

city biking in  
**TOKYO**  
JAPAN Page 50

# URBAN VELO

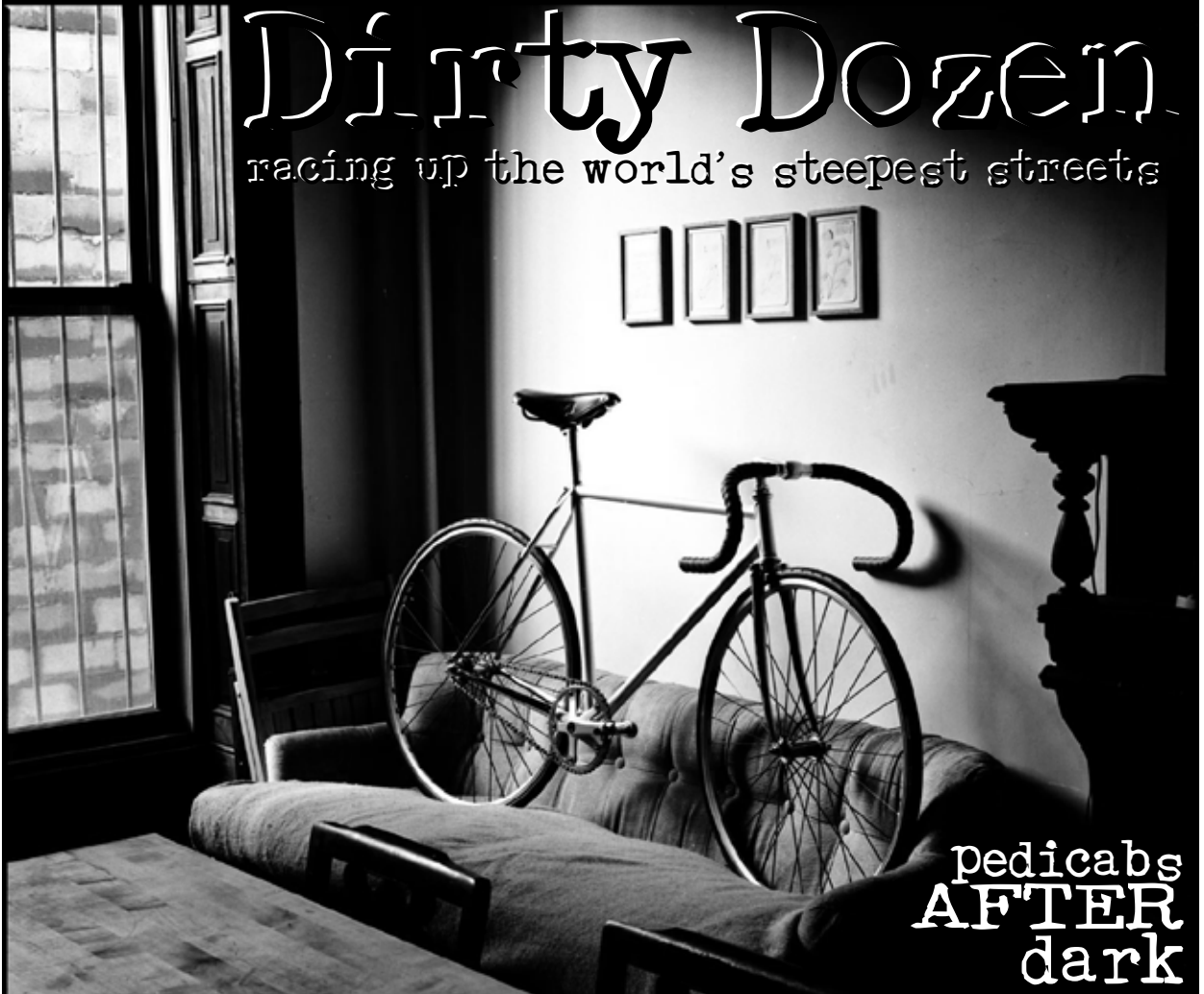
Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #5 • January 2008



## Dirty Dozen

racing up the world's steepest streets



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dark

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# Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



The above image was taken at the most recent Interbike tradeshow, an appropriate place in the midst of bicycle excess for a bathroom reminder that cyclists are not rock stars. No matter the race results or the miles logged, wheels powered by our own bodies bring us together as a greater community.

This magazine is only as good as our contributors make it. Luckily for all involved, there are numerous cyclists out there with a story to share. This issue marks the return of two such folks, Ted King-Smith and Johnny Tarr. Their words within these pages present vastly different outlooks on cycling culture as one races up the steepest street in the world, while the other pedals a three-wheeled passenger monstrosity for the sake of theater and tips. If you have your own story to share, get in touch. 

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

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# Publisher's Statement


By Jeff Guerrero



**L**'ike many of you reading this, I've been doing the "no car thing" again. It's not like I don't own one, it's just that I let it sit around for months at a time and it stops working. Cars are finicky like that. Bikes, on the other hand, are a lot more forgiving. If I let the Geo sit for two months the brakes seize up and the motor won't start. Meanwhile I can put some air in the tires of a 1960's Raleigh that I found in the basement of my apartment, hop on and ride to the coffee shop any day of the week.

Unfortunately, I do live in a society designed for the automobile. Cars take precedence and bikes are a second-class form of transportation. That fact becomes increasingly noticeable when you're riding your bike because you have to, not because you want to. Take the recent bike path closure here

in Pittsburgh that interrupts my commute to work. There's no way a construction site would be allowed to shut down a street in the city without some sort of a detour. Yet that's exactly what happened to the North Shore trail once construction on the new casino started. And while the closure only measures a quarter of a mile or so, the end result is that cyclists have to contend with high-speed traffic and dangerous roadways.

And then there's a matter of winter weather. Even before the winter solstice came the temperatures dipped far below freezing, bringing ice and snow that sent me skittering along the pavement numerous times. But even on days when I feel like I'm riding through the tundra, I take comfort whenever I see another set of tracks in the snow. It means I'm not the only one. 

Urban Velo issue #5, January 2008. Dead tree print run: 1200 copies. Issue #4 online readership: 20,000+



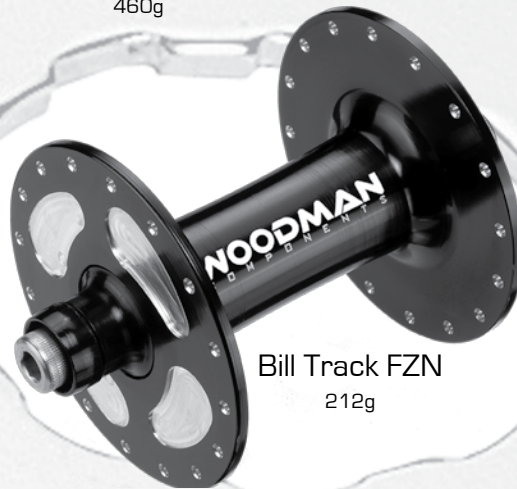
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# I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Jose Martinez, [www.negativo.org](http://www.negativo.org)

**NAME:** John Watson aka "Prolly"  
**LOCATION:** Brooklyn, NY  
**OCCUPATION:** Architect / Gutter Rookie / 3D Modeler

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

I live in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and I ride a track bike like everyone else here.

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

I loved riding in Rotterdam and Amsterdam because of the urban planning. The Dutch have it all figured out. Ideal bike lanes, more rights for cyclists and ample bike parking.

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

NYC is the perfect city to ride a bike in. It's dense and because it's essentially a grid, it's easy to navigate. All the traffic and crazy pedestrians keep you on your toes and there are no "ordinary days" on a commute. The only downside to riding in NYC is the lack of compassion for the cycling community. People die out there all too frequently and the city always manages to blame the cyclists, not the drivers.

With all the negative things I could say about NYC's planning, there's nothing that beats riding with 10 people from Brooklyn all the way up the West Side to Harlem. It's such a beautiful ride. Also, summer-time Coney Island rides are a staple. Finding that special little spot to do tricks really makes my day!

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

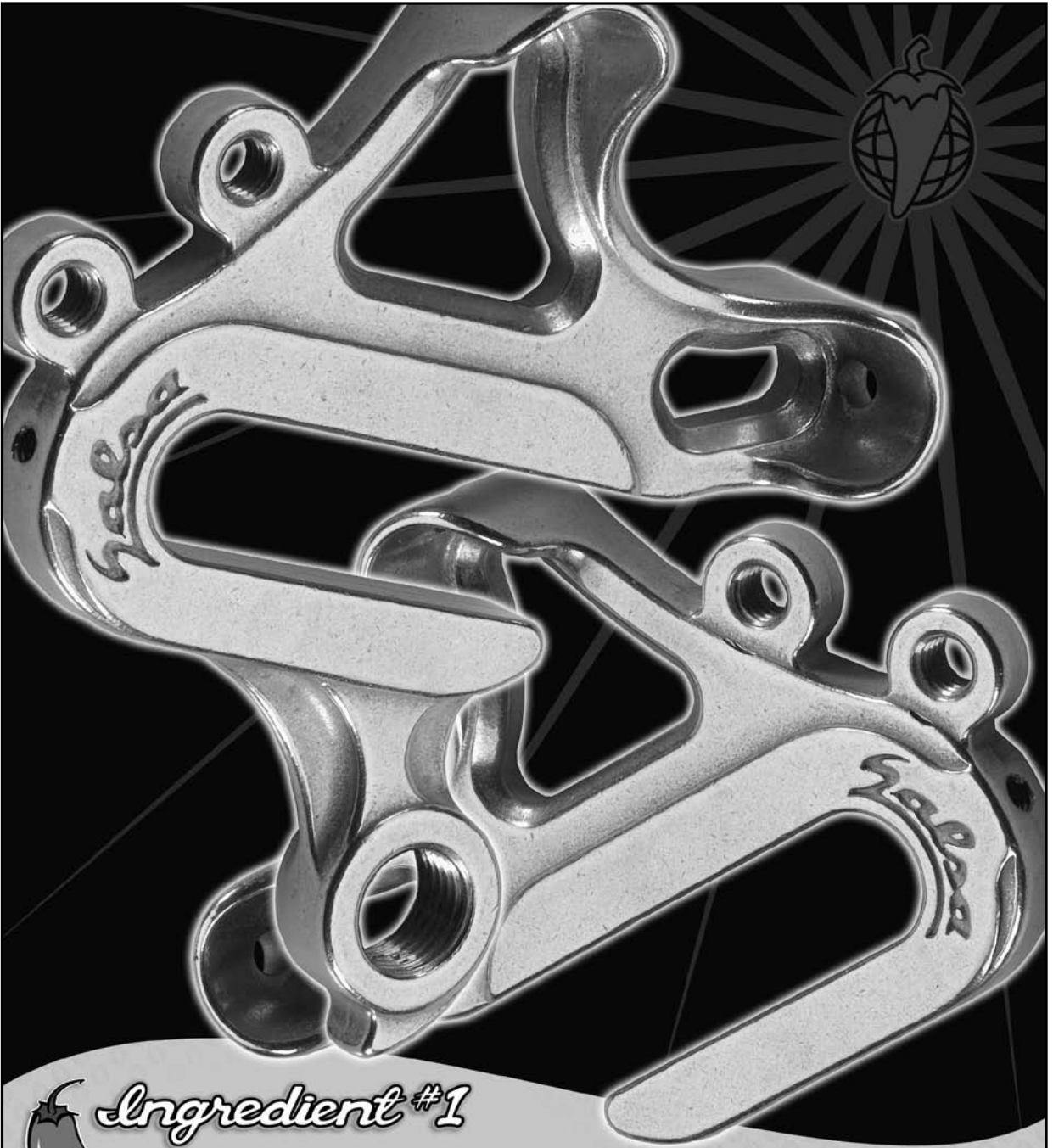
There is no other city in the US that has the density of NYC where you can ride from one end to the other in less than 45 minutes.

