This is undoubtedly a mountain bike, meant for trails first with time proven geometry giving it a predictable ride as responsive as it needs to be, "like a bike" as they say. The Karate Monkey is perhaps the very first production 29er and it remains much the same as it did when introduced, with a few refinements along the way. The frame is now disc only with a slightly lighter weight tapered fork for a better ride, but retains the 4130 chromoly tubeset, curved seattube to shorten the wheelbase and versatile track ends with a derailleur hanger. The complete bike comes single speed as shown, but it has the appropriate braze ons for a geared drivetrain along with fender/rack eyelets front and rear. Track ends with disc brakes can be a hassle when it comes to changing a flat and require the disc caliper position to be readjusted for different gear combinations but there is something to be said for the simplicity of the Karate Monkey. As mountain bikes go it's versatile and uses as "standard" components as it gets—there are many examples of people getting into backcountry trouble or tackling the daily commuter grind with a Karate Monkey build.

The parts selection on the complete bike isn't particularly fancy, more a durable, serviceable group with an MSRP of $1225. The 660 mm wide, 17° bars are comfortable all day and for getting rad, and the spec'd Avid BB7 brakes are still my favorite disc brakes on the market all things considered. It comes geared at 33 x 17, too tall in the woods around here in my opinion, and too low for the street—not a big deal, freewheels are cheap to swap out for your riding style. The size large as tested weighs in at 26.5 lbs.

Large volume slick tires roll remarkably fast on pavement and hook up in everything but mud, at least for me they bring about a different way of getting around less concerned with speed and more so with just riding. The destination will still be there whenever I finally get there, inevitably with a splash of mud and stupid grin. If speed is of the essence or your favorite bike accessory is your scale, a Surly is probably not for you. As a primary commuter there are better choices, as a second bike for your mountain and back alley ripping around needs this is a damned fun choice.
www.surlybikes.com

Light and Motion Urban 500

Once you cross the threshold of using a headlight for seeing the road rather than just being seen, brighter is better and rechargeable is the only way to go. The top end Light and Motion Urban 550 lights the way ahead with a measured 550 lumen output, rivaling the bulky waterbottle battery light systems I cut my nightriding teeth on and all in a 112 g rechargeable package smaller than a bicycle grip.

The Urban 550 features three beam settings and flash, with a claimed runtime of 1.5/3/6 hours on high/medium/low and a whole week worth of riding at 18 hours on flash. Amber cutouts along each side of the lens lend some added visibility, and are just enough for me to read my cyclocomputer or cuesheet. The single Li-ion battery cell takes approximately 6 hours for a full recharge via the mini-USB interface. The swivel mount is easy to fasten to and remove from the bars, with $10 replacements available in the event that you break the mounting band.

I've spent the fall and winter using the Urban 550 as my primary light for night rides both in town and ducking into the woods. Weekly night 'cross rides help keep my sanity, and the Urban 550 has proven fit to light the way along riverfront trails and dirt roads, though a more powerful light would be better suited for full on singletrack. Along city streets I've yet to ask for a more powerful beam, primarily using the medium and low beam settings on all but the darkest alleyways. By paying attention to the green/amber/red/blinking red battery indicator I've been able to avoid getting left in the dark, even when ride plans switch midstream from one hour to three. The Urban 550 has proven

weatherproof in my use, expected given the company's experience making bona fide scuba diving lights, though this one is not rated for full submersion. The unit feels solid and has survived my abuse unscathed, with a previous generation Urban 180 using the same construction still going strong with the scars to prove it hasn't been babied.

If there is any criticism of the Light and Motion Urban 550 is that it might be overkill for some commuters, even if there is little reason not to have more light. At $159 you certainly don't want to have it stolen, and if your commute is on well-lit city streets you may not need the light output on a daily basis. That said, the mount can't make it easier to take with you and the extra light may help you to discover new routes and enable new rides. Light and Motion lights are designed and assembled in the United States from as many domestically sourced components as possible, so service for a damaged light is but a few dollars postage away. If the Urban 550 has too much light, is too much coin or doesn't have enough runtime check out the $129 Urban 400 or the $99 Urban 200. See more at www.lightandmotion.com

Timbuk2 Conveyor

Timbuk2 has expanded their catalog so much that they now offer full-blown airline luggage. The Conveyor is available in two sizes, XL ($259) and M ($199). I chose the smaller size because it's intended to be a carry-on bag. At 14 x 22 x 10, the medium sized bag should pass muster with most major airlines. I actually checked the Conveyor, in part just to see how well it would handle the torture of airline baggage handling. And I'm glad to say it came through absolutely unscathed.

