



GET OUT OF THE CITY

City to City Bike Touring - pg 54

URBAN VELO



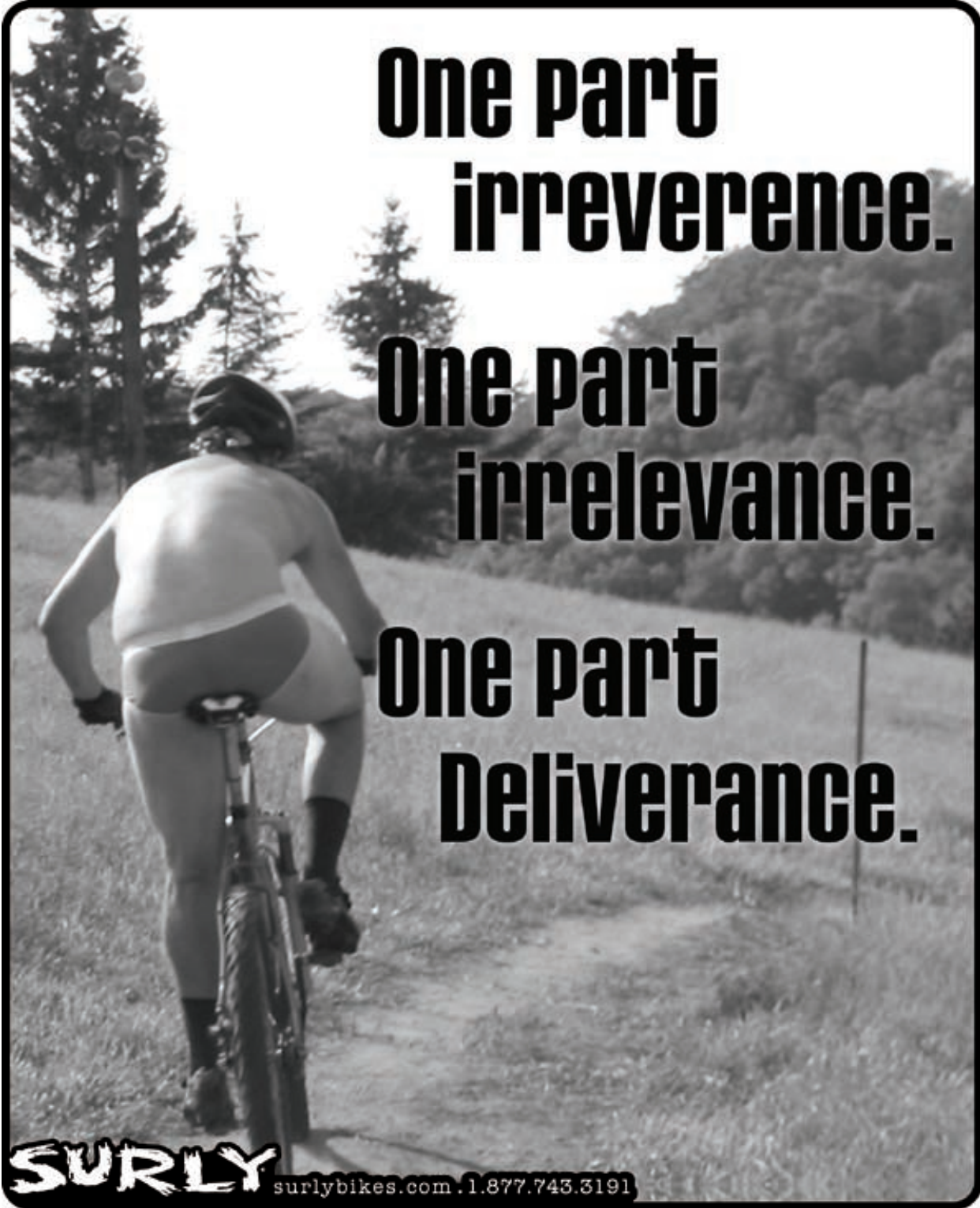
Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #7 • May 2008



DIY Truing Stand • From Messenger to Road Racer • Bikes on Film

PHOTO GALLERY - Bike Culture in Harlem, see pg 40 • Download this issue free online URBANVELO.ORG



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On the cover: Steve Radonich in Oakland, CA at the 80 freeway ramp. Photo by Jason Montano, www.montanovelo.com

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Contents photo: Train station in Utrecht. Photo by Regenius, www.improovies.net

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Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



Invariably, this column is the final piece of the puzzle before going to print. Simultaneously polishing off the issue and introducing it to the readers is a challenge for me, but surely not for lack of enthusiasm. Each issue is more exciting than the last, with much of that excitement inspired by the contributions within. Seeing other's work come alive on the page is thrilling every time. Giving a proper intro can be intimidating.

Breaking down the artificial barriers between cyclists has emerged as a subtle running theme in this issue. Whether it be commuter and racer, mountain and road, geared and fixed, there always seems to be someone pointing out our differences as cyclists before looking at the far more striking similarities. The old man on the rail-trail and the kid riding a wheelie ultimately have the same reason to smile. The bikes may be different, even the motivations to ride, but the fun on two wheels is just the same. 

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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero




Seven issues... Hot damn! With a full year of existence behind us, I'm left wondering where the time went. There's been a lot of cause for celebration and a little bit of turmoil, but reflecting on our first year mostly gets me thinking about the people I want to thank. Friends for their encouragement, advertisers for their support, colleagues for their advice and a business partner who works as hard as anyone I know. I sincerely appreciate the contributors who make Urban Velo the diverse and inspiring publication it is. And last but not least are the readers, because without an audience we wouldn't exist. Their kind words and enthusiasm inspire us to keep going.

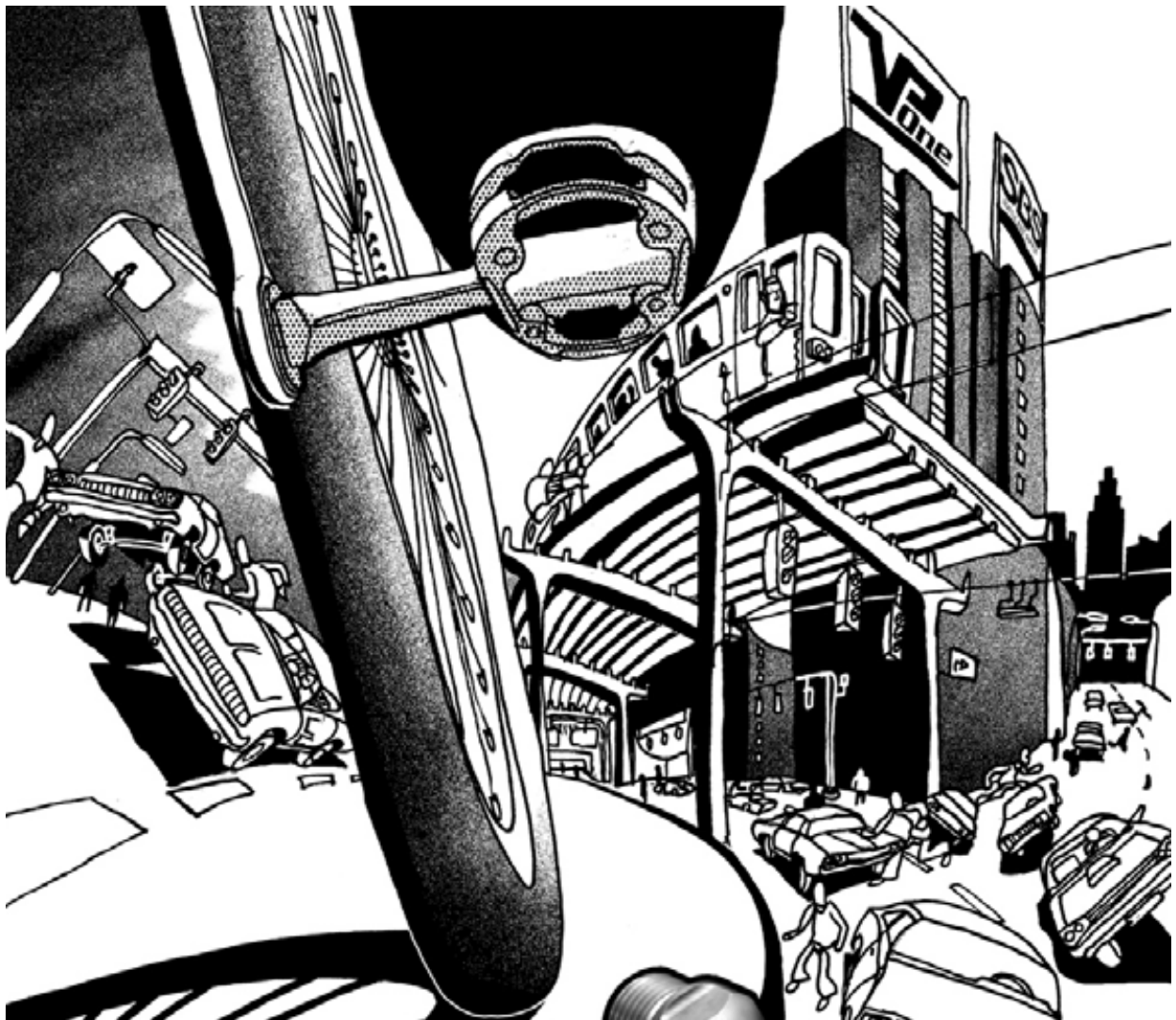
Surprisingly, we've received very little criticism thus far. I say surprisingly because being a critic is perhaps the easiest thing in the world. After all, it's just a matter of giving your opinion. And I've got a saying that goes, "Opinions are like assholes—everyone's got one." As mundane as it may be, there are still legions of critics out there. Haters...all ready to rain on your parade at a moment's notice. Quick to jump

to conclusions. Eager to trash talk what's different, or what they don't understand.

While the zine itself has managed to elude the mudslingers, a fair amount of this issue deals with some oft-criticized aspects of bike culture. Why anyone would chastise another rider for his or her choice in bicycles is beyond me. The only thing such criticism accomplishes is a division within the community. Meanwhile, everyone knows that what the bicycle scene needs to thrive is unity.

Personally, I've got a basement full of bikes. Some are for roads, some are for trails, some have gears, and some don't coast. I ride them with people from all walks of life—from starving artists to wealthy professionals, from political activists to servicemen. Black or white, fixed or free, road or mountain...what really matters is that we all ride. And we're all hoping for a world that's better for bikes. Until the streets are clogged with bicycles instead of motorcars, we should focus on encouraging on another, not squabbling over petty differences. 