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

 **Contribute!** 

Send your answers and a high-quality photo to:

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Marty Sale

**LOCATION:** Perth, Western Australia

**OCCUPATION:** Cycling Coordinator

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

Perth, Western Australia. We're pretty spoilt here with a network of cycle paths and bike routes and a series of about 40 maps for the different areas around the metro area. Having said that we are also in an economic boom which seems to make people think that they need bigger cars. So now we have a lot of less-than-competent drivers in SUVs who haven't worked out how wide their car is yet. My guess is, at the back of the manual for these things there is a poorly translated troubleshooting guide that lists what to do and/or say when you nearly kill a cyclist.

## What's been your favourite (or the most exotic) city to ride in and why?

Perth is the only city I have had the pleasure of riding in. The best place to ride here is the holiday island off the coast called Rottnest. The only cars there

are the emergency services, maintenance vehicles and the occasional shuttle bus from the ferry terminal to the two hotels. Everyone else walks or rides, mainly rides. The island is about a third of the size of Manhattan Island and has a population ranging from 300 (in winter) to 15,000 (tourists in summer). I think a lot of your readers would think they've died and gone to heaven if they went there. Basically it is a pub with a beach out the front full of barely clothed beauties and an island out the back full of cycle tracks.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

I just love riding. For me riding is a break away from the rest of the world. My daily commute gives me 45 minutes peace between work and my awesome, crazy, noisy kids at home. I ride for completely selfish reasons and if they ever discovered that cycling increases global warming the first thing I'd probably do is put on an extra layer of sunscreen.

I love riding in this city because of the camaraderie between cyclists. If you stop to fix a flat on one of our cycle paths you'll probably have five people stop in the first five minutes to ask if you need anything. If you are on your own side of the river (our city is split north-south by the Swan River) everyone says hello or nods as you ride by. I've never been able to work out how people can tell if you are on the wrong side of the river, they just seem to know.

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

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Joe Harris  
**LOCATION:** DeKalb, IL  
**OCCUPATION:** Graduate Student—Political Science

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

I live in DeKalb, Illinois, about 45 minutes from downtown Chicago, and the home to NIU. That's Northern Illinois University, which is where I work and attempt to do research that no one's done before. This town is small, its arguably the farthest outlying suburb. So, riding here is mostly about a tiny Critical Mass—50 riders or so—and riding from my apartment to campus. There aren't any bike lanes, yet, although I read that Illinois just passed the "complete streets" initiative, which would put bike lanes on every road by the end of 2008. (Too bad I'll be living in Chicago proper by then.)

The other interesting thing about riding here is that underclassmen are total idiots with their cars—I've been clipped once, and have had a number of near misses.

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

Baltimore is by far my favorite city to ride. The weather is awesome. Drivers are usually courteous. My close second is Chicago, because bike lanes are prominent, and bikes are really, really fashionable there. It's hard being trendy as a grad student, I'll take whatever I can get. Riding in any city is a blast, getting very close to cars with no brakes is as much excitement as one could want, plus it's cheap, gets you exercise...and sometimes in Chicago, girls. Ha ha.

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**NAME:** Tom and Coty  
**LOCATION:** Santiago, Chile  
**OCCUPATION:** Psychology Students

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

Bicycling in Santiago is quite an adventure. Downtown means dealing with bus/truck drivers who couldn't care less about you and surfing through traffic jams. We have some bike lanes but they actually aren't much of a help. Old people love to walk on them and young couples find them the best place to walk their prams. But we couldn't give up biking, it's a lot cheaper and healthier, and we only get 8 to 10 rainy days a year.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

We love the way you interact with fellow bikers and skaters; we enjoy being part of the city-flow. It's the fresh air and oxygen (if you're lucky, otherwise you get just smog) in your face and the mind-awakening movement in the morning.

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

Just get on your bikes and stretch your legs.



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# I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Jeff Guerrero

**NAME:** Belloma

**LOCATION:** Four-One-TRUE

**OCCUPATION:** Student/Barista/Writer

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

So much has been said about how awesome Pittsburgh is to ride in, but I think the best part of this city is the bicycling community. I'm really new to this and completely green to bicycle maintenance and therefore constantly indebted to other riders. Whether it's my coworker who immediately offered her old bike to me when mine was stolen, or my friend who came and rescued me from a flat I couldn't fix, or any of the countless folks who explain the mechanisms with perfect patience—I feel that I'm part of a community.

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

Jerusalem was crazy: you're in desert heat riding up hills that make Pittsburgh look tame and the only bikes around

are old janky ones that are rented to you by a guy who doesn't look you in the eye. My roommate went riding in the Old City, at night no less, and was crazy with adrenaline for hours after. Like most things in Israel, everything was amplified and intense.

Craziness aside, there were some familiar sights. Once, a boy gave me a flier that I spent twenty minutes deciphering the Hebrew on until I realized they had just transliterated "critical mass." I also noticed a few stickers with the lion of Judah (the coat of arms for Jerusalem) riding a bike next to the words "Ahto Ahad Pahut"—one less car.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

Personally, I need as many excuses as possible to wear spandex and blinking lights.



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# Make The Leap



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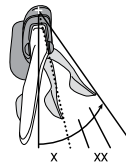
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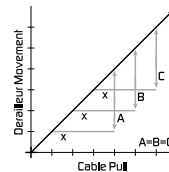
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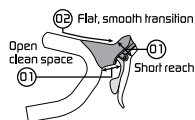
X: Cable pull is equal  
ABC: Derailleur movement is equal



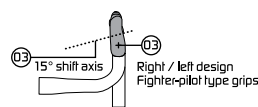
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# I Love Riding in the City

**NAME:** Aaron Edge  
**LOCATION:** Seattle, WA  
**OCCUPATION:** Managing Art Director for The Stranger

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

Seattle is great for cycling, we have a strong community of riders...especially the fixed-gear scene. Check out Cadence Clothing, Fast Friday, Reload Bags and Rain City Fix ([www.raincityfix.com](http://www.raincityfix.com)). The hills aren't as bad as San Francisco, but still give you a good workout. Our summers are the best and winter doesn't get so rough that ya can't still ride through it.

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

Portland, Oregon is pretty flat and has a large bike scene, I like Seattle and Portland equally.

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

I enjoy riding a bike on a trainer, in the city, on a bike path, in heavy traffic...everywhere. I just love to ride—it's fun, healthy and gets you places fast! Plus, I've met such amazing people from getting into cycling and putting together my book on Seattle's fixed-gear photographs.

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



Photo by Kirk Mastin, [www.kirkmastin.com](http://www.kirkmastin.com)



**NAME:** Pip Gregson  
**LOCATION:** Charlotte, NC  
**OCCUPATION:** Yoga Teacher/Bike shop Employee/Mum

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

Charlotte is an odd place to ride...There are great roads and streets lined with old magnolias, which are killer if you can avoid being hit by blue hairs, folks on their phones and people who want to know, "What is this bike thing you speak of?"

Downtown has some good spots to work on skills... There are a few loops around town that make it nice to get out on your bike.

**What's your favorite (or the most exotic) city you've ever ridden in, and what's special (or memorable) about it?**

A friend and I borrowed a pedicab in Auckland NZ. I was at an after party for a runway show I was in, so we had big hair, tons of makeup, in dresses and heels. Can you say late night drag queen look?

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

It is nice to be a Mum and dropping my son off at school, meetings, doctor's appointments and parking the car at home, grabbing my bike and feeling like a kid again.

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Jim Dunne

**LOCATION:** Staten Island, NY

**OCCUPATION:** Food Distribution

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

I live in Staten Island and commute to Manhattan everyday for work. In the morning when it is still dark and I begin my ride, for a very short time the city is quiet. By the time I reach Manhattan the city is bustling with people. When someone invented the term rat race they were definitely referring to NYC. My

ride from the ferry to midtown is less than 6 miles. Those 6 miles are akin to riding in the DMZ—pedestrians dart out from between parked cars, taxis fly out in front of you for that all important fare, doors whip open in anticipation of knocking you down and one of the worlds most expensive cities has more pot holes than the Ho Chi Minh trail. In other words it is a paradise right here on earth.

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

I have ridden in DC, Pittsburgh, Portland and NYC. NYC is still my favorite. There is just so much you can do in Manhattan, the city has become much more gentrified (whitebread) and less affordable, but is still one of the coolest places on earth.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

I am a homeboy, I love my city and it's frantic pace. Many other cities are more bike friendly by far, but NYC brings out the beast. Like the song says "Welcome to the jungle baby." A day in the saddle is life affirming.