The measurements listed belie the bag's carrying capacity. I stuffed everything I could possibly need for a four day trip to Las Vegas, including extra shoes and unnecessarily warm clothes, and the bag still wasn't close to capacity.

Construction-wise, the Conveyor features ballistic nylon and the same durable stitching as their messenger bags. The retractable handle is very functional and relatively sturdy. It doesn't exactly seem indestructible, but they do offer a lifetime warranty. The big (65 mm) soft skateboard wheels make the the Conveyor roll like a dream, even on rough tarmac and over broken sidewalks. And at just 7 pounds (8.5 for the XL) the bag itself is rather light.

I do sort of wish the Conveyor was offered in a greater variety of colors, because a unique color scheme makes it easier to keep track of your bag in a crowded airport. In the meantime you can choose between gunmetal/blue or black.

Check out www.timbuk2.com

Crank Brothers Mallet DH Race

The new Crank Brothers Mallet DH Race pedals were designed to provide additional control and stability beyond that of the typical clipless pedal. The latest Mallet was also highly influenced by the style of shoes that many downhill mountain bikers prefer, which are essentially the same as those worn by BMX riders, with the addition of a clipless pedal cleat. These shoes generally offer comfort and a high level of pedal feedback and have continued to gain popularity in the urban market.

The downside is that unlike contemporary bike racing shoes, BMX style shoes lack the stiff sole that facilitates power transfer into the small contact area between the cleat and the pedal mechanism. This can also lead to foot discomfort. However with a large platform in addition to the clipless mechanism, pedaling forces are spread out more evenly.

Another benefit of the platform is that in a pinch, you can hop on your bike with ordinary shoes. Or you can ride un-clipped in sketchy situations and still have a decent amount of control.

I'm pretty well pleased as punch with these, and I also happen to really like the aesthetics. Crank Brothers knows that their target market likes their bicycle components to look good, and these pedals are no exception.

The Mallet DH Race weigh in at 479 g. The body is aluminum and the spindle is chromoly steel. They rotate on needle and cartridge bearings, and traction is provided by eight 8 mm adjustable pins. The pedals are designed to provide an increased q-factor for a wide stance and good crank clearance with flat (aka street-style) riding shoes. MSRP is $140. Visit www.crankbrothers.com for more info.

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Giro Reverb

Helmets are cheap insurance against potentially terrible outcomes and are as personal as shoes, might as well find one that fits the use you have in mind in a style that you'll actually wear. The Giro Reverb pulls from the past to make a helmet for today with modern fit and lightweight construction in the style of the Giro Air Attack worn by the likes of Greg Lemond in the early '90s peloton.

The Reverb benefits from over 20 years of helmet evolution since the original Air Attack—the throwback paneled graphics and original Giro logo make it easy to forget how heavy and unwieldy those old helmets really were. While some commuter helmets draw from skate style versions, the Reverb takes its cues from the Giro performance heritage. The helmet is remarkably light at 300 g due to the thin In-mold shell that covers the protective EPS foam and provides some protection from daily off the bike bumps, but not as much as the much heavier, thick plastic shells of skate helmets. I've certainly managed a few dings in my Reverb. The shell has nine vents and inner air channels to move air across your head, proving (almost) as comfortable as a helmet gets when the sun in blazing. I found the strap system comfortable, though I wish the y-connectors were locking and that there was some adjustment available to the rear yoke even if I found the light elastic fit quite comfortable. While you either love or hate the fully rounded profile there is a strong argument that helmets without pointy protrusions are safer in certain accidents as they are less likely to dig in and cause your neck to violently twist. The helmet ships with a removable visor, which I promptly removed.

Commuters with longish rides will welcome the lightweight Giro Reverb. More roadie than skate, it retains an understated look and won't lead to the neck and shoulder fatigue that heavier helmets may. The Giro Reverb retails for $60 and is available in three shell sizes in ten different graphics packages. See more at www.giro.com

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Chrome Lower Southside Pro

Casual SPD shoes have come a long way, going from the hiking boot styles or neon kicks of a decade ago, to models that only those in the know suspect hide a cleat. The tradeoff in each iteration has been a balance of riding stiffness to walking—too supple and you may experience pain around the cleat or foot arch when riding, too stiff and you end up walking like a duck. The "Pro" line from Chrome errs on the side of riding stiffness in a shoe that looks like a shoe, and after a few months on the Lower Southside Pro I'm pretty sure Chrome is on the right track.