Urban Velo issue #7, May 2008. Dead tree print run: 1500 copies. Issue #6 online readership: 25,000+



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I Love Riding in the City

NAME: Brian Ohlen

LOCATION: Puerto Williams,
Chile

OCCUPATION: Guide/Grease
Monkey

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

I live in the southernmost town in the world, Puerto Williams, Chile. Riding here is different than most places. There are only 2200 people in town, so traffic isn't really an issue. Wandering horses and cows prove more abundant than cars most of the time. None of the roads are paved. Street dogs enjoy chasing the unsuspecting biker. Small children own the roads with old BMX bikes with no brakes. Highlights of riding in Puerto Williams (Billy for short) include jumping piles of horse crap, chasing cows through the streets, and gorging oneself on cheese empanadas after a ride to town.

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

Hands down, Moscow, ID takes the prize. Moscow is a great small town that has a strong biking community with motorists that actually give pedestrians and bikers the right of way (more often than some cities at least). Other bonuses include the bitchin' Paradise Creek Bicycles, the Village Bicycle Project, and other bike friendly organizations.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It's fun.



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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Brian Fu

LOCATION: Hong Kong

OCCUPATION: Restaurant Owner, Concert Promoter, Graphic Designer, Fixed Gear Boutique Owner

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

I live in Hong Kong, the island side to be exact. Hong Kong is probably the worst city to ride in, normally you won't see anyone riding in the city. We don't have any bike messengers; maybe our public transportation system is too good. Hong Kong messengers would rather use the subway than ride a bike, plus there is no way to cross over to Kowloon side by riding, only way to cross is to take your bike on a 10-minute boat trip.

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

Tokyo. I have been there so many times but never with my bike, you see all kinds of people riding bikes everywhere you go. Traffic is bad enough so it must be a challenging course, love to ride there one day!

Why do you love riding in the city?

If you live in a fast pace city like Hong Kong, you never get enough exercise, by riding to and from work I stay fit and healthy. But when you do that on a fixed gear bike, the fun is multiplied by a hundred times.

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

I crashed into a taxi when a drugged driver suddenly cut in front of me back in February, these disc wheels are done by my friend Artoo, who was with me and helped me out through the whole ordeal!

Finally, whenever you visit Hong Kong, come check out my fixed gear shop and say, "Hi!"

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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Alex Wirth

LOCATION: Belfast, Northern Ireland (formerly Santa Cruz)

OCCUPATION: Youth Worker

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

Riding in Belfast is tricky. It's sort of a perfect shit storm of crap riding conditions. You've got the typical urban UK problems: narrow streets, potholes, oblivious drivers, terrible weather, tons of trash and dirt. But you need an extra level of awareness riding in this town. Belfast is a divided city and if you look in to the history of Northern Ireland a wee

bit you'll learn about the tensions between Protestants and Catholics. From street to street you pass between these communities that don't like each other for the most part and can be really violent with each other on occasion. This presents a challenge for bike riding in town. If you drive a car you just take the motorway that takes you straight through the city no problem. If I am on my bike and ride from the Catholic area where I live through the neighboring Protestant housing estate to the place I work, people get suspicious. You have to glance quickly at the boyos hanging about to see if they've got anything in their hands to throw at you as well as watching traffic. Several times I've had bottles or rocks thrown at me on my bike and one time a drunk tried to kick me. The trick is to just keep riding, flip them the Vs over your shoulder and make sure you run the next red light just in case.

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

Santa Cruz is still my favorite city to ride. I went to university there and the ride down the hill from the west entrance of campus down Empire Grade to High Street without stopping is pure joy every time, especially if there is tons of traffic coming from campus to blow by. They repaved that road last year. Butter!

Why do you love riding in the city?

I know I just did all that complaining about riding in Belfast but really I wouldn't trade it. All the chaos on the streets on a typical day riding make living here worthwhile. I work with youth all day and that can drag you down pretty heavily day in day out. Being able to blast into city centre at the end of the day and race the bright pink double-decker buses they have here up and down Royal Ave. for a little while is my release. I'm pretty sure the only reason I don't have a drinking problem is because of the beater Peugeot fixed gear conversion I ride. That's a lot of responsibility for a bicycle if you think about it.

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

City Centre totally clears out about 9pm and the nights tend to be warmer here. I've seen two other fixed gear bicycles since I've been here. I would love to ride with folks because I haven't really made any bicycle friends since I moved here in September. Email me (ajrwirth@verizon.net) and we'll tear this city up. Belfast is waiting for a fixed gear scene. Hey you Dublin messengers or anybody, hop on the train and come ride with me I'm lonely!

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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Lieven Loots

LOCATION: Southern Italy, 40 km south of Naples

OCCUPATION: Archaeologist, cycling and trekking guide

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

I kinda hate riding in the city, because I like to live, but with average motoring speeds in Italy's main cities Rome and Milan down to 25 km/hour, and never any parking space available, it makes a lot of sense strapping on a pair of cycling shoes. Italians of course have found an alternative to both car and bicycle: speeding around on scooters! Which make things for cyclists even worse. Motorists here have no clue about how to behave around cyclists, and arrive at actually threatening you if you get in their way.

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

I lived the first 27 years of my life in Flanders, Belgium, using bicycles as daily transportation. Cycling in any Dutch or Flemish city is actually rewarding, as they generally take good care of their cyclists – and then, hey, cities are flat over there.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I visited New York as a pedestrian several years ago, long before the cycling bug got to me, and I would love to get some cycling kicks in the Big Apple. Aah, must have read too much messenger hip lately.

16 URBANVELO.ORG

NAME: Chelsea Castillo

LOCATION: San Francisco, CA

OCCUPATION: Sold my soul to Whole Foods

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

Living in San Francisco is amazing and being able to race around the city dodging buses and taxis and plenty of pedis, it just makes it all the more exciting.

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

I loved riding in Chicago, but SF has got to be my favorite.

Why do you love riding in the city?

The constant thrill. Whether riding over all the hills on Polk just to see the water at sunset or racing inbetween the cars down Market hoping to simply not get hit. My heart is constantly racing when I'm riding and there is nothing better than getting sweaty and feeling the wind beat across my face.

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

If you aren't riding here, you need to. Grab a crappy bike from the Goodwill, fix it up and get to pumping your legs.

Once you dodge traffic in the city and get hit by a bus and three cars and just get up and keep riding, you know you're hooked for life.





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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Pugatch is 49x18

LOCATION: Scummerville, MA 02143 represent'n

OCCUPATION: Group Home Supervisor for Troubled Teenage Girls

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

Riding in Boston is intense, I can't compare it to other cities because I always rode in the 'burbs before moving here. In six months I've been hit twice, and made at least 50 drivers shit themselves with close calls. The famous Right Hook minus turn signal and plus cell phone is a constant annoyance. Taxis are pretty respectful even commenting on bike bling; it's the busses you have to watch out for, they're out for blood. Nothing beats sprinting through downtown dodging tourists on a summer afternoon.

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

Not really a most memorable city, but area. I rode across the state of Massachusetts as part of the Mass Red Ribbon Ride, 175 miles over two days to raise money for AIDS research and education. My friend's mother just died of AIDS that year and it was a very emotional experience but rewarding especially in the mountains when I kept up with all the "roadies" and to see their faces at me riding fixed and bombing down mile long descents while they coasted.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because of the constant stimuli. In the countryside there's plenty of wooded roads and a car passes maybe once an hour but in the city every second requires attention, judgment, and skill; I was told riding a bicycle decreases the chances of Alzheimer's, I can see why. And of course, there's always the benefit of getting places faster than if you used a car or public transportation without having to find parking or pay a fee.

Poetry Anyone?

Roses are Red, Violets are Blue... Your SUV cut me off, With a U-Lock I'll smash you!

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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Dawn

LOCATION: Denver, CO

OCCUPATION: Category Essentials Trainer at an Outdoor Retailer Near You

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

I live in beautiful downtown Denver, Colorado. Through the heart of the city and on up to Boulder, Ft. Collins, Golden and other cities, we are fortunate enough to have a network of riverside trails for those times when one needs to ride for hours without stopping... when it's free of ice I'll get in 150 miles or so a week. Lots of the trails are below street level so it's really the best of two worlds—the urban-ness of factories, subdivisions and railroad bridges, highway underpasses, the wildlife that follow the rivers, the wino camps and around it all, the smell of river and smog... It's sweet.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It sometimes inspires me to write, usually just a brief haiku or two in my MySpace blog. When I thought of submitting to your mag, I found the following entry written after one of those rides where I just got tired of being rained on. Jeez. It was really warm out but it had poured off and on for hours and I was getting wrinkly.

Rainy Day Ride, South Platte, Spring '07

So after quite some time under various dripping railroad bridges, I am finally bored with the rain and I look up and see golden arches. I roll into the Mickey D's, covered with train grease, river mud, wino pee and goose poo, helmet dripping down the back of my neck and onto the counter, bike making puddles on the floor. It is fucking pouring out still, as can be seen through all the large windows. I place my order. The guy looks at me and says, "For here, or to go?"



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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: David Wilson

LOCATION: Seattle, WA

OCCUPATION: Seattle Bike Supply chief of warranty/customer service.

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

My commute to work is 9 miles along Lake Washington which is very scenic and has only one mild climb. I have lived in Seattle for 10 years and I love the cycling community. I build, repair and restore motorcycle and bicycle frames under my own name—David Wilson Industries.

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

I really like riding in Chicago. There are wide streets and boulevards bisecting through interesting neighborhoods; the lakefront is remarkable; they have fantastic architecture;

and the city government is wholly behind bicycles as transportation. A perfect place for cargo bikes!

Why do you love riding in the city?

In Seattle I like the quiet residential areas with good climbing and a large variety of terrain. There are many small parks and green spaces through out the area; Discovery Park, with it's incredible views of Puget Sound, is a great place to explore at night. The weather here is very conducive to year round riding, but I'd recommend full fenders in the winter!

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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Christopher Gough
LOCATION: Baltimore, MD
OCCUPATION: Pro Firefighter

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

I live just outside of Baltimore, MD. Riding in the downtown area is a lot of fun, but not safe due to the lack of bike lanes, and a lot of big trucks. The Inner Harbor area is nice, but can be too crowded with pedestrians and lost tourists.

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

I grew up in NYC, but never rode my bike through Manhattan. My girlfriend Julie and I went there for a few days in May and took the bikes. I was a bit leery about her reflexes and ability to maneuver safely through the crowded streets of midtown and lower Manhattan during the morning rush. I was overly impressed by how she took me for a ride! Our plan is to do a two-week tour of Greece (on bikes), and tear up the streets of Athens and the alleys of Santorini.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love the rush of blasting through busy intersections and squeezing in between and in front of moving cars. I was a messenger in Washington DC a few summers ago, and I'm trying to get hired again, but it's the slow season. It also feels great to see how aggressive some drivers try to pass you, only to sit at the next bottleneck or traffic light while I cruise by. What better way to take in the sights and sounds of a city?

Poetry anyone?

I'm no Edgar Allen Poe, just get out of your cars and get on the saddle!