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

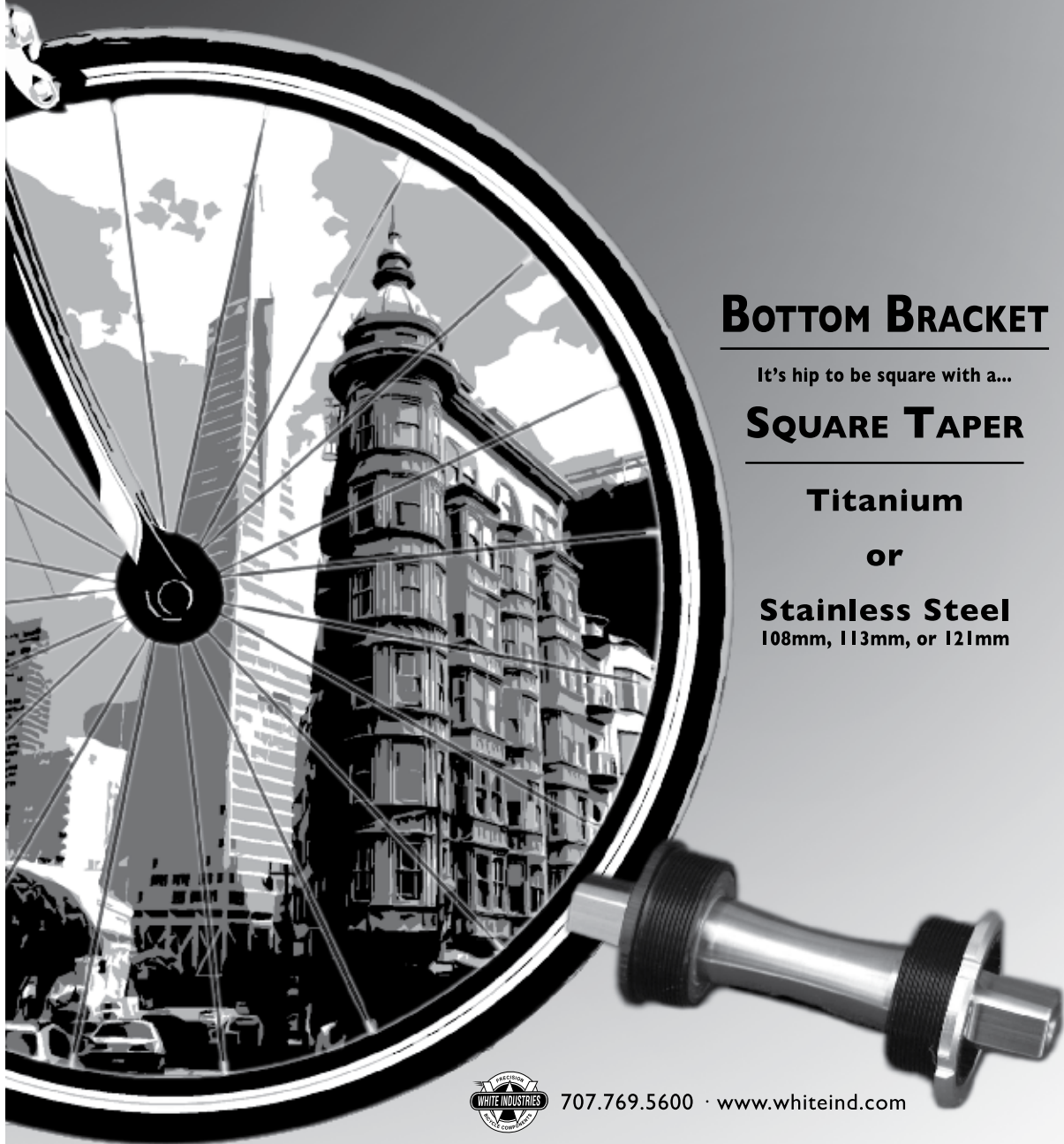
No poetry, I have been riding for over 20 years in NYC. I was a messenger in the glory days of the Reagan 80's (sarcasm intact) making top dollar while Slayer blasted through my headphones. That will always be with me. Every now and then I see my 19 year old self out there hustling and it makes me happy. I look at the younger guys and girls out there riding and they really have it together. They have done so much with so little, all the alleycats, websites and the unity within their community is inspiring.

**Contribute!**

Send your answers and a high-quality photo to:

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

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Alegiust  
**LOCATION:** Milan, Italy  
**OCCUPATION:** Bicycle Retailer

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

Vivo a San Giuliano Milanese alle porte di Milano - Italia.  
Sono un piccolo bottegaio indipendente. Ho 41 anni.  
E' da circa un anno che uso la bici fissa per brevi spostamenti quotidiani negli orari di lavoro (e non solo).

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*I live in San Giuliano Milanese just outside Milano-Italy.*

*I'm a small shop indy retailer. I'm 41.*

*It's just one year I ride a fixed gear bike for quick moves in this town.*

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

Il posto che preferisco per le mie brevi corse è la SS9 via Emilia, la nostra strada principale che vanta origini romane dal 187aC.

Strada sempre trafficata, immergersi con la fissa è per me come un tuffo in un fiume.

*My favourite place to ride in is our main road SS9 via Emilia (an ancient Roman road since 187 B.C. always full of traffic).*

## Why do you love riding in the city?

Mi piace l'attenzione, la pienezza mentale di pedalare su una fissa e così momenti della giornata contraddistinti dalla fretta di tornare in negozio diventano GRANDI MOMENTI !

*The attention, the fullness of cycling this way and so moving from a place to another during my work time it's not a hurry thing cause I have to come back to the shop it becomes a great moment.*

## Poetry anyone?

la mia sorta di poesia HAIKU

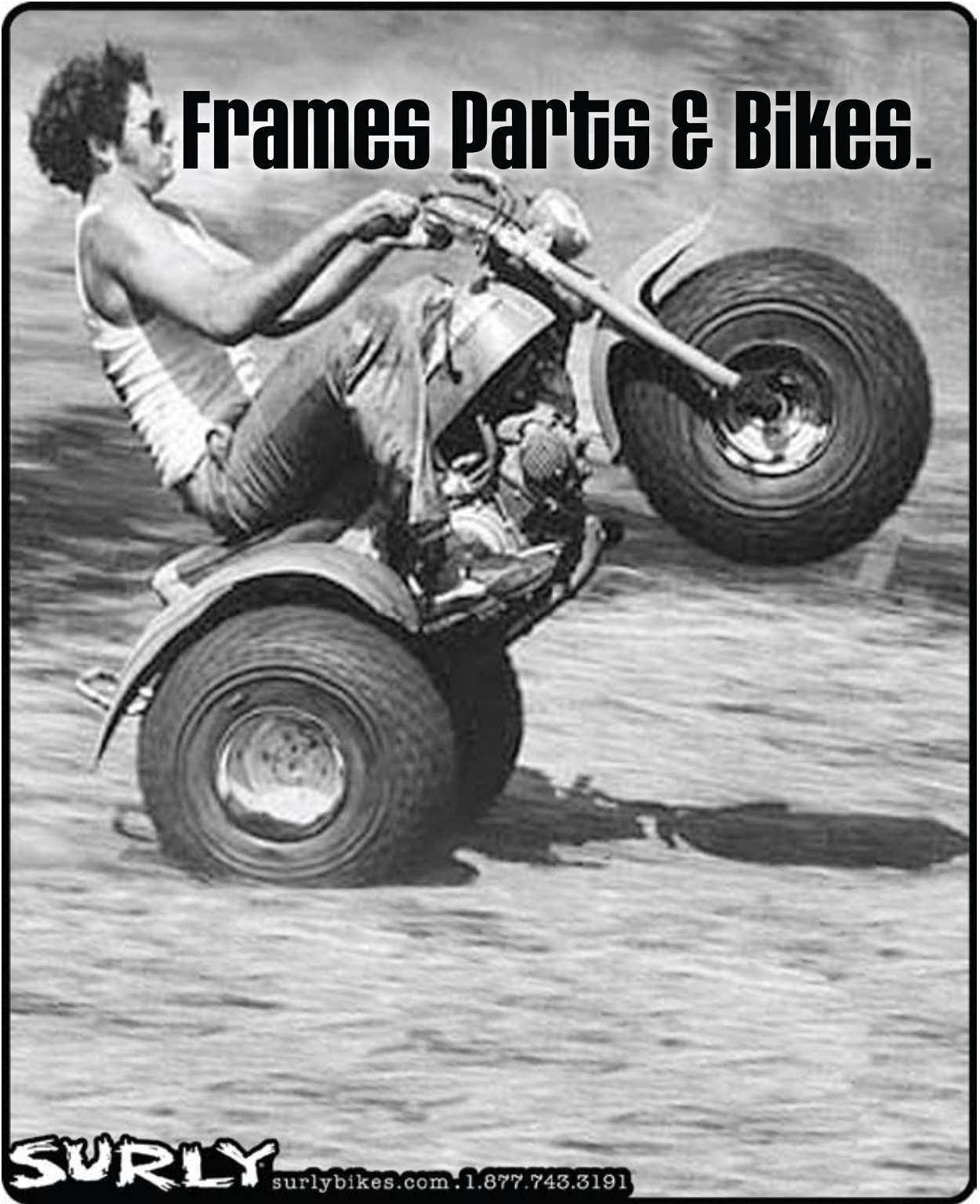
sulla mia bici  
la SS9 via Emilia è sempre diversa.  
Un pettirosso sul semaforo

*My kind of poetry...*

on my bike  
SS9 via Emilia looks different  
a robin on a traffic light

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*Tell them you saw it in Urban Velo!*

# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Jim V

**LOCATION:** Baltimore, MD

**OCCUPATION:** Teacher

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

Baltimore is not the best city for riding, but it's a pretty great place to live so the trade off is worth it. The public transportation system here isn't really that good so riding is the better option. Luckily, there are a few routes out of the city where you can just get on the road and go for hours.

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

It's a toss up between Toronto, Pittsburgh, and Hanga Roa, Easter Island. Toronto is just an amazing city. It's really bike friendly and every time I go there, I fantasize about moving there. Pittsburgh, because it's where I grew up. I'll never forget being 14 and hammering up every hill I could on a 10 speed from Sears pretending I was Greg Lemond. I know there are plenty of places with bigger hills, but I've never lived in any of them. Easter Island is totally isolated and most of the roads are deeply rutted and extremely muddy and you suffer through these peanut butter mud patches, but every time you arrive to another set of Moai (the big stone heads) it's totally incredible. A lot of people will go over the whole island via bus. If you do that, you can see most of the island in a day. Riding lets you space it out and digest everything you're seeing.

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

Because I like living in the city and riding is the best way to get around.

**Or just say whatever you want...**

My wife and friends make fun of me because when I have to drive in the city, I automatically take the same route I take when riding. While it might be the fastest way on a bike, it's usually not in a car.



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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Frank Ohio, I used to work for BancOhio and the softball coach got carried away one night when I was up to bat. That was in 1989 and it stuck.

**LOCATION:** Columbus, OH

**OCCUPATION:** Credit Risk Analyst

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

I live in Central Ohio, but my heart is in Steeler Country in the fall. For the most part riding in town is not too bad. The same stupid people that almost hit you and tailgate when you are in your car are the same stupid people that drive too close to you when you are on the bike. There are lots of open country roads, those are typically safer.

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

My favorite is Beauford, North Carolina—riding along the waterfront and watching the wild ponies run on the island across the bay.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

I can keep up with traffic for the most part—great for the wind sprints.