The Lower Southside Pro has oiled leather uppers with more breathable polyester side panels and a full length, two-stage nylon plate in the sole for rigidity, and to allow some walking flexibility throughout the toe box. The Southside Pro shoes are stiff around the cleat, on a level more typical of racing shoes but not quite to the carbon sole level. It's also immediately apparent that they're hefty, something I've been critical of with most every casual SPD shoe I've worn. After some time on the bike I've grown to really like the feel of the Southside Pros, with no hot spots or foot pain to speak of. I've used Crank Brothers Eggbeater pedals since shortly after their debut, and due to their non-existent platform and reliance on the shoe for all foot support can create some significant pain for me on rides of any distance if I use anything but "real" clipless shoes. No such problems with these shoes, they don't feel like race shoes but they do feel rigid. Off the bike they more or less feel like walking around in cycling shoes, though the subtle flex in the toe does help to mitigate the feeling of rocking end to end across the sole. I do not regret wearing these to office and to lunch meetings.

Weight aside, I like these shoes and I find myself picking them up more often than not when wanting to clip in and ride around town. By proxy I end up riding nicer bikes around town more often. They're serious feeling riding shoes in a package you can wear at the bar without feeling like a clown or getting called Lance. Available in grey or black for $120 from your local shop or direct at www.chromebagsstore.com


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Alexander Motsenigos & The Unwinnable Argument

By Joshua Siebert

Any cyclist inclined to defend his right to the road is familiar with the following argument, which is offered in various formulations: Lawless behavior by any cyclist relieves all drivers of any legal or moral obligation to all cyclists. Drivers will honor cyclists' legal rights only when all cyclists conform carefully to the rules of the road with a punctiliousness that most drivers could not achieve if they tried. Ironically, this argument uses the law as a sort of stalking horse to relieve drivers of their own legal obligations.

Anyone who argues for a living, lawyers in particular, knows a secret: The easiest way to win is to shift the burden of proof to your opponent. The party who does so claims a position of rhetorical supremacy: Implicitly, the burden falls on the adversary because he is presumptively wrong. To prevail, the presumptively correct party need only repel his opponent's advances as he seeks the high ground.

In law, the burden tends to be pre-defined. In debates over policy and individuals' moral obligations to each other, where there are few rules, the burden

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can be shifted in myriad ways, including trickery, bombast, and the strength of overwhelming numbers.

Such debates often involve too many moving parts to sustain tidy conclusions. It is in seeking to reconcile competing viewpoints and priorities on complex topics that preemptive burden-shifting becomes so effective. When both sides must rely heavily on anecdote and moral conviction, the game is rigged in favor of whomever shifts the burden. And when one side in a public debate has vastly superior numbers, like drivers, it can shift the burden on sheer noise.

The argument based upon misbehaving cyclists depends on a particular burden-shifting syllogism: Those with a lesser claim to a given resource owe deference to those with the superior claim; cyclists have a lesser claim to the road; therefore, cyclists have an obligation to accommodate drivers, who hold the superior claim. Never mind that this contradicts the laws of most jurisdictions in the United States: The debt cyclists owe to drivers is moral; normative but not rooted in the law.

Tellingly, those who make this argument seldom (never, in the author's experience) assert what would seem to be the corollary proposition that no driver owes any other driver full respect until all other drivers obey the law. The reason is straightforward: One driver's moral claim to the road cannot readily be disentangled from another driver's by a category distinction, such as exists between cyclist and driver. Hence, drivers honor each other's rights regardless of some drivers' bad behavior. Burden-shifting doesn't work; if your fellow driver isn't entitled to equal respect as a consequence of the misdeeds of the few, then neither are you.

If we can agree that cyclists, even reckless ones, are far less dangerous to drivers than other drivers are, and both numbers and common sense make that much irrefutable, then something other than risk must underlie drivers' reliance on cyclists' reckless behavior to justify their own elective approach to the rules of the road. The answer lies in the syllogism: Cyclists have an inferior claim to the road. They are tolerated as a matter of grace, which is forfeited the first time any cyclist fails to afford a driver whatever tribute he thinks is his due, often a tribute not required by law.

No recent event has so vividly illustrated this attitude as a Boston-area grand jury's recent refusal to indict truck driver Dana E.A. McCoomb for allegedly causing the death of 41-year-old cyclist, Alexander Motsenigos.

Law enforcement authorities have released traffic camera footage of Weston Road, a busy, two-lane, shoulderless thoroughfare in Wellesley, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb. The footage shows Motsenigos proceeding swiftly down the road on his road bike. He rides with the posture, cadence, and speed of an experienced roadie, and his equipment and kit suggest he is precisely that. He crosses McCoomb's field of view as McCoomb waits to enter traffic on Weston Road.