 **Contribute!** 

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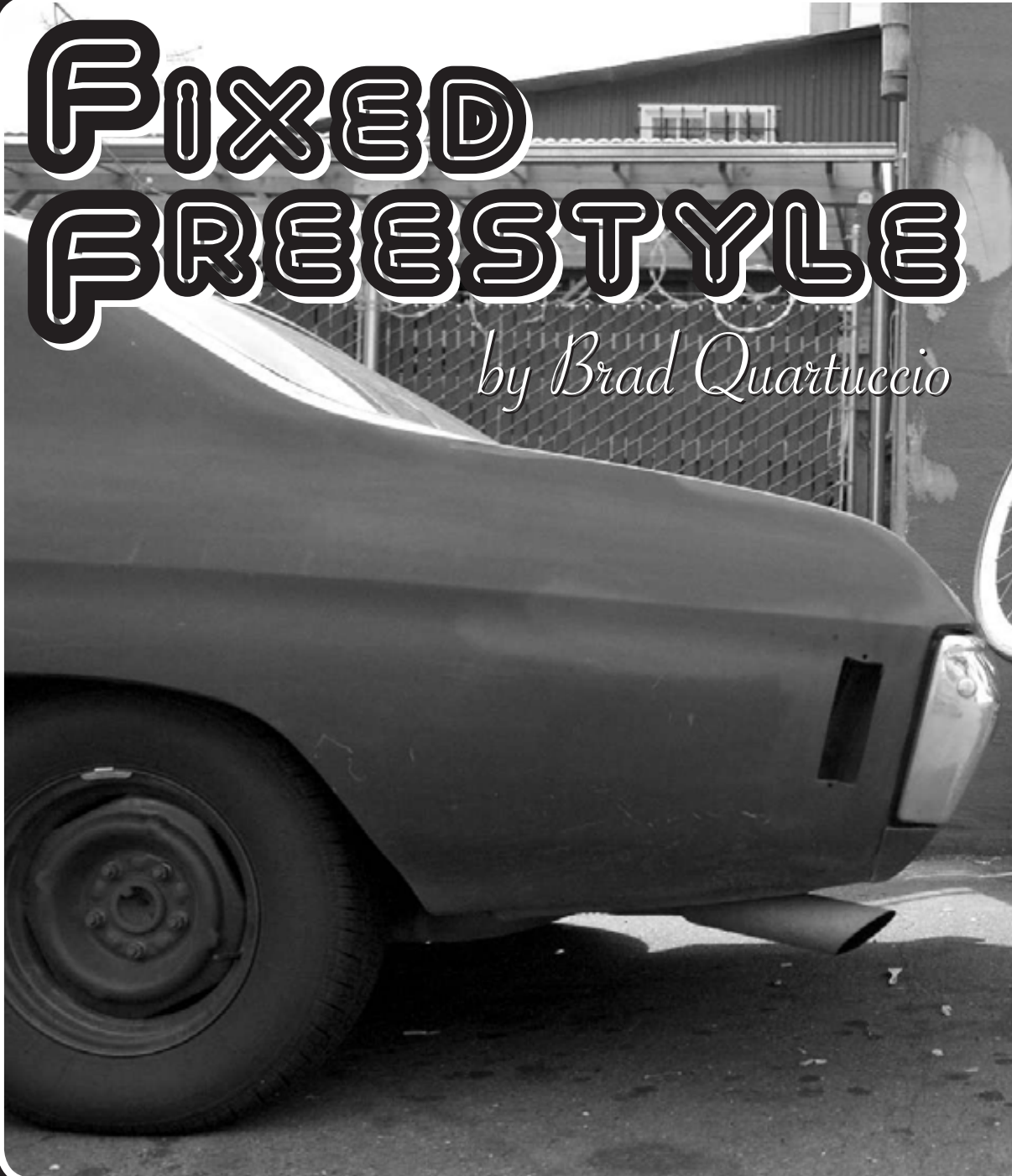
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FIXED FREESTYLE

by Brad Quartuccio





Fixed freestyle is here, and always has been in one form or another. In 1899 Thomas Edison filmed a rider performing backwards circles and barspins and with it the dawn and essence of what was to come. With urban cycling booming, track bikes everywhere and a solid history of BMX in the collective cycling consciousness one could argue that the present day interest in fixed freestyle was inevitable. Or you could point with a cranky finger and declare it dead on arrival; child's-play contrary to all pure cycling reason.



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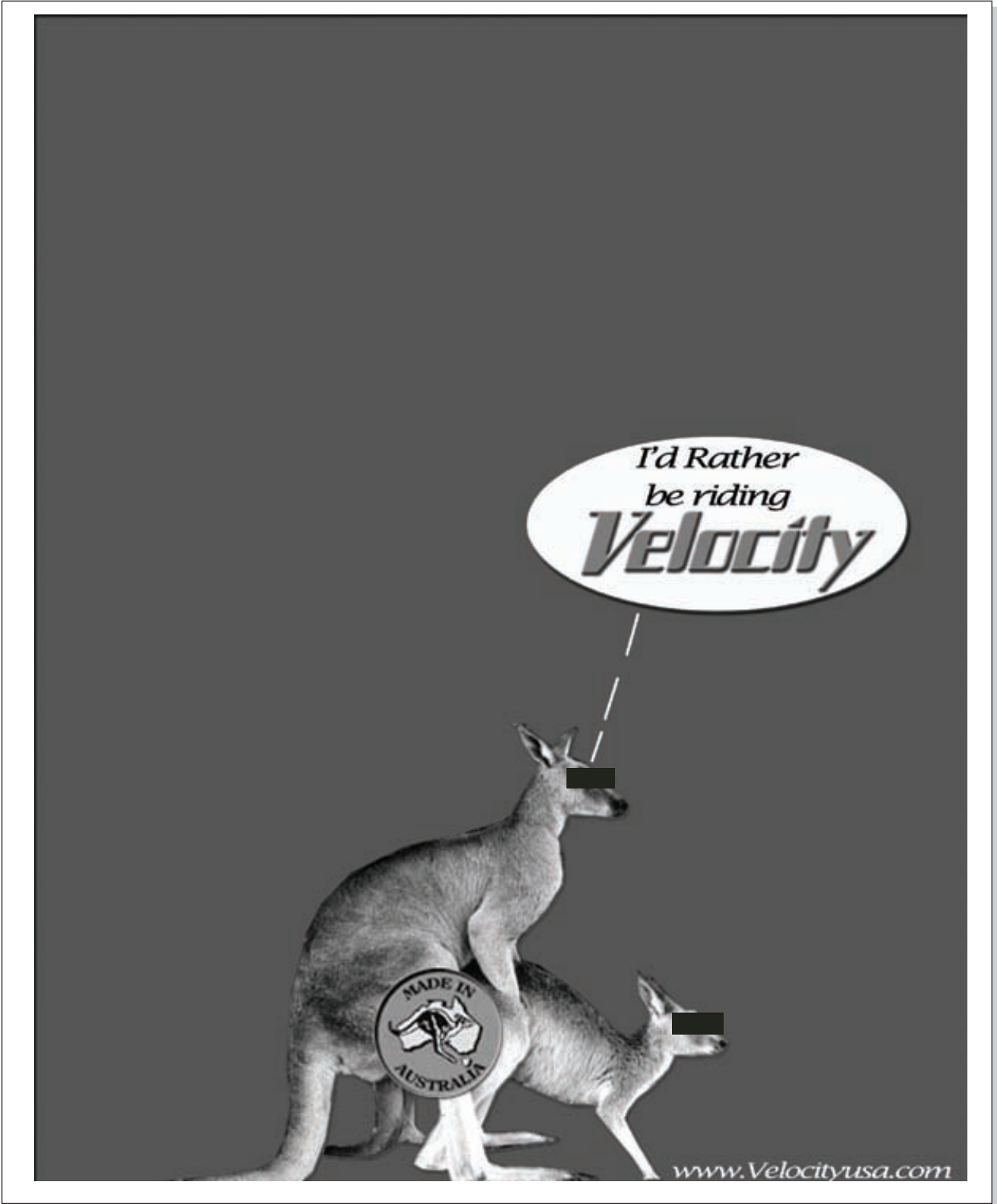


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“I think it’s natural for anyone who rode BMX to. . .do tricks on bikes that aren’t intended for tricks. It’s just fun.” – Tom La Marche



Lest one forget, the same cranky finger said BMX wouldn’t go anywhere and that mountain bikes were just a hippy sideshow. As each of those sports matured, spin-offs were met with equal derision – freeride or street/park anyone? Urban track bike riding was declared to have jumped the shark years ago, but the bikes on the street continue to multiply. Granted, the cycling old-timers have been correct about various trends dying a quick death, but the common trend amongst the ones that have thrived is bottom-up growth, starting with the riders rather than the manufacturers. Fixed freestyle has experienced just such a progression, ground on up. Rider driven. Fueled by the track bike explosion and the “cool” that comes with it, but in turn feeding back and redefining the scene – fashion and all.



Tell them you saw it in Urban Velo!

“MASH pretty much acted as a culture catalyst for the track bike.” – John Prolly



Like much of the culture that makes up the current state of urban cycling, fixed freestyle was birthed by bike messengers. From controlling brakeless fixed gears through traffic and honing the skills to trackstand and ride backwards circles on through the blend of sport and street clothing that makes up the fashion, it all comes back to the couriers. Alleycats have been going on for some time, and have undeniably experienced growth and changes in recent years as more people find the sport through non-messenger roots.

“Then MASH came. [It] pretty much acted as a culture catalyst for the track

bike,” reports John Prolly, one of the more visible figures of the fixed freestyle genre. Gabe Morford and Mike Martin’s MASH film opened the eyes of many to the riding techniques that only a select few had developed. “With the aid of YouTube, kids started emulating the unique riding style found in the MASH trailer... Not just ordinary tricks the messengers could do like skids, backwards circle and trackstands.” Barspins, rear wheel stalls, combinations of tricks few had seen in solo revue were shown to the masses. As the masses tend, riders have gone to emulate the tricks and take everything a step further in the couple of years since.

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“Everyone needs to stop taking this so seriously and realize that we all ride bikes because it’s fun.” –Tony Fast



With these new tricks came subtle equipment changes, as the re-appropriated track bike’s relatively delicate componentry was simply not created with anything other than banked turns and straight ahead power in mind. Equipment choice has been a mix of style, durability and necessity. Necessity speaks to the need on most frames to run a diminutive 650c front wheel for barsin downtube clearance if such tricks are desired. Just as in freestyle bmx, a certain repertoire of tricks can require certain component choices. Riser, bullhorn and traditional track drops all have their pros and cons for skidding and hill bombing. Durability is something all together different, and expected given the bicycle heritage. Tony Fast, “At one point last summer I had gone through about five forks in

two months and knocked out two teeth as a result. The stock forks available are available are...very poor at dealing with the abuse.” Tire size has steadily increased as well, with 28c tires now common to hamper pinch flats. Mountain stems and posts are common, reinforced saddles are making an appearance.