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

Lately I've been riding my new fixie at night. C-bus is fairly dead after 7 PM, so it's fairly quiet. I am a huge REM fan and typically have one of their songs in my mind. As I have been riding as night I started playing around with the words to Nightswimming. And here they are:

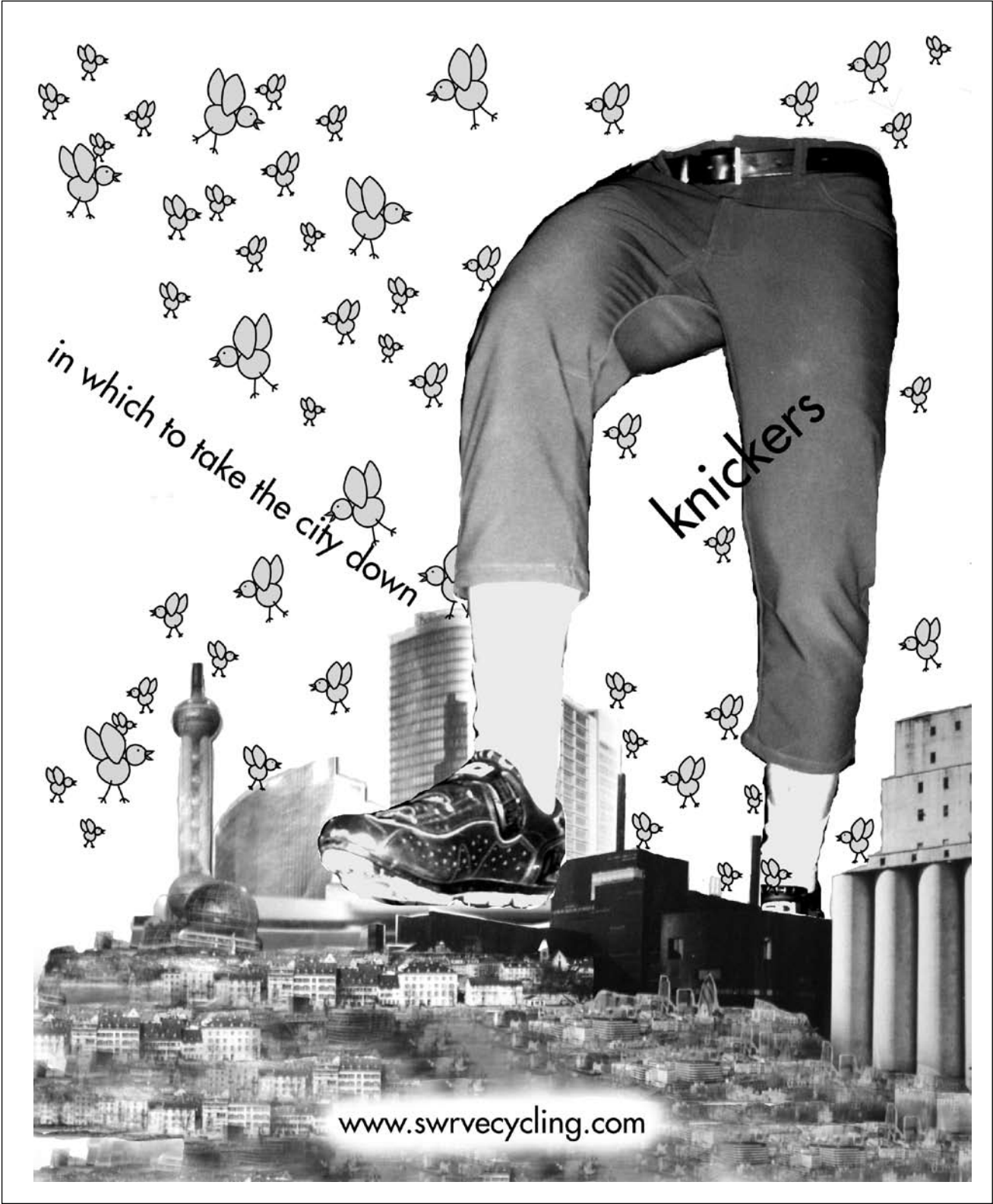
*Night riding deserves a quiet night  
The photograph in the backpack, taken years ago,  
Turned around backwards so the traffic shows  
Every streetlight reveals my lurching shadow  
Still, it's so much clearer  
I forgot my light in the neighbor's hedge  
The moon is low tonight*

*Night riding deserves a quiet night  
I'm not sure all these drivers understand  
It's not like years ago,  
The fear of getting caught,  
Of recklessness and pedals  
They cannot see me riding  
These things, they go away,  
Replaced by everyday*

*Night riding, remembering that night  
September's coming soon  
I'm pining for the moon  
And what if there you were  
Side by side, instead of tandem  
Around the fixed gear sun?  
That bright, light forever on  
Could not describe night riding*

*You, I thought I knew you  
You, I cannot judge  
You, I thought you knew me,  
This one laughing quietly underneath my breath  
Night riding  
The photograph reflects,  
Every streetlight a reminder  
Night riding deserves a quiet night, deserves a quiet night.*





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# THE DIRTY DOZIE



**BY TED KING-SMITH**

**C**yclists in Pittsburgh have been upholding a bizarre tradition for the past twenty-five years. In the typically frigid post-Thanksgiving weekend weather, they've gathered with the express purpose of riding to and then racing up the thirteen steepest hills around the city, the queen of which measures an absurd 37% grade; making it arguably, the steepest street in the world.

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRAD QUARTUCCIO**



It's also cobbled and appears like a brick wall with a street sign garnishing it, begging the question, "Are you fucking kidding me?" Twelve more of such treats lie in wait. The ride is led by one of its founding fathers, Danny Chew. Chew rides a lot, so much so that mid-ride he announced the completion of his millionth kilometer. Which, so he says, is equivalent to twenty five times around the circumference of the Earth. He still has fifteen more of such circumnavigations before making his lifetime goal of one million miles, but that is another story. For this race there is no license, no insurance, no permits and the only support given typically consists of Little Debbie Oatmeal pies, cola and various neon green beverages. Of course there is no sponsorship, no cause, and no prizes; just pain. In spite of these facts, over 395 people have challenged the Dirty Dozen in the past twenty-five years, spurred on in search of pain, personal glory and big time bragging rights. Not to be out-done, I contested the Dirty Dozen for my third time, maybe seeking some glory of my own but wound up as I do every year, fighting just to survive.

This year's ride featured 131 people, a record turnout, even more than last year which featured unseasonably

warm conditions. Not so this November morning with temperatures below freezing and bone-chilling moisture. The caravan rolled out shortly after 10am in search of the first hill that shoots up and out of the nearby town of Aspinwall. The ride between hills is mild, but there is neutral start at the base, just Danny cemoniously blowing his whistle to announce the sprint. Being somewhat fresh and having some fore-knowledge of the kick-off, I found some position in the lead group and struck the hill with gusto, motoring up the grade at a high cadence on the way to eleventh place, one place out of the points. Lungs burning from the sudden inhalation of so much freezing air, I began to doubt my ability to score at all. After a somewhat leisurely paced ride to the next hill, I felt my lungs recovering as we began our next climb, the appropriately named Ravine St. Long, yet not too hard, Ravine crested, like many local hills, at a graveyard. The next climb takes most contestants by surprise, as after a steep descent the ride makes a sharp turn into a wall of pavement, catching many still in their high gears where they flounder and topple over.

Winding out of Millvale from behind Mr. Small's theater, Logan St. goes from steep to ridiculous in a series of switch-



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backs finally straightening out into a paved cliff, this time featuring a bottleneck caused by some “friends” shooting video and an oncoming station wagon frozen in the moment. Riders had to thread this shoulder width needle at next to no speed without losing balance, a “foot-down” negating their climb. I was able to navigate by leaning against and then pushing off said video car and somehow regaining my balance. Suffice to say no points for me, or anyone else caught behind the traffic-snarl. I’ve been told Pig Hill got its namesake in that it was used to run pigs to slaughter back when there was a rendering facility at the base. Now just a road, but the slaughter continues! Riders took turns descending the hill and racing back in heats of about a dozen at a time, making this the most fun for spectators yet worst for those seeking points as only the top twelve in standings got to contest it. The North Side of Pittsburgh brings Suffolk St.—nightmarish and arguably the toughest of the bunch. It secretly lies dormant from under a highway and whips around a curve into a grade like a concrete wave dwarfing all comers. If you can surmount this pitch, a longer slog awaits and once you’re about to “blow your load” as it’s been described by four time champ Stephen Cummings,

it turns to a stack of cobbles. Yuck.

At this point my lungs hurt, my legs ached and my malformed cyclist arms buckled under my own weight as they typically don’t lift more than twelve ounces at a time. The ride then dipped back down to river level to head through the city, though not without a casualty as one rider’s failing brakes sent him into a guard rail in a failed evasive maneuver. Once reconnoitered, the ride swept through downtown Pittsburgh, the old messenger hunting-grounds, deserted as usual on a weekend. Soon thereafter on the south end of town comes the climb up historic Sycamore Ave. featured in the now defunct Thrift Drug Classic, where Lance Armstrong dominated on the Motorola team. Sycamore is long and tough but remarkably tame all things considered. This doesn’t mean I had anything on it, as I watched the leaders float off into the distance. The ride pauses for it’s traditional group picture on a Mt. Washington over-look before departing for hell in the neighborhood of Beechview.

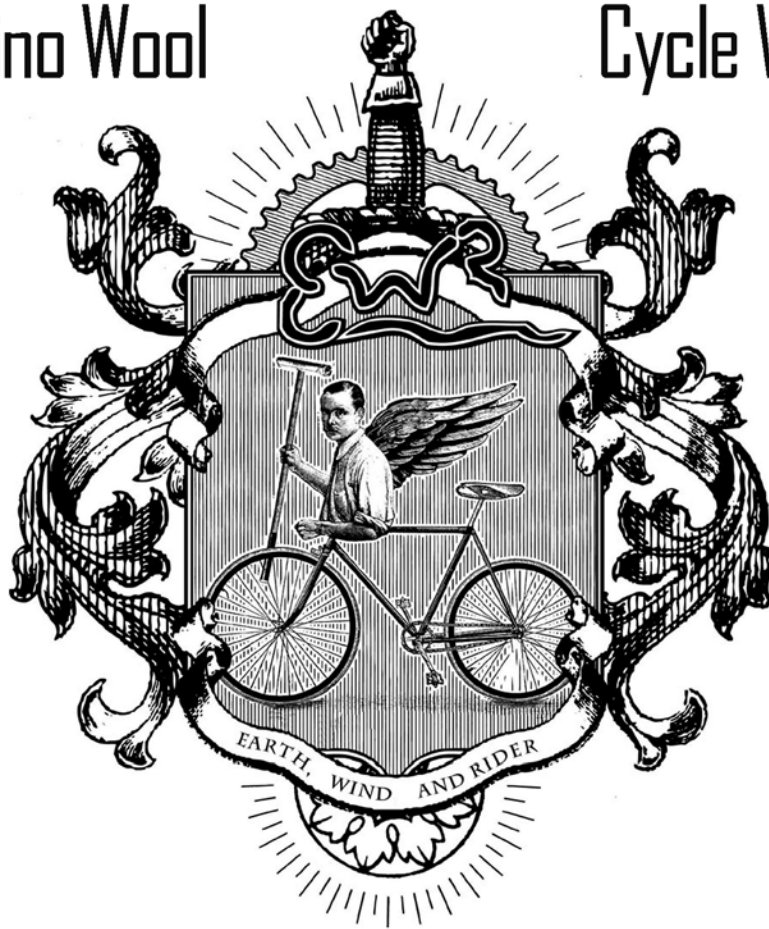
The ride takes an undulating and exhausting downhill-uphill route until the group must confront Canton Ave., the steepest street in the world and one to brag to your family, friends and mail personnel about. But, as Chew him-





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self warns, "The hill must be respected!" At the whistle-blow the lead bunch sprints around the corner and attacks the hill with many mercilessly shot down as they are shouldered into wet leaves and ruts. Riders go down like dominoes and nearly roll back down the hill. Those who make it to the top are jubilant as the defeated regroup, march back down the stairs and attack the hill again until, as tradition dictates, they conquer. With a hundred-some riders this can take a while and the victorious stand upon the peak to cheer on their compatriots. I made it in two tries, a personal best. The next hill is a complete brute, falling in rapid succession after Canton. It's nearly as steep and twice as long, pulverizing my already exhausted frame. With hills this steep, you need to bench press your front wheel into the road to avoid wheelie-ing, which takes a huge toll on the arms and shoulders. Once on top the group gathers itself for sugar wafers and Mountain Dew as many take a ritual piss in a lawn beside the road. The ride takes a turn for anarchy as exhaustion and caffeine dissolve concerns for propriety. This is the Dirty Dozen.