> In a triumph of transitive victim-blaming, a goodly number of drivers will assert that the injuries to law-abiding cyclists are the fault of other lawless cyclists.

Motsenigos rides to the right on a stretch of road with no parking lane or shoulder. McCoomb's 18-wheeler turns left onto Weston just a moment after Motsenigos speeds by. He accelerates quickly, and immediately attempts to overtake the cyclist on the narrow road as the two vehicles crest and begin to descend a shallow rise. There are no visual obstructions, no shadows or overhanging trees, to interfere with McCoomb's view of Motsenigos as he closes on the cyclist. It's a sunny day; they are crossing a short bridge. As the two recede, they are traveling more or less abreast, the rig still nowhere near completing the pass. Seconds later, witnesses say, McCoomb strikes Motsenigos with the side of his truck. First responders find Motsenigos unresponsive at the scene.

Authorities spent three months investigating the crash, enlisting the help of an accident reconstructionist and a trucking expert. They learned that McCoombs repeatedly was disciplined for driving infractions over decades as a commercial driver. After its investigation

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was completed, the prosecution took its case against McCoombs to the grand jury.

A grand jury does not determine guilt or innocence: It determines whether the prosecution has probable cause to submit charges to a trial jury. The grand jury often will hear no defense-friendly evidence at all (the subject of the investigation, who in this case denies hitting Motsenigos, is not entitled to attend); it assesses only the sufficiency of the prosecution's evidence to proceed. It has been said that a good district attorney can indict a ham sandwich, and with good reason: The bar is low.

Over several days, the jury saw enough evidence to return an indictment—if not for vehicular homicide, then for one of the lesser charges pertaining to McCoomb's irresponsible driving. As reported in the Boston Globe on February 15, 2013, "[v]ideo footage, captured by a traffic camera, showed McCoomb's truck attempting to overtake Motsenigos, striking him from the side, and driving off without stopping." The same article quotes an eyewitness, one of several who corroborated the prosecution's account, saying "It wasn't [Motsenigos'] fault! He didn't do anything wrong! He was just coming down the hill, and the truck hit him! The truck was going way too fast!"

Nonetheless, no more than 12 of as many as 24 grand jurors were persuaded that McCoomb should stand trial. (Thirteen votes are required to return an indictment.) Jurors reviewed the video evidence and heard corroborative eyewitness testimony, but refused to indict him even on the charge of unsafe overtaking of a bicyclist. By way of contrast, a trial jury in Massachusetts recently deliberated for only four hours before convicting a teenager of vehicular homicide for texting while driving. His victim? A passenger in the car he struck. If only he'd hit a cyclist, he might have gotten away with it.

The Motsenigos case hammers home what road cyclists long have known: The hostility of many drivers is not a product of justified indignation, although a minority of cyclists give drivers good cause to be indignant. But drivers' often unjustified indignation hides an uglier truth. There remains a pervasive, deep-seated, almost atavistic prejudice against cyclists, and prejudice, more or less by definition, is intractable to reasoned debate.

Few if any drivers will admit prejudice toward cyclists. However, in a triumph of transitive victim-blaming, a goodly number of drivers will assert that the injuries to law-abiding cyclists are the fault of other lawless cyclists. One cyclist was asking for it, so another cyclist got hurt.

The proposition lurking at the heart of this sophistry seems to be that the indisputably asymmetrical power dynamic between drivers and cyclists should militate in favor of the advantaged rather than the disadvantaged parties. However, this is yet another way in which the argument is extra-legal: Our legal system by design embodies the inverse proposition that those in the weaker position must be protected by the law. If might makes right, our pretensions to the rule of law are hollow. The law also disfavors "self-help," a pithy way of referring to taking the law into one's own hands.

There is one positive take-away: State and local law enforcement sought to prosecute McCoombs to the fullest extent of the law, something reports suggest is increasingly common in Boston and elsewhere. Because the moral and legal arguments of cyclists appear to be unavailing, only by operation of the motor vehicle and criminal laws can the scales be balanced; and this can only be effective if officialdom grants equal respect to the legal rights of cyclists. Civil settlements and verdicts, which face their own hurdles before often unsympathetic juries, are not enough. They are rare, and very rarely reported. The deterrent effect, if any, is negligible.

Only regular and vigorous prosecution of drivers who are recklessly indifferent to the safety of cyclists can effectuate change on the scale necessary to make the roads substantially safer for cyclists. This is not to downplay the progress cyclists have made legally and in community relations in the past decade. Nor is it to disregard the role that courtesy plays in improving interactions between cyclists and drivers. But in the presence of rampant, unacknowledged prejudice, diplomacy alone won't get the job done.