The common thread throughout has been speed. Time and time again I’ve been reminded that the bikes are used as transportation first, tricks second. Gear ratios are consistently reported in the street realm of ~70 gear inches. This may be the dividing line between fixed freestyle and formal artistic cycling on bicycles so crippled for the sake of tricks to be useless for blasting across town. For now at least, getting across town is still key.

Cycle Jerks

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*“I love trick riding, it reminds me of when I was a kid on a skateboard,”
—Dustin Klein, Cadence Clothing*



As the riding has evolved, the equipment has begun to catch up. Up until very recently, few manufacturers were paying much mind to fixed freestyle, leaving riders with a hodge podge of durable road and lightweight mountain componentry to mix with the traditional track parts. Times are changing though, with Brooklyn Machine Works and Profile Racing leading the way with street durable “track” parts, and plenty of smaller custom builders catering to rider needs as well. The question remains if more companies will follow their lead, and how the riding and equipment will evolve together. Supply, demand and fragility will likely usher out most of

the rare Campy and NJS parts from this aspect of the urban fixed scene.

BMX and skate culture has clearly had an influence, both in riding and fashion styles. Many of the tricks themselves come straight from BMX—barspins, chainring stalls, grinds. The flow of flatland is evident in the elegant wheelie and intricate trackstanding tricks being developed. Burd Phillips, Bootleg Sessions, “I was completely obsessed with riding flatland... When I first got on a fixed gear bike, I knew that I was going to start messing around on it. A full-sized bike that I could do tricks on. What could be more perfect?”




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Like anything in pop-culture in the past twenty years, hip-hop has in one form or another touched the fashion of the sport. Basically, there are a lot of flat-brimmed ball caps and white on white sneakers out there blending with the more traditional cycling caps and cropped pants. Track bikes are cool with the cool kids. Tony Fast, "If fashion gets people riding bikes then more power to it."

The future of fixed freestyle is up in the air. Some predict a quick disappearance, others a complete dominance of urban riding. Reality is likely solidly between those extremes in terms of mass acceptance. Dustin Klein, on the riding itself, "The trick element will definitely go up from here, people are testing the possibilities and eventually a few will really push it. It'll get way crazier than it is right now." 



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Gallery

Delivered by **WALD**sports.com

Photography by Ezra Caldwell



Panda Diptych

A little panda diptych for Megan Ann. Riding around my neighborhood with my f100.

Wald works for Urban Velo

Jeff likes the 933 Quick-Release Mesh basket
since it cradles his Nikon like its name was
Lindbergh.



Brad likes the 157B Giant Delivery
basket because it makes deliveries
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Congratulations you two on a great first year!
Thanks for letting us come along for the ride.

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Gallery

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Hill and Bike

I caught Hill as she was heading out the door to ride to work.

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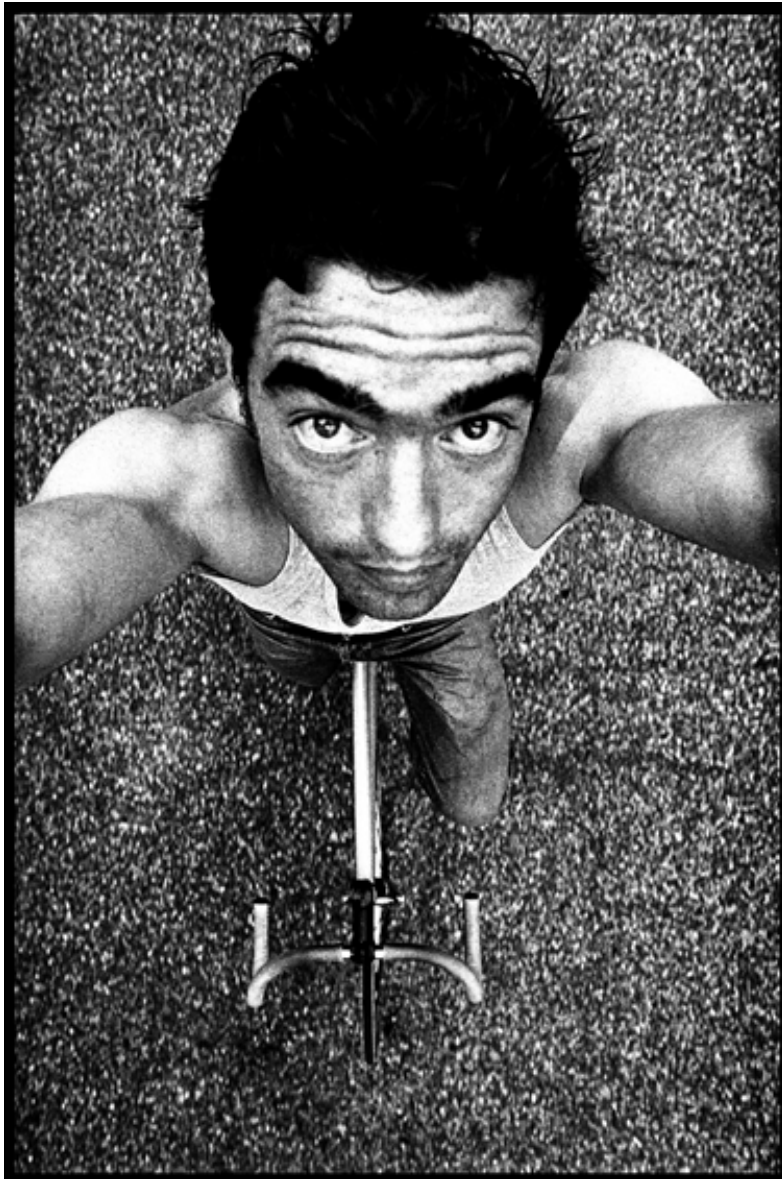
Pucci Swung By

Pucci swung by while I was shooting Megan's bike and insisted on being in a shot.



Gallery

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Today

This was from that same day riding around with my f100. What a great camera. I was borrowing a 24mm lens from a friend.

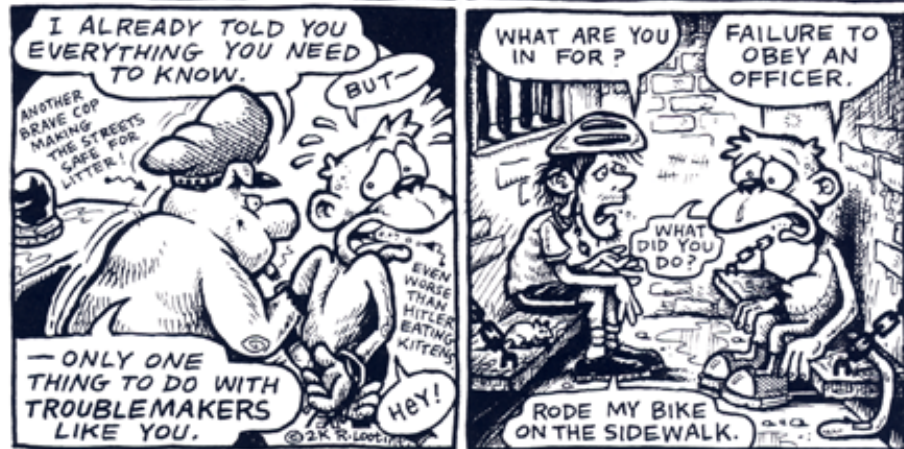
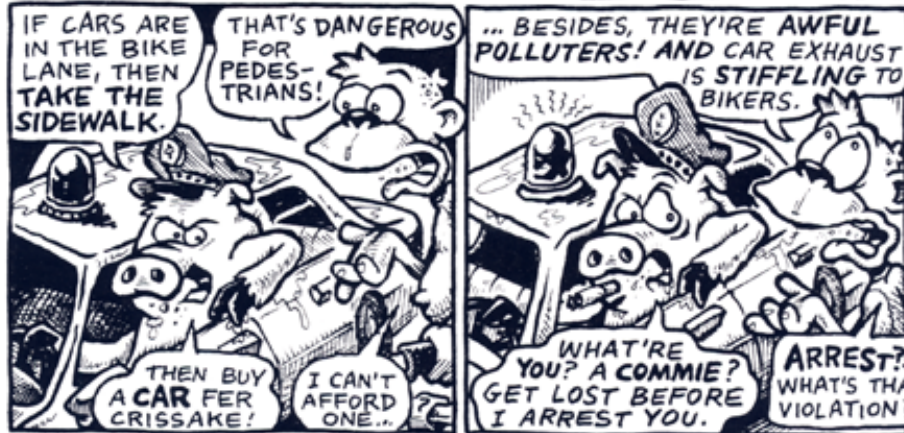
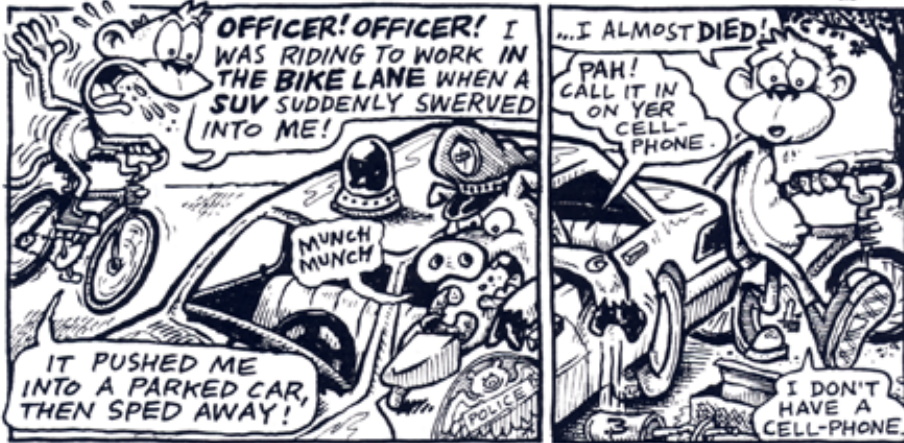
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Last One

Hill and me with our Fast Boy daily rides.