The ceremonial jet through the nearly mile-long Liberty Tubes, a rite of passage for local messengers, is a highlight for many cyclists who would never consider riding it alone, being highly dangerous and illegal. Cross racer Barbara Howe best described it as being like a speck of dirt sucked through

the hose of a giant vacuum cleaner. The haul up Welsch Way is a break in comparison to neighboring Eleanor St. Barry-Holt-Eleanor is actually three streets with traffic changing directions twice, too steep and long for motor vehicle traffic. Naturally, we ride the length of it which goes from steep, into a false flat to mega steep, at which point the sidewalk abruptly turns to stairs looking more like an MC Escher illustration than rideable terrain. Bemused locals cheer and jeer at us but I'm too focused on humping my bike over the hill to hear a thing. Cresting the hill, my heart plays a blast-beat and my lungs are on overdrive. I'm uncontrollably whooping. After a short break the ride turns into a high speed pace-line along a busy road, across the river and back around to the Hazelwood neighborhood where it whips into the final climb; a long slog for several blocks up Flowers Ave. and then over the last wall of Tesla St., a fittingly impossible finish to an impossible ride. With the finish in sight, exhausted riders charge or crawl up the final hump gasping and drooling as they crest the last hill. The survivors drop on the lawn at the top, panting and coughing, waiting for all of the riders to finish. Once assembled the officials quickly tabulate points and hold a slipshod ceremony to announce the winner and top-ten finishers. Everyone then quickly packs up and leaves thinking, "Fuck it, I'm cold, let's go." 

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# Gallery

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Helmets? When I have a kid, I'm going to make him wear a cat on his head. That way, if he falls off his bike, he'll land on the cat's feet.

Photo by Kelly Regan Gamble

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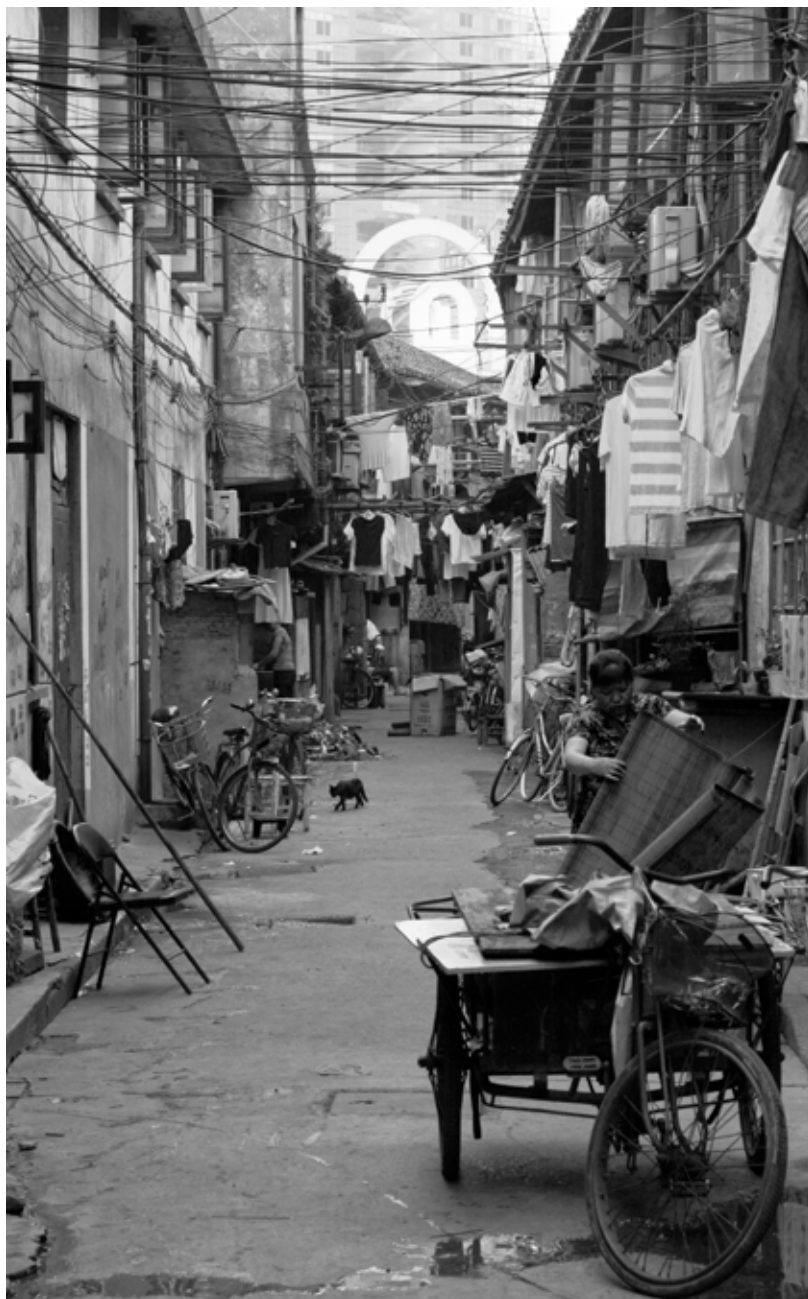
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# Gallery

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The photo to the left and the panning shot of the man pulling the tricycle are from Shanghai, China. Over in China, recycling is taken to a whole new level. The government encourages it, and a lot of people ride from neighborhood to neighborhood, ringing bells and announcing they're around to collect refuse for recycling.

The shot of the two guys talking is from a park in downtown Shanghai, and the skyline is of Shanghai as well.

The photo of the woman leaning on a mountain bike is from Inner Mongolia, a region in northern China bordering Mongolia. It was taken at the finish line of the race I went there for. She was a local resident who came out to see the racers—who were mostly foreigners—and to inspect the bikes.

Photos by Anton Berkovich

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# Gallery

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BMX action at the skatepark in Sheffield, England.

Photo by Nick Oodian

[vert-i-go.co.uk](http://vert-i-go.co.uk)



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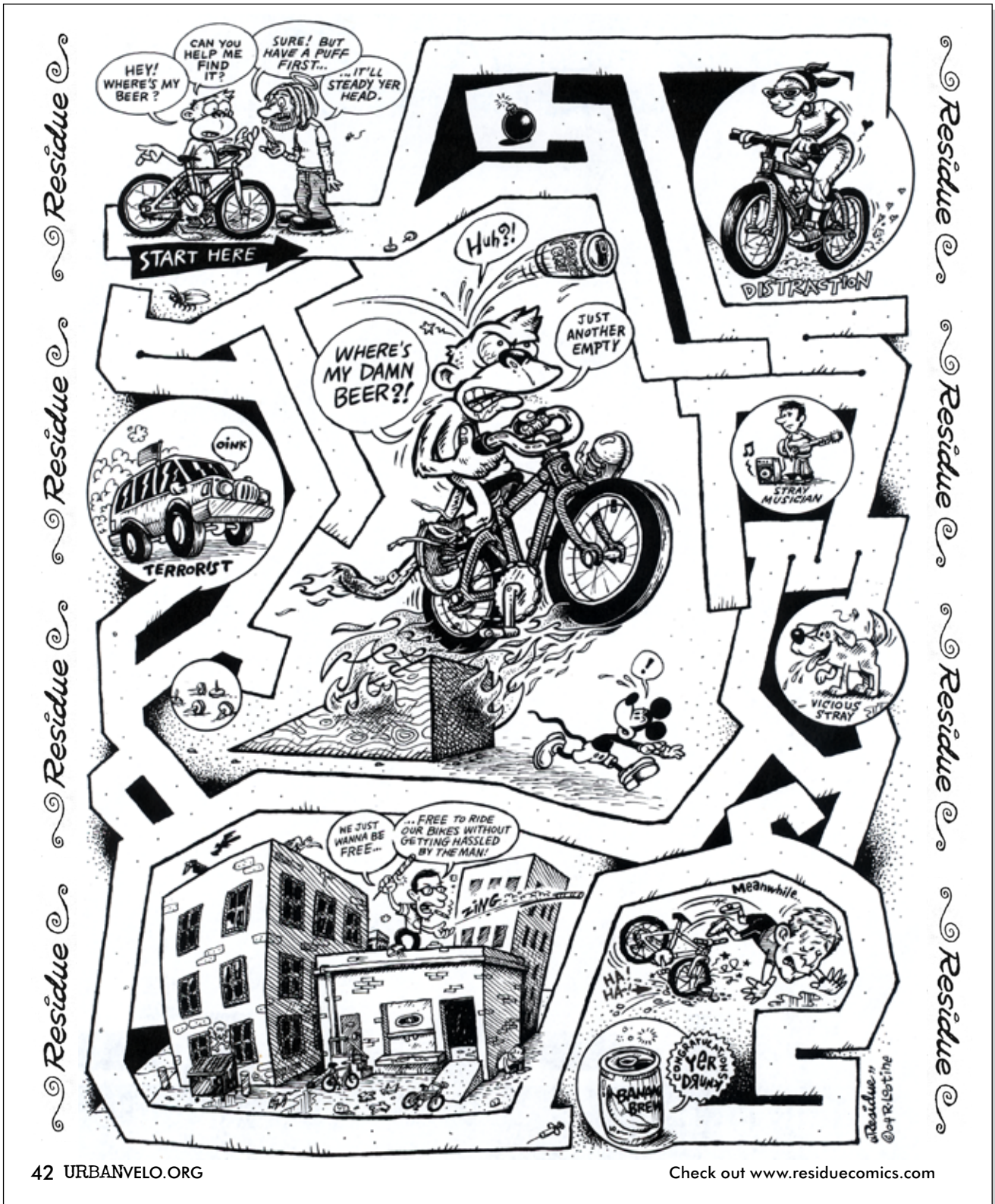
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# PEDICABS

## *After Dark*

BY JOHNNY TARR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTON BERKOVICH

A common idiosyncrasy among riders is to value a bicycle as a means of independence. We all like to feel autonomous in the midst of the intertwined paths of most of the rest of any city's populace. Most of the time, I am the personification of this sort of self-determined flight down 9th Street, but when I take a weekend ride these days, I share my bike and the experience with dozens of people. I let them decide where we wander, and I become a part of the fabric of the urban landscape, larger than life on an empowering vehicle called a pedicab.