So the next time someone tells you, in so many words, that he has a diminished duty to follow the law while certain cyclists fail to ride lawfully, ask him if he feels the same diminished obligation to other drivers for the sins of the few. If the answer isn't yes, thank him for his time and walk away, before you waste yours. You're better off writing your city councilman, the chief of police, or your district attorney.

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It's a great time to be a cyclist at Temple and in the city.
– Lindsey Graham, Bike Temple Coordinator

BUILDING BIKE-FRIENDLY CITIES OF THE FUTURE

By George Olden

Photography by Frank Barbella

Our cities are changing. Slowly but surely they're becoming better places to ride. It may not feel that way every time an impatient driver cuts you off or when a bike lane ends at an awkward intersection... But thirty US cities now have bike-share schemes, with more planned. The popularity of cycling has expanded from places like Portland, San Francisco and Minneapolis to become a part of mainstream culture across the country, as more and more people turn to cycling as the easiest way to get around. Thousands of miles of bike lanes, paths and trails that didn't exist ten years ago are not only in place and well used, but have become an integral feature of the urban environment.

Next time you're using one of these lanes, remember that there's nothing straightforward about this change. Just getting a bike lane installed is a complex and time-consuming process, a combination of bureaucracy, competing interests and financial pressures. Sometimes the opposition can come from unexpected sources—as in downtown LA, where it turned out that the bright green paint on the lanes interfered with the green screen technology used in the movies.

Philadelphia is a good example of somewhere that's steadily becoming more bike-friendly, has a growing cycling community, and is dealing with challenges that apply to many cities. Aaron Ritz, Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs Planner for the city, explains that one

of the biggest problems is a particular limitation of the physical environment, "The city was originally designed around, and still retains, much of it's pedestrian scale." This means that unlike New York, which has wider avenues more accommodating to bike infrastructure, "most of the streets in Philly are too narrow to take a bike lane without something else having to go, either parking or a traffic lane. And in some places it's just not feasible to take away either of these." It doesn't help that in recent decades "Philadelphia has grown without people understanding cycling."

What's refreshing about talking with Aaron is that he's one of the increasing number now working in planning and policy who do understand cycling. In Aaron's case, it runs in the family. His father owns Skunk River Cycles in Ames IA and Aaron himself is a Park Tools Master Mechanic who once worked at Trophy Bikes in Philly. He's toured and raced widely, twice winning the National Brompton Championship in the US and placing 3rd in the 2011 World Brompton Championship in London, and now builds his own bamboo and carbon bikes. He moved to Philadelphia because it seemed affordable, "a good place to bike around," and now working in city planning he says he's learnt a lot about street widths and road surfaces, and gains the satisfaction of knowing that his work can make a difference for everyone riding in the city.

Aaron Ritz, Philadelphia Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs Planner

Bikes lanes may be the most visible change, but they're just the start. Where it's practical to install them they can be extremely successful, especially the "protected" kind that are separated from traffic and show the highest increases in volume of users; but in isolation they're not going to be the answer. A detailed research survey in 2009 by John Pucher, Ralph Buehler and Mark Seinen of cycling levels in the US and Canada concluded that although New York had installed an impressive mileage of bike lanes, this had yet to translate into similarly high bike use in the city because of a lack of integration with public transport, insufficient bike parking and inadequate enforcement of traffic laws by the NYPD. In contrast to this, "Portland [OR] is the North American city that comes closest to implementing a truly comprehensive, well-integrated, long-term package of infrastructure, programs, and policies to promote cycling." The result? A six-fold increase in cycling levels between 1990 and 2009.

So as Aaron Ritz points out, the real challenge is to create "a high-quality infrastructure that fits the local environment." The design and development requirements are unique for each city, and each city has to work out how to respond to this. Inevitably some are doing this better than others.

In Washington DC, Mike Goodno, Bicycle Program Specialist at DDOT, is tackling a different priority. "Bad behavior by all road users has created animosity," he says. "As hard as we, and our bicycle advocate colleagues, try, we can't reach every cyclist. Our law enforcement partners are often too busy, or just don't know cycling laws well enough, to ensure that cyclists obey the laws and that drivers are courteous to cyclists. Without this added friction, more people might give cycling a try." Mike also identifies the benefits of traffic calming in places where bike lanes can't be installed, pointing out that "limiting speeds through design can effectively provide a good cycling environment without dedicated cycling facilities."

As our cities begin to change, so will the diversity of riders. It must. Because for all the talk of a recent renaissance in cycling in the US, in reality this has been limited to certain areas—mainly gentrified urban neighborhoods close to business districts and universities—and to certain narrow socio-economic groups. Cycling is still a predominantly male activity, as the percentages of women and children cycling have either stayed the same or declined.