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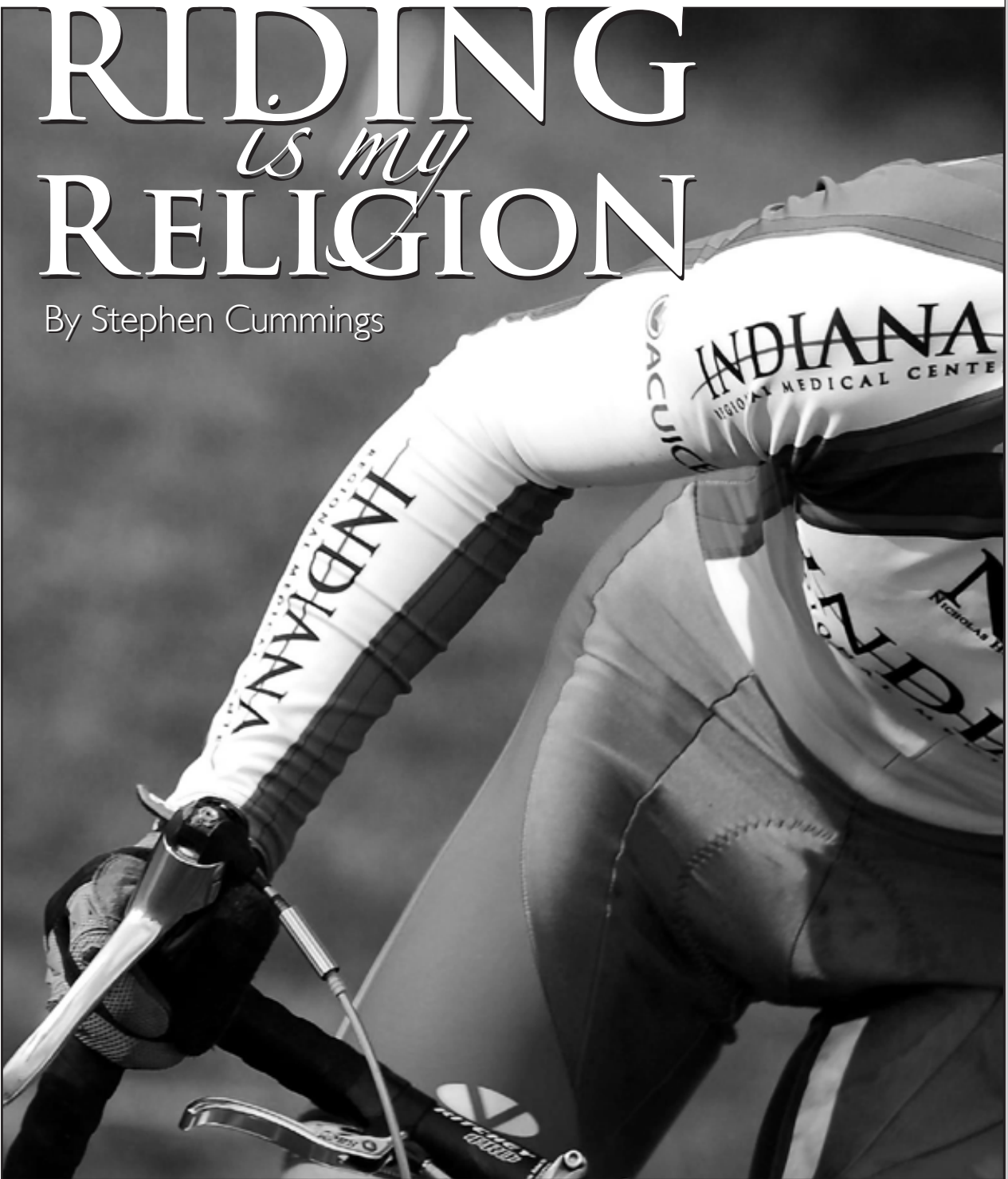
**sorry, i've got you mixed up with
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RIDING *is my* RELIGION

By Stephen Cummings





The racers themselves looked at home in the parking lot with towels to wrap around themselves while they changed, and flip flops to walk around in. They had stationary trainers to warm up on. The racers looked like seasoned athletes. I had never seen a vein on somebody's calf until that day. I had driven to the race while wearing the only cycling clothes that I owned and didn't think to bring a spare set of clothes. Mind you, the only cycling clothes that I owned, I had worn everyday while riding across the country. They were a sun faded solid blue, and baggy around the arms and legs. They seemed so drab and uncool compared to the flashy outfits of those around me. I didn't own flip flops to bring. I had one or two towels that I needed for showering; I wasn't going to take one to a bike race. My towels were over used and underwashed, hanging on the back of the bathroom door at the punkhouse where I was living.

"Do you have Gu packets? Gator Aid? A Clif bar?"

Andy and I just looked at each other nervously and didn't answer Pete's question. As two guys who just rode around the city all day, were we in over our heads? Could we even finish this race? Should we even start? I mean, these guys were serious if they were willing to pay two dollars for each Gu packet, and use three of them during the race, right? Who were we to show up unprepared at the most basic level? I trembled on the start line, in a sea of fifty or so other riders.

The whistle blew to signify the beginning of my first road race.

As it turns out, messengers ride a ton. They ride a shitload. They probably ride as many miles every year as a decent domestic professional cyclist. Messengers can also handle their bikes as well as most experienced cyclists, or better. We were messengers. It took as little as fifteen minutes for us to realize that not only were we as fit as the other guys in the novice race, but we were also more comfortable on our bikes. Over the course of the race, the lead group whittled down to ten, and we were in it. I looked around after finishing, watching what was left of our group coming across the finish line. It blew my mind that the guys with such nice stuff, that looked so athletic, didn't beat me

As spring turned to summer, the local criterium series began, and I attended with diligence. Experienced racers vol-

unteered to teach the beginners what we needed to know about racing. Each week had a lesson on racing tactics, training, nutrition, hydration, bike maintenance, and sometimes a lecture on what we had done wrong the previous week. While some of the racers skipped these lectures, or talked amongst themselves in the back of the group, I carefully listened and took mental notes. I treated the weekly event like it was school, and I was trying for an A.

It also turned out that not all of the guys that I was racing against fit the stereotype that I had built up in my mind. In fact, very few of the group were the muscle bound, alpha male jocks that I have tried to avoid all of my life. I wasn't the only person that rode my bike to the races from my house. I wasn't the only person with a "Triangle Messenger" branded Timbuk 2 bag. I wasn't the only one who thought paying two dollars for a Gu was like speeding in an SUV towards a red light. Like the population at large, these road weenies were made up of all types.

The proprietor of the local shop put me in touch with a guy that I had been racing against. That guy had friends, and soon enough we started "working together" during the races to win the local criterium series regularly. Team Kraynick's was born and we picked up a few more riders over time. We would ride to and from the races, to and from work, and ride together on the weekends. The team

wasn't made up of road weenies. We were commuters, messengers or just "cyclists" in general. We had city bikes with fenders at home, we weren't afraid to wear rain pants if it was cold and raining. We came from the functional cycling perspective, not what had been fed to so many others by the glossy cycling magazines.

Over the next few years, my days were spent riding my fixed gear around the city with my bag and radio strapped to me. I would come home on weeknights and pass out around 9pm, or race the local criterium, then come home and pass out. Every weekend we would ride the local "fast guy" group ride, or race when we could. A local frame builder built us frames and painted them to match the planned jerseys, which were modeled after the "Moleteni" jerseys of old. They simply said "Kraynick's," with the frame builder "Mezzatesta" written below. We were functional, cheap, and a pretty damned good team.





Steevo has won the Dirty Dozen four consecutive times. www.dannychev.com

Team Kraynick's would drive a 500 dollar pickup or a 1000 dollar Toyota to find the hilliest longest road races within an eight hour radius. We worked together for results, and climbed the categories assigned by USA Cycling. We were best friends, teammates and having a blast. Unfortunately it was shorter lived than we all would have liked. Cycling is dangerous, and a compound fracture of a wrist, a broken femur and various concussions whittled down the team. Eventually, a cross roads was reached, babies were had, life's priorities caught up with a few team members, and we stopped racing as Kraynick's.

The following year, I joined an "elite" team and started racing on a regional level. The team was serious. Team members had or actually were coaches. Team members were former professionals or went on to be professionals. We competed against professionals regularly and were invited to national caliber events. One race had helicopters and motorcycles filming for the cable TV channel Versus. Racing went from just being fun to something else. It became really hard. Now, the fun came from overcoming the hardness, and the ensuing feeling of contentment derived from accomplishment. Every race became a mental and emotional battle against myself. Sometimes finishing a race in the main pack was a good enough result to make me happy. Other times I would do everything I could for the success of a teammate and ultimately not finish the race. Sometimes the best that I could do for the team was hand off bottles to teammates after I dropped out.

Most of this new team, and the people I was around were different. They didn't own commuting bikes. Most of them had houses in the suburbs and multiple cars. The idea of a bike tour didn't sound like fun to many of them. Being a messenger was quirky and weird. This isn't to say that they weren't awesome people, they were just different. But as time passed, they grew on me. They were similar to the guys that I saw in the parking lot at my first race and judged. It turns out that they weren't so different. Some of them came up pretty rough, and overcame a lot to participate in what amounts to an expensive hobby. All of them worked their asses off to get to where they were in cycling and in life, and I respected that. It might have been a different goal and priority set, but hard work is hard work.

My final year of messengering consisted of working all week until I was "allowed" to leave on Friday afternoon. This

permission was usually given after buying the dispatcher cigarettes and beer. Then I would meet up with teammates and drive four to five hours, sleep somewhere, race Saturday and Sunday, arrive home as late as two in the morning and then get up at seven for work. I loved the job, but it was getting to be more and more taxing.


I stopped messengering in the spring of 2006 after a freak accident involving a construction worker accidentally dropping a brick on my head. I was strapped to a backboard and taken in an ambulance to the hospital. The construction worker couldn't have picked a better person to hit with the brick, as I had a helmet on, and there was no serious damage done to me. I needed time off of work after the accident, and just never went back.



I think in the beginning of my racing, messengering was the perfect job. It gave me really good fitness, it kept me thin, and payed my bills. The accident happened at a good time though. After years of working, the need for time off to race had come to a head with the owner of the company. I was also getting pretty burnt out and bitter, as messengering can do to people. The fatigue of walking up steps and standing in line all day was growing, and probably prevent-

ing the freshness and recovery that I needed for racing.

Last fall I spent twelve weeks racing cyclocross on the Indiana Regional Medical Center cycling team. It was me, and three professional road racers. Chris Horner got 15th in the Tour de France just three months before we raced together. It is pretty surreal that it may have all started by calling Triangle Messenger and asking for a job, and having a love for bicycles rather than a love for athletics.

I still commute on my bike to the grocery store, and to and from work. I still have fenders on most of my bikes. I still have the plain blue jersey that I wore to my first race. Since starting to race at the level where I am, I have met a dozen or more other people who started exactly the same way. I have had the conversation numerous times. "Oh you were a messenger? How long? What city?" Sometimes you can just kind of tell without asking. I am also still the guy on the bike path with the expensive bike and the outfit to match. Some people that I race against will "retire" and never touch a bike again, and some of us are prepared to ride for the rest of our lives. I remember when I asked a Kraynick's teammate what his religion was and he just said: "I'm a cyclist." 