A pedicab is any sort of vehicle that carries multiple people by way of the exertion of one. I'm the one, and it's quite a roll to play. Mine is a sweaty, demanding, risky, job. Sometimes it's degrading, and often it's messy. I've had my tips stolen, my masculinity doubted, and my quads burdened to their absolute limit. What makes the whole thing worth it though is the exhilaration of thriving on the heartbeat of the city itself.

I started pedicabbing here in Columbia, Missouri as I was in the process of going native. I'd been here in "Collegetown, USA" for almost a year as a student, but it wasn't until I stayed the summer that I could really call the city my home. I'd stopped just exploring the city and become a true local. So when I needed a new job during the dog days of summer, pedicabbing came to mind just because it was a

downtown job that I felt comfortable with. I'm not one to be juggling plates or pushing blue jeans, but I'm good with strangers and bicycles.

A local pizza-joint owns Columbia's only pedicab. We aren't New York, I'm afraid, but the owner Kurt wants the pedicab to soon be an integral part of downtown Columbia. I think he sees potential for it to be like the double-deckers in London or the gondolas in Venice. Getting hired was as easy as convincing him that I want the same thing.

The pedicab itself is a simple vehicle. It's got a steel frame, a bench-seat in the back, and a cover you can put up if it rains. The space under the seat houses a battery for the lights, some shock absorption for the passengers, a go-cart differential for the rear-wheels, and a hydraulic brake. There's a tip-box behind the driver. Learning to drive a pedicab doesn't take long because it's basically a 21-speed that can't lean. If you can get that down and not hit things with the sides, you can drive a pedicab.

While the pedicab itself is humble, a ride on it is amazing in contrast. A three-hour shift makes the whole day perfect. I adjust the seat, check the lights, and then the moment I roll off the lot I'm Superman. This must be how it feels to command a kingdom, or walk on water. Traffic treats me royally. Everybody waves back. The cab itself is an eye-magnet that makes its riders instant celebrities.



I feel people on the sidewalks getting excited as the cab rolls down the street, so I invite them on. Some folks hop right on, exclaiming how I've come at just the right moment, but some potential riders need convincing. They might give nonsense excuses about how they're only going two blocks, and surely that's too near or too far. Or the mothers, bless their hearts, say that they would feel terrible about making me work. Nothing but a show of machismo beats that fallacy, so I tell them I'm the strongest man in Columbia. They don't really believe me but that's fine because I believe myself and that's the important thing, so they get in anyway.

I think the different reactions to the prospect of a ride come from differences in how people see the pedicab itself. Some people look at the cab and say "carriage," while the others call it a "rickshaw." A carriage brings noble people on fantastic adventures, and so it makes them kids again,

but if my passengers think they're riding a rickshaw, they can't keep their minds off of the "poor guy up front," and so they end up missing out on the experience while they worry over me. If they only realized I'm the happiest man on the cab! That's why I make it a point to play my part and wear my glee on my sleeve. I dress up in my favorite city-riding clothes, get all cocky, and try to be a sort of cross between your crazy uncle who skydives and a tour-guide in a fun museum.

My riders tend to treat me as well as I treat them. I've made plenty of friends chatting up my fares. At football games, the tailgaters remember my name every week, and giving their kids a ride will always score me some potato-salad. People who ride with me downtown make me as much a part of their night as their favorite bartender. Some passengers really open up when faced with a fresh set of

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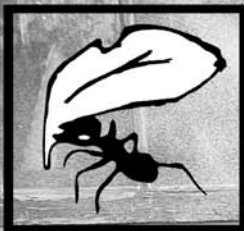
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ears, surprising me with the sort of honesty that only a stranger can be trusted with. And oh, the ladies; they love being treated like princesses, so they treat me like a prince.

The whole thing goes beyond being social, and becomes downright theatrical. I'm putting on a show, the whole city is my stage to play it out on as I please, and anyone I see is in the cast with me. That's the real crux of it too: to get folks in the cab, I have to get them to play along with the whole production. No one goes out planning to ride the pedicab, and so I have to get them to branch out from their original plan to try something new. If they realize that crossing paths with me is the best thing that's happened to them all day, that's when they're going to have the best time, and so will I.

By the time I end a shift, I've been through an exhilarating epic. I'm fatigued and ready to relax, but I'm also on a killer endorphin-high that tells me I could go all night if I tried. Normally, going out to celebrate is a good compromise. So I tell whoever I'm hauling that they are my last ride of the night. It makes them feel special, but I say it mostly so that I hear it, because it's time to let the late-night driver have his fun. I wave at the chefs smoking behind the restaurant when I roll back in, then I sit in the shed to count up my tips. That's always exciting because the money is great, and you'd be surprised what else finds its way into the tip-box. Washing the sweat off in the bathroom comes with a sense of accomplishment – I look like a racehorse in the mirror, and I feel like one too. A job that has me pushing my body hard, meeting people, and making riches all at the same time is pretty much the best thing I can be doing any given evening.

The core of the entire action of pedicabbing is getting connected. Every time I ride I bond with myself, my passengers, and the city as a living thing. Pedicabbing is one of those occupations, like being a cowboy or a musician, that is more than just a job. There are equal parts adventure, romance, fame, and challenge, but the best part is how people interact with my vehicle and me – We're iconic. While I ride a pedicab, I am as much a part of the city as any coffee-bar, park, storefront, or indeed even the streets themselves. 

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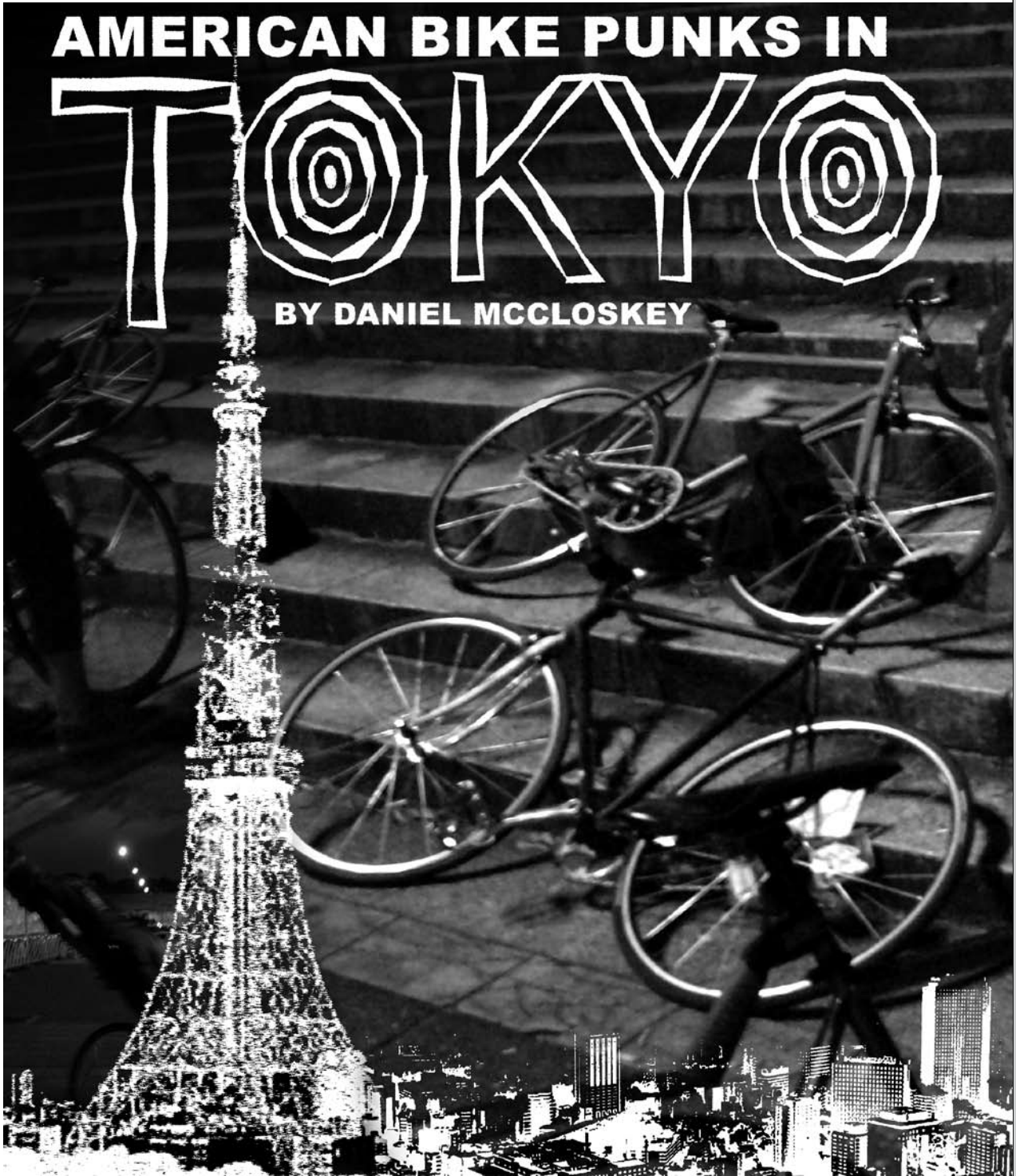
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# AMERICAN BIKE PUNKS IN

# TOKYO

BY DANIEL MCCLOSKEY





Photos by Daniel McCloskey and Ryan Butler

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**W**hen Brian and I get to Tokyo we each have a messenger bag, a backpack and a huge box. Neither of us knows what to expect from riding in the city.

## TRAVELING TIP!

**Call your airline ahead of time. Both Brian and I were able to take our bikes for free as a substitute for one of our two standard pieces of checked luggage as on many international flights.**

There are thirty-five million people in the Tokyo metropolitan area, and guess what? They all ride bikes. Old ladies, salary men, kids, cops and construction workers are all putting foot to pedal on the streets of this great metropolis. It's not uncommon to see a woman with one kid in a child-seat behind her and another sitting in the front basket. Some women ride with small dogs in their baskets, and one old man in Azuba-juban (the home neighborhood of Sailor Moon) rides a rusty green folding bike while his ancient beagle trots behind him. Salary men pedal dutifully to work in their business suits every morning, and wobble home from the bar every night. There are so many bikes that near many train stations there are underground parking garages just for us. Most people ride what they call "mama-charis."