Steve Taylor works in community liaison at the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. A former

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courier, you'll still see him pulling a track-stand in the middle of Broad Street on a busy afternoon, only now he's towing a trailer of bike maps and promotional information as he heads out to run a neighbourhood outreach event or deliver an Urban Riding Basics class. "Getting the city's bike maps out to people means that they look at them and realise they knew about this bike lane or that one, but they don't know all the different ways that routes connect, and that if you're willing to take a little longer ride you can have a more pleasant ride." To get more people riding, he emphasises the importance of self-recognition and breaking stereotypes. "Anywhere you look in Philly, now, you see a cyclist, all types of different people from the very young to the very old. Which means that if you look for a few minutes you're going to see someone who looks like you riding a bike." In many cities outreach work is now targeting the significant number of potential riders that Aaron Ritz terms "curious but worried," people who want to ride but are deterred by safety or traffic concerns. After all, our cities will be truly bike-friendly when cycling is an easy choice for everyone.

Inevitably, many planners look to Europe for ideas. The frequently quoted statistic is that 50% of all journeys in the Netherlands are by bike; in the US it's just 1%. Tom Godefrooij, a Senior Advisor at the Dutch Cycling Embassy, recently ran a series of ThinkBike workshops across the US in cities including LA, San Jose, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. "Of course we had an impression beforehand of the position of cycling in the US," he says, "and we also knew that a number of cities were doing serious attempts to incorporate cycling properly in the urban transport system. Yet we were surprised about the hesitation of US cities to do what it takes to make cycling safe, efficient and convenient. Obviously it is difficult to imagine a re-distribution of road space in favor of cycling and walking and subsequently at the cost of the space for automobiles. Yet our Dutch approach to look at the whole picture instead of only looking at cycling facilities as an add-on to the existing road appeared to be an eye opener to many of the ThinkBike participants."

In this context it's encouraging that many cities are now adopting "Complete Streets" policies, new legislation that requires city departments and private developers to consider the needs of all users in street design (including pedestrians and cyclists). Whilst this may seem like common sense, it actually challenges many decades of urban design biased heavily towards driving—the results of which we live with every day. This change is certainly overdue. As long ago as 1961 in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs wrote "traffic arteries, along with parking lots, gas stations and drive-ins, are powerful and insistent instruments of city destruction... Streets are broken down into loose sprawls, incoherent and vacuous for anyone afoot. Downtowns and other neighborhoods that are marvels of close-grained intricacy and compact mutual support are casually disemboweled... City character is blurred until every place becomes more like every other place, all adding up to Noplace." If you've ever arrived somewhere only to find that it looks just like the place you just left, then you've probably experienced Noplace.

But the obvious problem is that Europe and the US have completely different cultures. Mike Goodno has seen the European example first-hand for himself, on a recent fact-finding trip, but is quite clear about the reality in somewhere like DC. "We are seeing increases in cycling by mimicking the infrastructure that European countries have been installing over the last few decades... However, I think it will be extraordinarily difficult to reach the level of cycling that Europe has by constructing facilities alone. Many European countries have excellent land-use policies, tax-incentives, educational programs, and laws that make cycling and transit use the logical choice. In the US, we tend to subsidize driving over other transportation options."

Tim Suba, a Philadelphia resident and cyclist who ran cycling vacations across Europe with Blue Marble Travel, puts it more strongly. "Apples vs. oranges... It is counter-productive to make any comparisons between European data of cycling patterns. Don't get me wrong—I'm a tremendous fan of European cycling and railways, but human beings have dwelled in and developed European communities for millennia. Their transportation options (and mindsets) are informed by that rich, deep historic tapestry. As we weave cycling into the fabric of US cities, any talk of Europe is as big a waste of time as—someday—borrowing ideas from our terrestrial infrastructure for a Moon Colony!"

And for Steve Taylor—who's also ridden in both US and European cities—this issue again once more

In both cities they want better urban connections rather than more recreational routes.

comes back to solving problems at a local level, and by doing so celebrating our distinctness. "We should not want a city like Philly to look like a European city," he says. "Of course we shouldn't hesitate to try different ideas, whether from European, Asian or American cities, but we should not assume these are the best answers. We don't have, and nor should we aspire to have, a culture of helmet-less people riding upright 3-speeds. As urban cyclists it's not who we are. We have to figure our own solutions out."