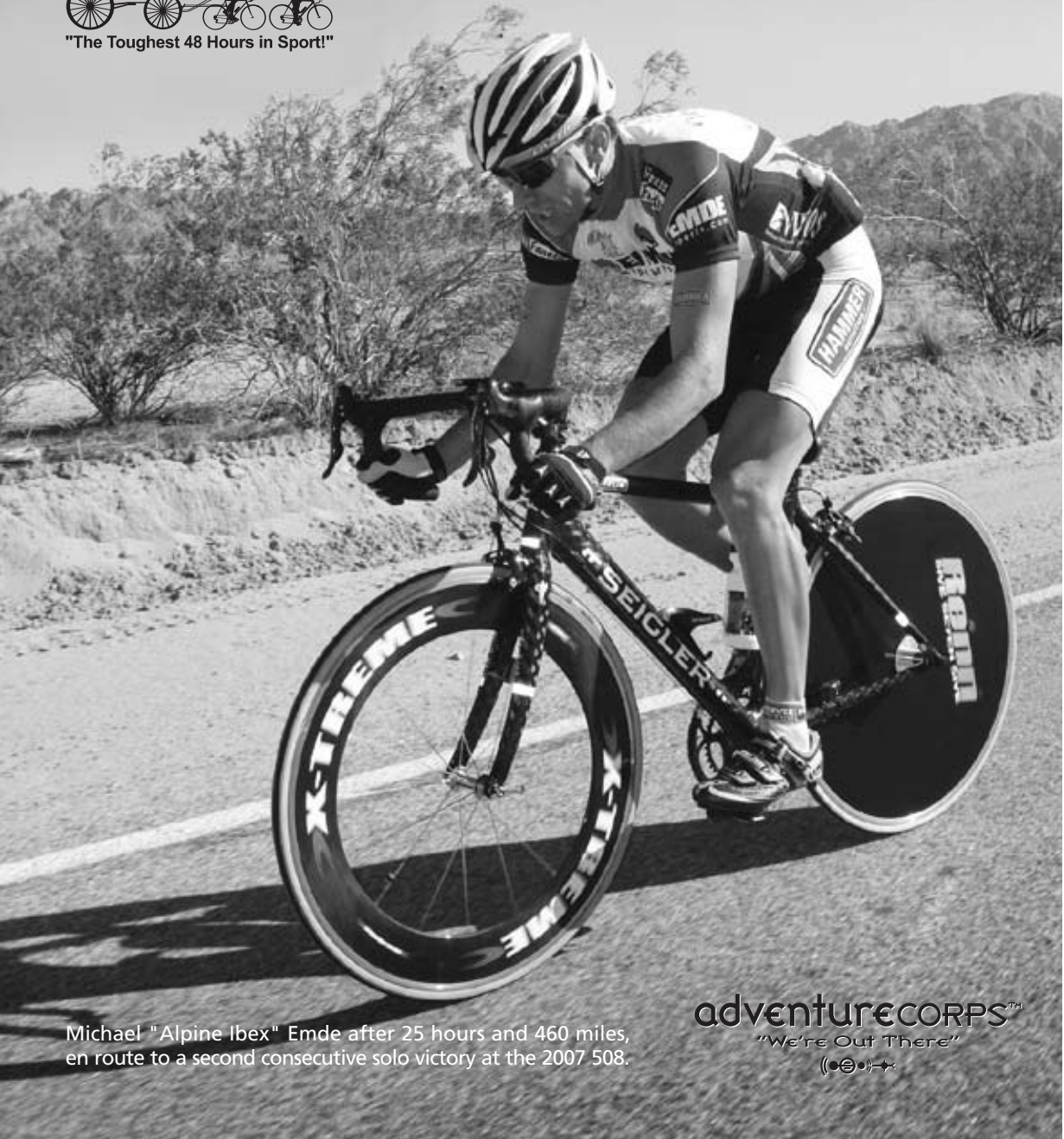
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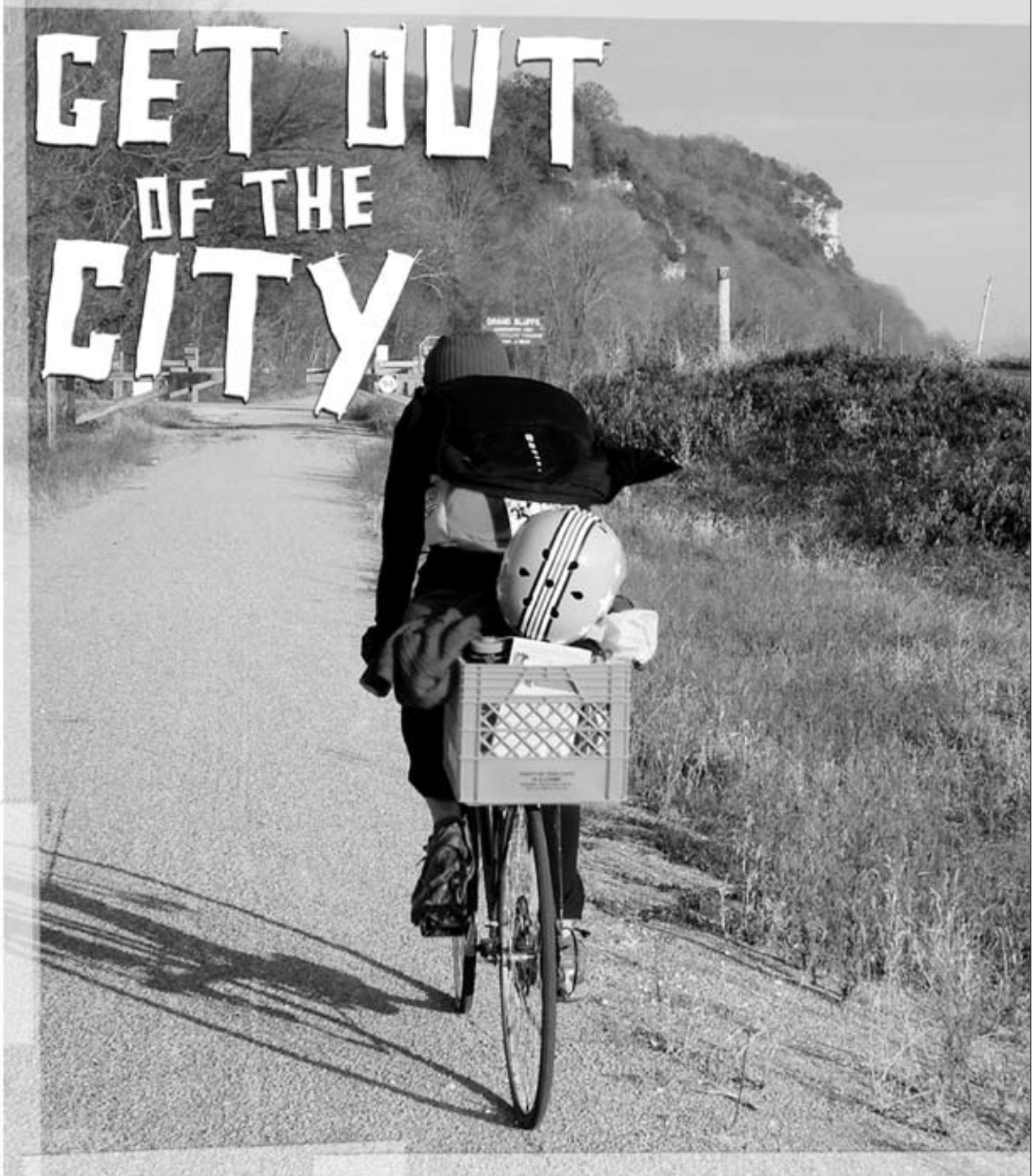
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GET OUT OF THE CITY





Photos by Johnny Tarr, www.flickr.com/photos/kjohnnytarr

THANKSGIVING VIA THE KATY TRAIL

By Johnny Tarr

Having a strict plan for an adventure is a conflict of interests, so Cameron and I set off for our Thanksgiving Epic with only a loose grasp on our own logistics. The basic idea: ride halfway across Missouri on the Katy Rails to Trails project, stay in cheap hotels, and arrive three days and about 150 miles later for Thanksgiving dinner with Cameron's family in St. Louis. You wouldn't sedate the bull before the rodeo, and you really shouldn't hash out every detail of an adventure beforehand either.

The Katy Trail runs from just outside Kansas City all the way to St. Louis, following a railroad bed along the Missouri River. The railroad gives the trail its name. Columbia sits a bit north of the midpoint, connected by the nine-mile MKT trail.

We'd imagined riding out of town with our faces to the rising sun, but Cameron's late night and my early errands pushed our launch behind our lunch. The silver lining was that we could grab burritos wrapped in foil on our way out. For most of our riding on Day One we were on the familiar MKT, the trail we take monthly on Party Ride Monday, or when we go to Cooper's Landing Marina. Cooper's is a nifty place where the river-rats and the cyclists converge for camping out, lowbrow folk concerts, and Thai food served from a box-trailer. On this trip, Cooper's was the last familiar sight we'd see until St. Louis. We stopped to down half our burritos, and then took off into fresh territory on the floodplain. We knew we'd be fatigued within the next day, but right then we had just hit stride atop our perfect bikes.

By perfect, I mean perfect to us, of course. Cameron rides a Nishiki road-bike he bought in Denver, with a great New Belgian bell on the drops. He took the front derailleur off and now he shifts chainrings with his foot. The hand-painted red lugs contrast the rest of the powdercoated blue frame, and we sometimes refer to it as Optimus Prime – it is quite a truck of a bike. I ride a neon-green conversion. The Stella frame is the only French thing I have ever loved, with a mix of BMX and cyclocross parts making it quite the mule. I had aero-bars on the bullhorns for the trip so I could switch up my position. Both of our bikes were sporting milk-crates, the addition of which was the only step in converting our daily-rides to touring rigs. We never got wrapped up with conventional wisdom or tedious details; we just ripped.

The sun was rapidly setting as we entered Jefferson City. Crossing the Missouri was the first perilous step in entering the state capitol. Only the northbound side of the bridge



The Katy Trail stretches 225 mile (365 km) across most of Missouri.

has a bike lane, and even that is frighteningly unprotected. But even that luxury isn't found on the highway overpasses we had to navigate around inside the city. We took a winding and improvised route through service roads, recreation trails, and parking lots, getting lost and finding a kickball along the way. Finally, we rolled up to a strip of hotels and checked into the cheapest one, then ate at a dieing restaurant where we could feel every eye on us. Cameron commented as we filled up at a salad bar: "They're just so excited to have young people in here."

Day Two saw us waking up in a room that strongly suggested it was designed for children. There were even little pictures of cars and trucks on the quilts. Not one picture of a bicycle. We had more geographic confidence while leaving the city, and we would have even made it back to the trail relatively quickly if a pothole hadn't snapped my rack loose, nearly spilling my load. Fortunately, our combined repair kits had enough shoelaces and zip-ties to MacGyver a solution.

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We spent the day passing small towns that used to be integral parts of the railroad-system, and now they're all integral parts of the selling-Snickers-to-bicyclists system. There was a pleasant monotony of bluffs on the left and the river on the right, but we had to break that monotony often for food. We bought PBJ supplies, chocolate and granola on the way out of Jeff City, and we ate on an almost hourly basis. The other stops were for Cameron to stretch his bad knee. We'd have been in the tightest of spots if it gave out on him, so Cameron took advantage of every railroad bridge railing as something to lean on while maintaining his leg as an engine.