"Mama-chari" is a mix between a longer Japanese word that roughly means, "a mom who rides her bike to pick up the kids and get groceries and stuff," and "Cha-ring Charing" which is the sound a bike bell makes in Japanese. They are basically cruisers with big baskets in the front. They line every street and can be found between all kinds of people's legs, but they are mainly ridden on sidewalks and back roads.

## LEARN JAPANESE!

**Bicycle = Jitensha**

**Bicycle Shop/Dealer = Jitenshaya**

In Tokyo bicycles need to be registered. If you buy a bike here the store will register it then, but if you bring your own bike you're supposed to go to a bike shop and ask to get it registered. They are supposed to ask to see a receipt, or some kind of proof of ownership, but if you don't have anything like that don't worry—Brian and I didn't either. When the first shop we went to was iffy about it we just



mama-charis

went to another shop. The second place hooked us up, no problem. They took down our name and information, and gave us each a little yellow sticker with a number on to put on our frames. Just bring your passport and 500 yen (a little less than \$5) for the registration fee.

Besides the whole registration thing, a hot little tidbit I picked up about biking in Tokyo was to watch out for cops. I heard horror stories about cops pestering foreign riders. On the internet I read a story about a man getting stopped every several blocks, while the dean of my college here told me about a student that got stopped twice a day—once on his way to school, and once on his way home. He also told me about a student who was kept in holding by the cops for seven hours when the bike he borrowed from a friend was registered under a family name that was not his own. When I started biking I was thoroughly prepared for this to happen. I double-checked to make sure I had my ID and my bike's registration receipt every time I got on my bike. I grew tense every time I passed a police station (there's a small police station every couple of blocks in Tokyo). But as days and weeks passed and I wasn't stopped, I began to doubt the rumors of police discrimination. The other day this subject came up while I was chatting with my friend Jong. He was talking about how people are imprisoned by timetables due to various factors including the public transportation system. When I suggested a bike Jong admitted that the use of a bicycle negates time, but he could no longer stand being stopped continuously by the police. I was surprised to hear this. In the month I had been in Tokyo I



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had been riding every day, and not once had I been stopped. When I told Jong this, he said, "Of course. You're white."

Jong is from the Philippines and according to him the only people cops really stop and harass are those who look "third world." As long as your bike is registered and you have ID on you, all the cops can do is stop you for a couple of minutes, but like I said—there are police stations everywhere—so if you aren't white nor of Japanese descent this could potentially put a real damper on your Tokyo bike experience.

## BIKES IN ANIME

**Hayate no Gotoku (Episode 1)**

If you like city riding because of the excitement you'll like Tokyo. Beyond the typical car traffic I was used to in the states there are motorbikes up the wazoo in Tokyo. While you're cutting past cars motor bikes are cutting past you, and to make things even more hairy, every time someone on the street lifts their hand in the air a taxicab comes out of nowhere to try and kill you (if you ride in Manhattan you may feel a pinch of nostalgia as you swerve for your life). Another interesting note is that cabs in Tokyo have automatic doors, so you never really know when a cab door might open. Though nothing has come of it thus far, I thoroughly expect to be doored by a robot under the control of a cabbie gone mad.

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## BIKES IN ANIME

**Yu Yu Hakusho (Episode 79)**

The motor bikes, cabs, and omnipresent threat of robot attacks definitely up the adrenaline factor, but some of the most overwhelming biking can come from navigating through swarms of pedestrians under the neon lights of Tokyo's shopping districts. There are literally hundreds of people crossing the street at once in these areas, and unlike the cars they are all going at different speeds and in different directions. My best advice is, "Take it slow and keep your eyes wide open," because it's like flying in an asteroid field.

## LEARN JAPANESE!

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nice wide streets

On the flip side Tokyo's roads are really well kept, so you're going to miss the pothole dodging so popular in many American cities. Also, random angry outbursts from motorists seem to be limited. People do honk sometimes, but only when Brian and I were doing something stupid and illegal. If you're doing just one of the two, people seem to keep any alarm they may have to themselves.

If you love to ride your bike you'll love to ride your bike in Tokyo. It's that simple. Just try to stay on the left side of the road.





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# TECHNO CRASHING

By David Hoffman







We all know people who have been involved in crashes. We read about them in the paper, we hear about it from other cyclists; sometimes we see it happen. But how many crashes occur in your area over time? And where are you most likely to be involved in a crash? Sure – we all know where the dangerous intersections are located, but where is the data to back this up? How about the best route to get from one place to another on your bike? Good questions – ones that have been very hard to answer for a variety of reasons until relatively recently. Finally, technology is able to provide the raw data and some answers to these questions.

## REPORT THIS!

For years, advocates have struggled to get a handle on the real number of crashes and danger zones within a city. Up until fairly recently, most data is collected by getting reports from the police or transportation agencies and compiling the results yourself. This is both tedious, often incomplete (read: many agencies are notoriously under-informed about bicycle-related crashes and their causes), and

almost always a couple of years out of date.

Currently, crash data is collected and then fed on a regular basis into state and federal reporting systems. In bicycle and pedestrian related crashes only an estimated ten percent are actually reported. The other ninety percent may represent less serious crashes where there is little or no injury, but the difference may be literally inches. The current data collection doesn't even take in to account "close calls."

## CRASHING BAD. TECHNOLOGY GOOD.

Question: What do you get when you mix Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), online mapping services such as Google, Yahoo, and MapQuest, and bike geeks (usually the commute-to-work-by-bike type)?

Answer: An online, publicly viewable and editable database of all things bicycle, including crashes, injuries, fatalities, close calls, bike parking locations, bike shops, bike-friendly businesses... well, you get the idea.



## CONTESTED STREETS

Hey! Just how DID New York descend into the congested, car-bound, bicyclist-and-pedestrian-killing-machine that it is today? Last year Cicala Filmworks produced a really, REALLY good documentary on just this very subject. From their website:

“**CONTESTED STREETS** explores the history and culture of New York City streets from pre-automobile times to the present. This examination allows for an understanding of how the city - though the most well served by mass transit in the United States - has slowly relinquished what was a rich, multi-dimensional conception of the street as public space to a mindset that prioritizes the rapid movement of cars and trucks over all other functions.”

Check out the trailer at: [www.contested-streets.com](http://www.contested-streets.com) and get your very own copy through Transportation Alternatives: [www.transalt.org](http://www.transalt.org)



The good news is that this technology is spreading quickly, probably to most major metropolitan areas within the next year or two. For instance, advocates are using the data collected in New York and Pittsburgh to help build cases for intersection improvements, road maintenance and repair, and traffic calming.

And there's more to the story. This same technology can be used to help bicyclists find the safest route from one destination to another. Information such as accident data, road elevation, road widths, and traffic speed is entered into a database. You can use the service like one that would give you driving directions.


## SEE FOR YOURSELF

Here are a few really cool sites for you to check out and see just how this technology is being used:

**Crashstat.org** – Run by Transportation Alternatives ([www.transalt.org](http://www.transalt.org)) in New York. This site currently compiles bicycle and pedestrian injuries and deaths compiled between 1995 and 2005. When you actually view the data you'll probably be shocked (unless you're a NY native) at the raw numbers. Zoom in to see details

on a street-by-street basis, or zoom out and begin getting a handle on the trouble spots.

**Maphub.com** – Hails from Urban Velo's World Headquarters in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Originally a project that was started at Carnegie Mellon University that grew into a start-up called Deep Local (the same folks who recently helped put together Pittsburgh's first commuter bike map in 15 years!), the site allows users to enter their own data as well as see the data that everyone else has contributed. MapHub has grown steadily over the past couple of years, relying heavily on individual users to log everything from bike parking, to crashes, to hazardous road conditions. You can filter through the different layers to find only the bike shops, or only the places where cyclists have crashed, etc. Visit: [www.maphub.com](http://www.maphub.com) (main site) or <http://pittsburgh.maphub.com> (be sure to click on the "Bike Information" link).

**ByCycle.org** – Trip planning and route finding service for bicyclists. See: [www.bycycle.org](http://www.bycycle.org) and look for the "Bicycle Trip Planner." Currently, this service is only available in Milwaukee, WI or Portland, OR. 

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# HELL OF A GOOD TIME

## MELBURN-ROOBAIX



By Andy White

Cyclists must be sadists. Why else would they enjoy being told what to do, where to go, and to do it when they are told?

Melburn-Roobaix, a twist of the Queen of the Classics, Paris-Roubaix, started beneath clear blue skies.

In only two years of rolling by fyxomatosis, it has blossomed into one of the highly anticipated dates on the Melbourne cycling calendar, reaching the cut-off rider limit of 200 is testament to this. The central theme was fun, with the thrill of navigating hidden corners of the city, stopping for compulsory coffee en route, and riding with friends, old and new.

Riders of fixed, free, geared, knobbied tyred and slick, rigid and suspended, all gathered at the cities most central location. From there, they were thrown into the heavy weekend pedestrian traffic, searching for a list of “pave” to be handed to them in amongst a swelling crowd of football fans also gathering at the first checkpoint.

The 13 sections of pave would take them over some of the steepest, longest, and roughest cobbled alleys, streets and lanes in pursuit of glory—the glory of cycling with friends.

Halfway through the day, as the field approached the

turn, the clouds opened, making the cobbled sections into perilous, muddy rock gardens.

The first riders home to Brunswick’s bumpy velodrome were greeted by Wagner’s cathartic “Flight of the Valkyries” from the track’s PA. Arms raised triumphantly, the first rider across the line broke the tape and thanked his domestiques for their hard work in helping him beat a local courier, if only narrowly, who had carried his own PA system for the ride blasting out AC/DC with the aid of a battery buried in his bag.

Slowly the remainder of the field rolled in, wet, filthy, and grinning ear to ear. “That was the best ride I’ve ever done!”

With a gold pave trophy and a bottle of bubbly for first across the line, the real prizes were raffled off in the comfort of a nearby pub. Thanks to Shifterbikes and CTA for their kindness. Riders swapped stories of near misses, mechanical failures, routes taken, and how Col d’Ugly gets steeper every year, over a well earned beer.

The only question on everyones mind—where will it go next year?



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



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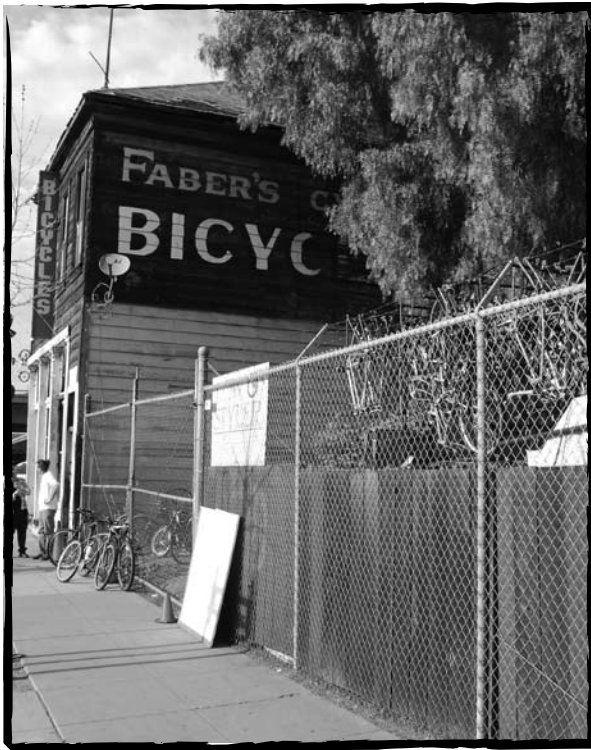
Words & photos by Brad Quartuccio


# Faber's Cyclery is Closed

1921-2007

Legends only become so once they are gone. Faber's Cyclery sat on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Market St in downtown San Jose, CA and is now only a thing of memory to the generations of cyclists that have been through.