A more useful comparison might be London, where cycling had declined in popularity but is now increasing dramatically. London's roads are already a squeeze, and this is a city with an extensive public transportation network and a congestion charge for any driver taking their vehicle into the city center. It's also steadily becoming a better place to ride around. There are "bike super-highways" running along major routes into the center, a popular bike-share scheme, and increased efforts towards safety and traffic calming—including things like improved training for truck drivers, who account for a startlingly high percentage of bike casualties in the city. Particularly important is that employers in the city are beginning to support bike commuting, in many cases responding to the demands of their staff.

City University London, for example, has developed a Green Transportation Plan that makes increased bicycle and pedestrian commuting a strategic aim. The majority of the university's staff and students still use public transport, and with rising numbers cycling or walking, car journeys now account for just 1% of trips. Dawn White, Sustainability Officer at the university, explains how this came about, "We used the bottom-up approach at City to get cycling initiatives funded and implemented. Most people travel to the campuses by public transport, cycle or by foot... Yet we had very little secure storage space available for our cyclists, and no other initiatives to offer them. Something clearly had to change." In addition to improved facilities there are now regular maintenance and safety classes, and government-sponsored bike purchase schemes.

Temple University is working along similar lines having identified that more than 5000 of its students, faculty and staff live within six miles of the main campus. The University's Sustainability Office now runs Bike Temple, a comprehensive plan that includes a dramatic expansion in bike parking on campus, free U-locks if you register your bike with Campus Safety, urban riding and maintenance classes, mentoring schemes for new riders and local criterium races. Bike Temple Coordinator Lindsey Graham is very optimistic for the future. "It's a great time to be a cyclist at Temple and in the city," she says, even though challenges still remain. "In US culture we're just not as used to seeing cyclists on the roads. It's essential to increase all road-users' awareness that we're part of the transportation network and have a right to be on the road. The cycling culture is already here... but I'd like to see more infrastructure on the streets around the university, to really connect Temple with the rest of the city."

Better connections are a common theme and are driving the next stage of infrastructure development. In the ThinkBike workshops, Tom Godefrooij noticed how some cities seemed more focussed on "the number of miles of bicycle lanes rather than on the connectivity of the network." In fact, it seems that everyone wants more usable networks, preferring little adjustments to what's already there rather than grand new trails. This is a recurring comment from nearly all of the people I speak to who use their bikes to get around. An experienced rider like Steve Taylor would like to see more thought going into which locations the routes actually connect. "We need more trails with useful destinations," he says, citing the Hudson Trail in New York as a good example of "a route that you can really use to get north and south, it's fantastic for commuters."

The commuters I spoke to agreed. Jonathan and Jane Grode, who divide their time between Philadelphia and Providence RI, and ride to work in both cities, tell me exactly what improvements they'd like to see. "Right now there is a great system [in Philadelphia] going east to west," says Jonathan, "but what we really need are north-south routes on both sides of the city." They're also very aware of the differences

between the two cities. Jane likes riding in Philadelphia because of the dedicated bike lanes, even though "there is a ton of traffic and no real regard for bikers. In Providence there are no lanes, but the drivers are a bit more aware." And in both cities they want better urban connections rather than more recreational routes like the Schuylkill Trail, which Jonathan likens to an "expressway" for bikes—"a lot faster, but a bit out of the way" for everyday use.

And looking further into the future? For most cities it will probably be a case of working smarter, of using limited and in some cases diminishing funding in more effective ways. There will be more bike-share schemes, bike boulevards, and hopefully better education of drivers. There are calls for velodromes, and even a few fantastic suggestions like SkyCycle, the elevated bike routes across London recently proposed by the design agency Exterior Architecture—the kind of ideas that can inspire people and prompt debate, regardless of whether they ever become reality.

After numerous ThinkBike workshops, Tom Godefrooij still has a powerful vision of what might be achieved. "My dream is for cities where people, young and old, men and women, rich and poor, can safely and conveniently move around and can fully participate in social and economic life, regardless of whether they have access to cars or not. Almost by definition this would turn out to be a cycling city."

Of course, there's still much to be done. Many urban areas are still blighted by decades of poor planning and design. There are still highways in the wrong places and not enough secure locations to lock your bike. Driver behavior is not going to change overnight. And rather than a war on cars or utopian dreaming of what Edmund Bacon (the controversial Philadelphia planner) called the Post-Petroleum City, we need to focus on positive efforts that make cycling a simpler, easier choice for more people.

But right now, it's important that we recognise and celebrate the progress, the tipping point that has passed—the fact that urban cycling is no longer the preserve of a brave minority, and that increasing numbers of people are choosing to get around this way. As more and more of us take to our bikes, the cities we live in are being forced to respond and adapt, and by doing so they become better, more liveable places.