Actually, the truth is that we were never really in too much of a hurry. Transportation took a backseat to recreation on the Katy. Taking time to enjoy the views of the river and to buy junk food at general stores whenever either opportunity presented was as much a part of the trip as counting mile-markers.

The Katy Trail is a very American experience. The land along the rail bed is the border where agricultural traditions met the industrial revolution. Most towns grew around the tracks originally, so they naturally showcase the trail today, and each town is an honest place where the baseball field is easy to find and the folks at the service station are glad to fill water bottles. Ironically, it was the highways and the semi-trucks between the towns that starved the railroad of

business; in a way, cars and trucks cleared the way for our bicycles on the Katy.

When the sun dipped low, we started looking at our guidebook to decide where we would stay the night. The Katy is known for its bed-and-breakfasts at convenient intervals, but a few cell-phone calls told us that the ones within our budget were closed for the season. That's how we found ourselves in a supermarket parking lot, in the dark, trying to hitch a ride across another bridge into a town south of the river, with another cheap road-motel waiting for us. The guidebook recommended hitching as the only way across this dangerous bridge, but we learned otherwise from the first motorist we solicited; a beautiful bike lane had been added since our guide was published! The protected bike lane, with a view of a passing night-train on the south side of the Missouri, brought us to the German settlement of Herman. Wide lanes, a simple layout, and great Mexican food greeted us with the opposite of our experience in Jefferson City.

Unfortunately, the morning of Day Three brought more adventures in bike maintenance: we both woke up to flat tubes, thanks to slow leaks. As Cameron inspected his wheel, he found the tire so dried-out that it necessitated replacement along with the tube. Complicating the setback into a fiasco, the yellow-pages informed us that our flats had coincided with the local mechanic's day off. A woman in the hotel parking lot told us that our only hope of getting out of town that day was to find the shop's owner, "A small man with a large black dog." The description was dead-on, and we found our savior walking down the block from his own business.

The Herman Ride Rest and Go Bike Shop is a classic, as is everything else in the village. A kind man from Wisconsin lives there with his dog and a modest stock of bikes, and he was only too happy to help us out of our jam and swap talk about the trail at the same time. He's a no nonsense veteran of the Katy himself, and when asked what sort of tire he had to sell us, he plainly replied, "One that fits."

With our wheels renewed, the last stop on the way out of town was the supermarket from the night before, where we stocked up on snacks and a thermos full of coffee for the trail. When all was said and done in Herman, we hadn't actually returned to the trail until noon – too bad we'd committed to make the final sixty-mile push into St. Louis by the end of the day.

Even the daunting ratio of time-to-distance couldn't stop us from enjoying ourselves on the final miles. We stopped to play with the floppiest dog in the world when he bounded across a field to investigate us, and we read the trailside placards at historical sites. What really threw us off though,

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were the involuntary stops; like when Cameron nervously applied his last patch to another punctured tube, knowing exactly how screwed we would be if it didn't take. There were no open bike-shops between us and the end of the trail, but to our relief the patch held.

By sunset, we were worried. At dusk, we began sprinting—partly to outrun the mosquitoes. We rode into the total darkness, donning helmets after close calls with deer and jeeps. We did eventually emerge into the city, where the trail and a surrounding swath of woods penetrate the outlying suburb of St. Charles. Cameron's extremely kind grandmother met us shortly after we rolled up to the Trailhead Brewing Company with a minivan for our bikes, saving us from negotiating unfamiliar streets at night.

Cameron and I had two days to kill in St. Louis before Thanksgiving. After indulging in plenty of sleep and breakfast, and a contribution of chores, we headed out to the University City Loop with our bikes. Our first order of business was to get more conventional clothes than what we wore on the trail. At a trendy resale shop, I ended up with an awesomely appropriate t-shirt, declaring "STL [hearts] BMX." Properly dressed, we got caught by a pretty lady named Trucky as we were admiring her red Schwinn. We talked bikes with her for a while outside of an espresso bar called Meshuggah, and we came to find out that they cater to bicyclists who enjoy cheap beer on Tuesday nights. We killed some time at the St. Louis City Museum (imagine a post-apocalyptic Robin Hood tree-fort), and then the fine folks back at Meshuggah were happy to help us get directions to the Penrose Park Velodrome.


Missouri's only velodrome was built in 1962, and though it has hosted Olympic qualifiers and national championships, it has seen neglect in its days too. The track was resurfaced in 2005, but it didn't go perfectly. Cameron and I didn't mind the imperfections though. I must admit I was even a bit amused by the car tire tracks on the banked turns. Riding the Penrose Park Velodrome was thrilling, truthfully, but when we pulled thorns out of our tires after a couple dozen laps, the hissing air told us that the track still has a long way to go. The guys at Big Shark, a bike shop back on the Loop, admitted that the thorny seedpods spilling down onto one corner of the track discourages many folks who might otherwise go. I'm proud that we got to visit one of America's dozen velodromes, but I hope some botanical vigilante might eradicate those bushes!

The next day we saw the art museum and zoo at Forest Park, then enjoyed a cold ride on part of St. Louis's trail network. The city has a system of paved bike paths throughout many parts of its grid, and from what I saw



most of it is a notch or two above what we enjoy back in Columbia, and probably just as useful for local folks commuting as it was for the two of us escaping the kitchen in the buildup to Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is traditionally a time to be home with family, and I consider Cameron's family to be remarkably like my own. Many details of their kitchen were comfortingly identical to those found at my own grandparents' house, where I've spent most Thanksgivings, and just as the physical spaces were similar, so are our families, which brings added meaning when I say they made me feel at home.

At Thanksgiving Dinner, the family and I filled several tables in two rooms. We ate and drank, and enjoyed the spiral into overwhelming comfort and satisfaction until we found ourselves sitting with our feet up, sharing jokes and anecdotes about hunting or sailing or our respective encounters with the law. Of course, Cameron and I had plenty of fresh tales to tell, and so we added them to the conversation like sticks on a campfire until we'd relived the whole trip from behind our mashed potatoes. Really, the trip and the meal were one and the same; lists of ingredients spelled out on paper leave out the best parts, and it is the intangible element more than the immoderation that makes either indulgence worthwhile. 

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RIDING THE CAP/C&O TOWPATH

By Jeffrey Peel

East coast cities can become overwhelming, even for the most hardened urban dweller. The density, congestion, pollution, and crime can cause us all to need a reprieve from time to time, even if it's simply to another city with the same set of problems. One of the perks of being part of the Megalopolis that spans the east coast from Boston to Richmond is how easy it is to change your scenery. Getting out, visiting seemingly distant friends and riding new streets is often just a cheap Chinatown bus ride away. Toss your bike underneath in the luggage compartment and pack your courier bag for a weekend excursion to Boston, NYC, Philly or Baltimore. The constant flow of urban cyclists along the I-95 corridor keeps city riding exciting, as well as the party going with an influx of out-of-towners for local events.

Lying too far west to be a consistent part of this intermixing is the diamond in the rough, the city of Pittsburgh.

Having heard stories worthy of legend; of house shows, great cheap eats, the greatest bike shop ever (Kraynick's), crust-punk couriers and the playground that is a decaying rust belt city, I felt this was a place that needed exploring. With two weeks off while changing jobs, and a need for some quality time with my bike, I decided I'd just ride there. It's the perfect getaway mixing the peace and quiet of rural camping along with urban culture.

DC and Pittsburgh are conveniently connected by two continuous bike trails, the 185 mile C&O Towpath, and the recently completed 150 mile Greater Allegheny Passage. Unlike any other trail system outside of Western Europe, the trail network offers not only recreational area for suburbanites, but serves to connect two major metropolitan areas by completely non-motorized means. Imagine if all of our urban centers had this?

Fat tired touring/cyclocross bikes or rigid off-road bikes are ideal along the 315 miles of hard-packed gravel and dirt trails, utilizing old canal towpaths and abandoned rail beds. Though the flat terrain and car-free nature make it suitable for just about any bike. Regardless of your ride, a comfy saddle, padded gloves, a good pair of bike shorts and some chamois cream are mandatory equipment, as you will get

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THE C'MUTE FROM PĀKĀ

(the "kh-mewt" from "pa-kay")



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saddle sores and numb hands from the at-times rough trail. As with any tour, make sure your bike is in good working order. Despite several trail-side bike shops, their selection of replacement parts is limited and their short hours may leave you stranded for a night.

Having camped along the C&O on numerous overnight trips, I was interested to see how the trail fared further west of the DC metro area. While the scenery and wildlife along the C&O are great, at times it can be difficult to enjoy while having to constantly pay attention to rocks, roots and holes along the rough trail. The Capitol Crescent Trail leaving DC and the Western Maryland Rail Trail passing through Hancock, MD offer nicely paved parallel trails to the C&O. While often crowded, they make for a much smoother ride.

Food stops along the trail are sparse, with the real treasure of the trail being the plentiful campsites along the way. Spaced every five to ten miles, the sites are rustic with only an outhouse, fire pit and water pump. The great thing is it's easy to ride until you start feeling tired or it starts getting dark, and simply stop at the next site. Pack light though, much like most National Park areas, you need to haul your garbage with you. Also, be sure to bring toilet paper and bug spray in the summer months.


The completion of the C&O in Cumberland, MD didn't end with the trumpets, parade and key to the city that I had envisioned, but did offer good signage and an easy connection to the next leg of the trip along the Greater Allegheny Passage (GAP). The GAP trail couldn't have been any more opposite than the C&O with few campsites, and even fewer free ones, but it offers impeccable grading, particularly on

the recently completed section from Cumberland to Frostburg. It wouldn't be much of an exaggeration to say that the worst section of the GAP trail is better than the best part of the C&O.

Just outside of Deal, PA, and shortly after passing over the Mason-Dixon Line and Eastern Continental Divide the trail gives a nice view of dozens of wind turbines along the ridgelines making the slight, though largest, climb of the trip rewarding. Further along, the trail runs alongside the Youghiogheny River and passes through the towns of Confluence and Ohiopyle, both of which could make for great overnight or weekend getaways by bike from Pittsburgh.

Like the C&O, the GAP ends unceremoniously, this time in McKeesport, PA. From there it's a manageable, but definitely unfriendly ride into Pittsburgh. Though I feel the same sense of disgust at the sight of bikes strapped to cars as I do seeing animals locked in small cages at the zoo, if you can arrange a drop-off/pick-up there I'd recommend it.

Despite the hype, Pittsburgh did not disappoint. Yeah, there was the good cheap food, fun nightlife and burgeoning art scene that I had anticipated. What was not expected was the way young people were taking ownership and charge of their city. I met lots of people doing great things to improve their communities, and most all of them got around town by bike! I look forward visiting again in the future.