The building was condemned for a long time—during a spring '07 visit the building visibly leaned, the stairs were treacherous. And most everything was out in the yard, maybe a precursor to the inevitable. But the bikes still inside and those out were remarkable, and told more than words about the 80+ year history within the same walls. In the beginning it was a saloon, blacksmith shop and brothel. Soon after a bike shop that sold countless Schwinn's to Nor-Cal cycling legends of their own right. Faber's is cited as a source for many of parts of the 70's mountain bike pioneers,



and up until its recent closing housed a veritable museum of the American bicycle experience. The most obvious example of the heritage was the outdoor bicycle graveyard and tons of steel waiting for another run. Inside the shop was a beautiful mess – amongst the piles of components sat a kids bike from the 20's, a Penny Farthing from when they were still in service, and a bike supposedly from the asylum assembled completely from plumbing pipes and scavenged parts. Few know what was really hidden inside those walls. When I ventured in the garage out back, there was a row of perfect condition, spit shined NOS cruisers from the heyday of fenders and chrome. I'd never seen one in such condition, and here was a half dozen – with unopened boxes behind. Gone into private collections, individual's hands and surely some to scrap. Another legend born. 



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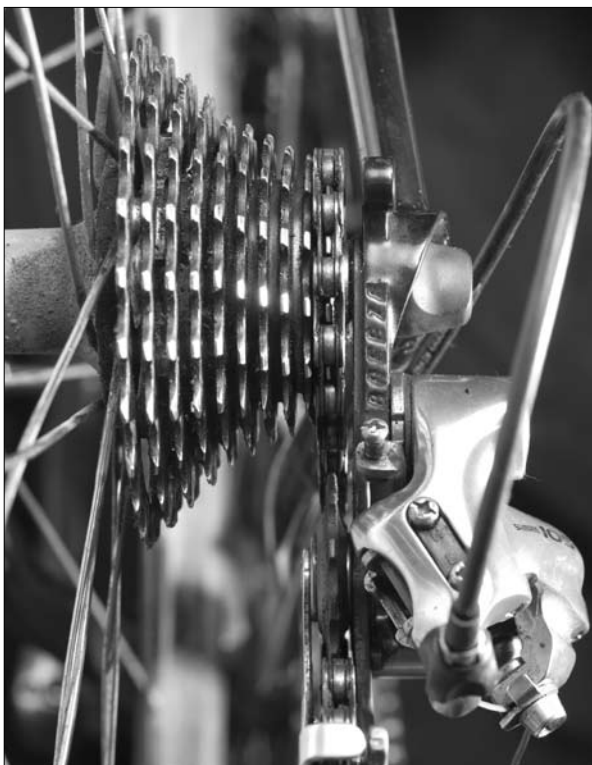
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## TECHNICAL GUBBINS

WORDS & PHOTOS BY BRAD QUARTUCCIO



## ADJUSTING A REAR DERAILLEUR

Adjusting a rear derailleur is easy if you proceed in a logical order. Put your chain in the middle or smallest front ring and let's have a go.

With your shifter clicked to the highest gear (smallest cog), release the cable fixing bolt of the rear derailleur. This lets the derailleur move to its default position, and lets you set the high limit screw. Adjust the high limit screw so that the top pulley of the derailleur lines up with the smallest cog. Next, move the pedals forward and listen for any clicking coming from the chain – you want to adjust the high limit screw so it is backed out as far as possible with the chain still riding silently on the smallest cog. This allows the derailleur to sit a hair to the outside of the cassette without the chain jumping, giving a quicker upshift into your tallest gear. Pull the cable taught and tighten down the cable fixing bolt.

Click click click your way to the largest cog and adjust the low limit screw so that the derailleur cannot shift the chain past the large cog and into the spokes. You want the chain to freely shift up to the largest cog, just not off the back of it.

Indexing... Go back to the smallest cog and check that one click up moves the chain up one cog, and one click down goes back. Is the derailleur not shifting up a cog without hesitation? Back out the barrel adjuster a bit. Overshooting the second cog? Screw the adjuster back in. Do the same for the upper most cogs, and then check your work throughout the whole gear range.

If the cables are clean and not kinked and the shifter and derailleur not damaged yet your indexing only works for about half the cassette with a given adjustment, your hanger is likely out of alignment.

TECHNICAL GUBBINS



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### REAR DERAILEUR CAPACITY

Rear derailleurs come in a few different cage lengths, all with a number listed as capacity to determine what gear range is acceptable for a given model. Or more accurately, what cage length is required for a given gear range.

Capacity = (biggest chainring - smallest chainring) + (biggest sprocket - smallest sprocket)

On a spec sheet, capacity is a maximum number. For an example, consider a road bike with a 52/39 chainring setup and an 11-25 cassette.

$$(52-39) + (25-11) = 27$$

This means that a short cage rear derailleur with a listed capacity of 29 would be the wise choice. Add a 30t chainring for a triple up front, and you'll need a longer cage rear derailleur with a higher listed capacity to make up for the added chain slack between the largest and smallest front chainrings.



Long, Medium and Short Cage Derailleurs

### DERAILEUR LIMIT SCREWS

Those screws marked H and L on a derailleur are limit screws. They physically limit the motion of the derailleur, functioning as adjustable hard stops of the outer range of the derailleur's motion. One prevents it from over shifting the chain between the cassette and into the spokes, the other from pulling the chain past the smallest cog. The L for "low gear" screw limits the motion of the derailleur past the largest cog, the H for "high gear" screw limits the motion past the smallest cog.

FOR MORE TECH INFO VISIT  
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# TECHNICAL GUBBINS

## HOW TO INSTALL A FRONT BRAKE



A modern dual pivot front road caliper.




There are different length pivot nuts.

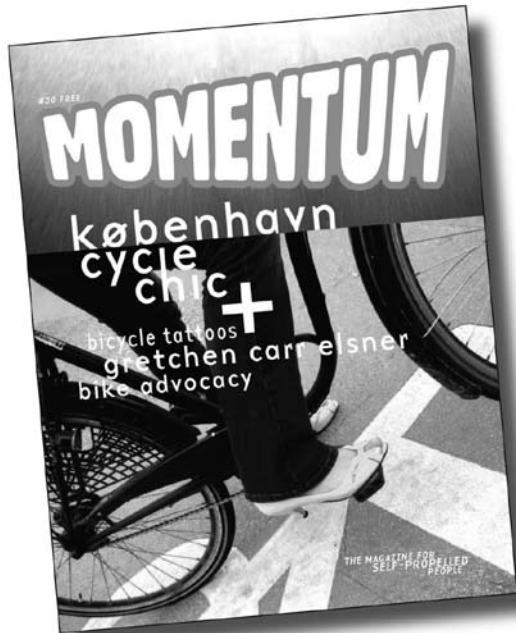
Front road brake calipers are intuitive numbers, and helpful if one plans to stop forward progress in a hurry. Attaches with a single bolt in the center, cable pulls just so, pads grab the rim. Simple.

Brake calipers come in front and rear specific models, each with a specified reach measurement, or the distance between the mounting bolt and the center of the rim. Short reach brakes generally measure 39-50mm, standard reach (sometimes called long reach) brakes 47-57mm, truly long reach brakes 55-73mm. Modern calipers feature a recessed mounting bolt with a pivot nut of either 10.5, 12.5 or 18mm length for different width crown/seatstay bridge assemblies. Current day brakes are for the most part dual-pivot, which practically speaking means they work better, with more mechanical advantage than older single-pivot models.

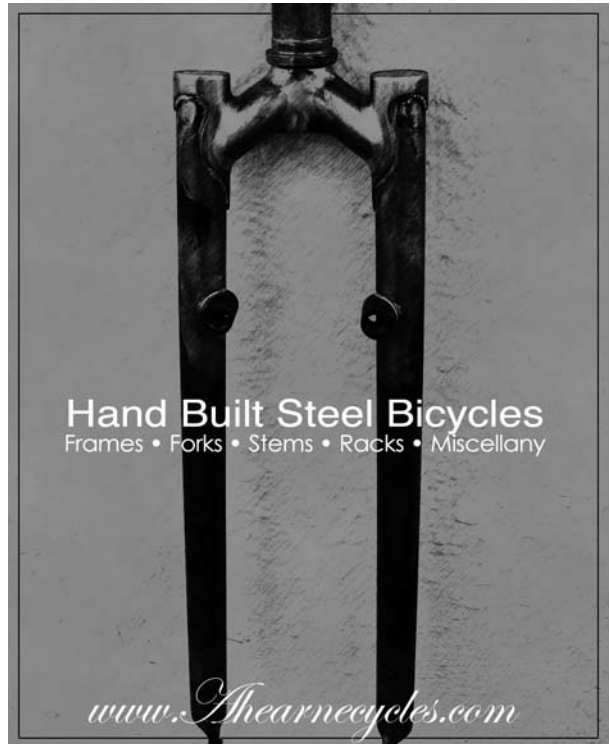
Actual installation begins with a ruler. Measure the distance from the mounting hole of your fork to the mid-point of the rim's braking surface and choose a caliper with the appropriate reach measurement. If your measurement falls out of the range of commonly available parts, either you measured wrong or you're attempting a freakish installation. Either scenario is fine, but this article isn't for you. Consult your local experts. Insert the center bolt through the crown, with the knurled nut between the caliper and fork. Choose the pivot nut that engages the most threads of the center mounting bolt without bottoming out on the back of the caliper and put it on finger tight for now. Manipulate the calipers open and closed with your hands, and adjust the brake pads to contact the rim flat and in the center of the braking surface. Next, make sure the barrel adjuster is screwed all the way in and the quick release cam in the down and closed position. Close the brakes with your hands so the pads are almost touching the rim, pull the cable taut and tighten down the fixing bolt. Center the brakes about the rim, tighten down that pivot bolt behind the crown, and give it a squeeze. If the lever feel isn't right, repeat that step with the cable and hold the pads a different spacing from the rim while tightening down the cable fixing bolt. The barrel adjuster should be used to adjust for pad wear, not upon installation, and that quick release cam lets you open up the brakes for easier wheel swaps. Just remember to flip it closed when you're done.

Enjoy! Ride safe. 

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