Ramps And Pins

By Brad Quartuccio

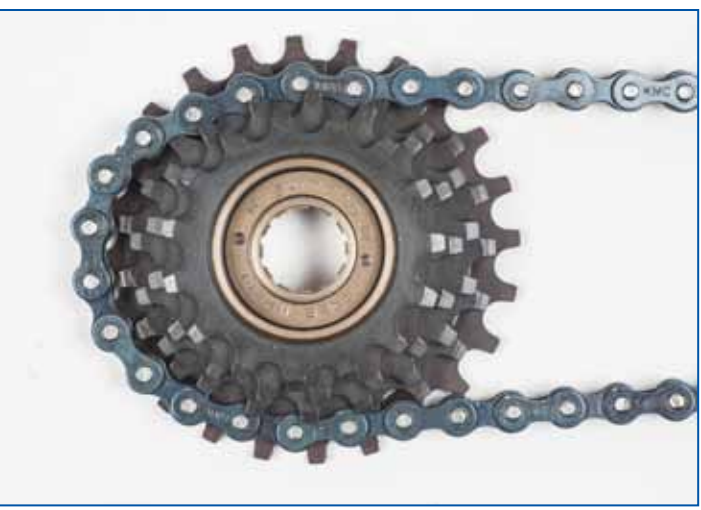
Fast and precise shifts are a huge part of the bicycle economy. Since the first bicycle gears shifted, tinkerers have been theorizing and testing ways to improve the performance. Shifters and derailleurs have seen obvious changes and evolution over the years, but just as important are the teeth of both the cassette and chainrings. Ramps, pins and complex tooth profiles help shifts happen quickly and smoothly under load, and every major drivetrain company has their own method for making it work.

It's a common novice question to ask if the oddly shaped teeth of a chainring or cassette are cause for concern, if they are worn out or even broken. Quite the opposite, as the shape and location of each ramp, pin and shaped tooth has a role in helping the chain smoothly move across the sprockets. In 1989 Shimano's introduced Hyperglide ramped sprockets, and quickly thereafter ramps and pins became commonplace on multi-speed systems. Shimano has had Hyperglide and Interactive Glide, SRAM has Powerglide and OpenGlide and X-GlideR, Campagnolo has Exa-Drive and Ultra-Drive and Ultra-Shift and this is hardly an exhaustive list. Shifting technology is competitive, a land of trademarked names and nuanced patents.

The ramps in the sides of a modern cogset and the shape of individual teeth help to lift and guide the chain from one sprocket to another. Prior to the introduction of Hyperglide and subsequent technology, the chain was more or less forced across the sprockets until it disengaged with one, and dropped into the next. With ramped cogsets the chain

Photos by Brad Quartuccio

Ramped sprockets allow the chain to mesh smoothly across two cogs, with only two chain links not engaged at roughly the 9 o'clock position.



Unramped sprockets force the chain to jump across the two cogs, with multiple chain links riding across the top of the sprocket teeth mid-shift. Pictured without a derailleur for clarity.

has designated places on the cog that shifts occur which allows the chain to mesh with two adjacent cogs momentarily during the shift, making a smooth transition from one gear to another. No clunking, even under load. While ramps aren't necessary to shift gears, they sure make it work better. The ramps of each cog have to be lined up with its matching neighbors, which accounts for the asymmetric spline pattern on freehub bodies that maintain alignment, and in turn cause compatibility issues between manufacturers.

Ramps exist on chainrings as well, but since front shifting uses more force to cross a wider size gap between sprockets, hardened rivets are widely used to help pull the chain up to the next ring. Since the steel chain is harder than the aluminum rings, the steel pin does the heavy lifting to prolong the life of the ramps and ring. Look closely at the markings on a set of chainrings and you'll notice that they too are paired in a specific orientation to one another.

Every manufacturer does it differently, some with subtle ramps and others with rows of missing teeth. It all adds up to faster, more accurate shifts under load with the current generation of chains and sprockets benefitting from a couple of decades of innovation. With the subtle differences in tooth profile and chain plate shape, it is best to check compatibility between manufacturers if you have any doubt. Save the ramps and pins for the multi-geared drivetrains. Choosing unramped sprockets with full profile teeth will make it that much less likely for the chain to derail on single speed, or single front ring, configurations.

OUTRO

Brakeless alleycat racing is not for the faint of heart. The 14th running of New York City's infamous Monster Track brought gutsy racers to the Big Apple streets on St. Patrick's Day weekend. Lead cover rider and first place finisher Austin Horse had but this to say, "Toughest Monster Track ever." Photos by Takuya Sakamoto, www.newyorkbikedreams.com

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