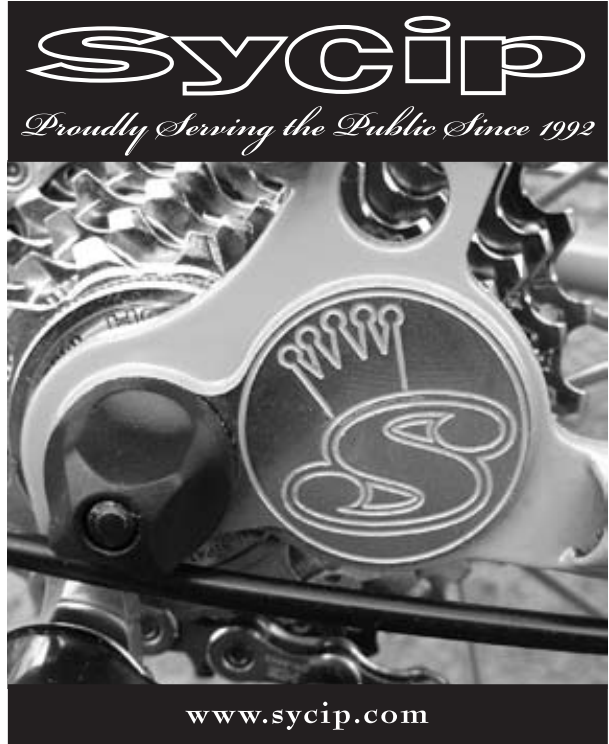
After four days in Pittsburgh, with cabin fever setting and the siren call of my own bed, I was back on the bike, making the trip home. Five days up gave way to four days back. That's the downside of this trail system. Just how I always look out the window on the way to New York City, but never on the way home, once you've completed it one way the excitement for the adventure wanes, and it becomes just another transportation corridor. Though one that only has bikes. 

DC/ C&O LINKS:

www.nps.gov/choh
www.bikewashington.org/canal
washcycle.typepad.com
www.westernmarylandrailtrail.org/WMRT

PGH/GAP LINKS:

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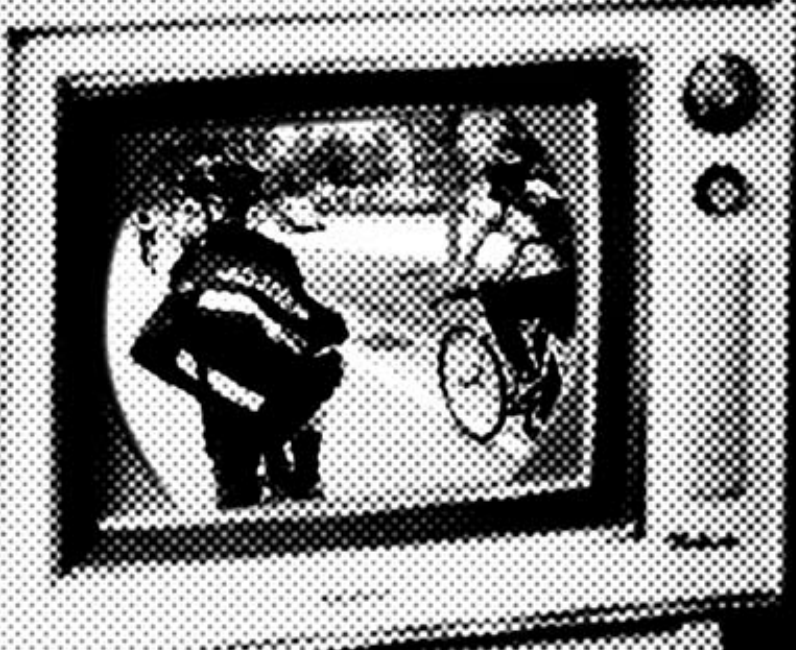
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Four communities across the US are spending \$100 million over four years to build and promote bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

By David Hoffman

STATUS QUO

Of the myriad of problems that bicycle advocates face in their day-to-day lives, convincing project designers, planners, and policy makers to spend money and resources on projects that will benefit bicyclists (collectively, “the System”) consistently ranks high on the list. In general, the System is wary of spending time, energy, and resources on projects that do not address “the most pressing needs.” Even now, one of the most popular ways to ease traffic congestion is to build more car capacity (read: more roads and lanes) in to the System. Thus, the flaw in this approach to transportation planning is revealed: Nature (and many a motorist) abhors a vacuum. When you create more capacity, the temporary ease in congestion will invariably be filled by more traffic.

How then to break the cycle of building more roads to accommodate ever-expanding traffic?

Simple. Change the rules of engagement. (For those über-geeks out there, think: “Kobayashi Maru”) Build facilities that will encourage motorists to abandon their cars whenever feasible and start taking other forms of transportation.

“But,” you protest, “didn’t you just say that isn’t how the System works?”

Yep. Until recently.

Enter Deb Hubs Smith, bicycle advocate extraordinaire, and Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN). Deb is a tireless advocate whose very long and accomplished resume includes helping to found and serve as the first Executive Director of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (www.marinbike.org), and serving as the founding director of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) National Partnership (www.safe-routespartnership.org). Rep. James Oberstar (www.oberstar.house.gov) is one of the greatest champions of bicyclists in Washington, D.C., currently serving as the Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

CHANGING THE RULES

Back in 2000, Bikes Belong (www.bikesbelong.org) asked Deb Hubsmith and Patrick Seidler, President of WTB (www.wtb.com) and WTB-funded advocacy arm Transportation Alternatives for Marin (www.wtb.com/about/advocacy) for ideas on how conditions for bicyclists could be improved in the United States. At the time, Bikes Belong was preparing for a meeting with Congressman Oberstar, then a ranking member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Hubsmith and Seidler were able to quickly put together a white paper that described two major program ideas for potential inclusion in the upcoming reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Bill. Those two program ideas were Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and the Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP). Safe Routes was originally piloted as a federal demonstration program in August of 2000 in Marin County, CA and Arlington, MA. Based on the success of the SRTS pilots and a national campaign, Safe Routes ultimately made it in to the 2005 reauthorization with \$612 million for a new National program, and \$100 million was included for the NTPP. For you technocrats, the funding for the NTPP was allocated through Section 1807 of SAFETEA-LU, the five-year federal transportation bill adopted in 2005.

WHAT IS THE NTPP AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?

The NTPP is a Pilot Program that designated \$100 million dollars to be spent between four pilot communities over the course of four years. This goal of the Pilot Program is two fold: 1) to demonstrate that a shift in "mode share" can be achieved by build-

ing bicycle and pedestrian facilities targeted at helping people choose to bike and walk instead of drive, and 2) that investing in bicycling and walking infrastructure has a very high rate of return on investment – higher than investing in motorized transportation.

NTPP
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Columbia, MO
www.getaboutcolumbia.com

Marin County, CA
www.walkbikemarin.org

Minneapolis, MN
www.tlcmnnesota.org

Sheboygan County, WI
www.co.sheboygan.wi.us

While these ideas may seem novel to most US transportation planners focused on reducing congestion, the success of non-motorized transportation has been clearly demonstrated in the many European cities. The NTPP borrows heavily on a program from the Netherlands called the "Delft Experiment"—where an entire bicycle network was constructed during the 1980s within the city of Delft in an effort to increase bicycling. (More background on Delft at: www.eaue.de/winuwd/78.htm). Bicycle-centric

planning is now growing in popularity in places like Bogotá, Columbia, where over the past 10 years an extensive bicycle network was initiated for construction by then-mayor Enrique Peñalosa. (See Peñalosa's biography with informative links at: (www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/placemakers/epenalosa). To be fair, US cities like Portland, OR and Boulder, CO have extensive and heavily used bicycle networks, but these cities represent a tiny fraction of municipalities where planners, policy makers, and advocates have been able to get a significant number of people out of their cars.

The four pilot communities are Columbia, MO, Marin County, CA, Minneapolis, MN and Sheboygan County, WI. Each community is receiving \$25 million dollars to spend over four years. Approximately \$5 million in each area is used to administer the Federal grant, making \$20 million available for actual in-ground improvements and programs.

As the author has the good fortune to work for the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC), the rest of this article will focus on the Marin County improvements.

THE REAL DEAL

In Marin County, the Board of Supervisors adopted a 2007 General Plan with the goal of 20% of all trips to be made by bicycling and walking by the year 2020. A recent survey places combined bicycling and walking trips at 13.6%. That breaks out to 1.8% for trips made by bicycle, and 11.8% of trips made on foot. While this may seem somewhat low, it compares favorably to the national average of only about 9.5% for combined bike and pedestrian trips. OK – enough with the numbers and statistics...

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Historically, Marin County provided the majority of lumber to the Bay Area throughout the late nineteenth and into the first part of the twentieth century. The railroads built an extensive network of branch lines and tunnels through Marin County. Towns sprung up along the railroad spurs to support the industry; most of which are now considerably more populated even though the last whistle was heard decades ago. The railroads stopped running, and the tunnels were neglected, many collapsing or plugged. Eventually, much of the old railroad rights-of-way were slowly reclaimed by Nature, but they were kept in public ownership and the corridors largely remain intact as a public asset. (Incidentally, there is a real movement bring passenger rail back through part of this corridor – see: www.sonomamarintrain.org). Today, beautiful, winding, narrow roads that snake between communities, punctuated by steep hills and numerous valleys characterize much of Marin County. There are a few major arterials that serve as feeders in and out of some communities to the major freeway (Highway 101) that bisects the most populated part of the County.

Years later, bicycle advocates realized that the most direct routes between communities was often along the old railroad rights-of-way, as the trains needed to take the flattest route possible. All of a sudden, reopening old tunnels and paving bicycle paths along the old track beds seemed like a brilliant idea. A 1994 study documented a plan to create a North-South Greenway and progress has been slowly made over the last ten years to find funding for these projects, with the majority of work occurring within local jurisdictions to provide a bicycle network within each community. However, safely getting between communities is often still

challenging to the less-than-hardcore cyclists due to the hill and valley terrain combined with typically narrow road infrastructure.

Enter the NTPP. Today, the funding from the NTPP is being used to fund primary network projects, local feeder connection projects, planning projects, countywide projects, and a whole host of outreach and safety-related campaigns. You can download a PDF from the MCBC website (www.marinbike.org/Campaigns/PilotPgm/FundedPilotProjects.pdf) that lists the complete set of projects. These projects were chosen over the hundreds of others that have been identified because they are thought to have the greatest impact helping people choose to walk or bike to their destinations, thus, helping to generate the greatest change in mode share possible. And while the history and terrain of the other three Pilot Program communities may be different, each community has a real and compelling need to build out their bicycle and pedestrian network.


NOT JUST A MODEL — A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN PLANNING

We return for a few moments to SRTS. What started as a Pilot Program in 2000 within just two communities for a mere \$50,000 per location has now exploded into hundreds of millions of dollars in funding that is being spent in all fifty states. SRTS has thousands of volunteers and hundreds of staffers in communities all across the country. The aim: to get more kids walking and bicycling to schools safely.

Just as SRTS is having a real and measurable impact on congestion near schools, our nation's carbon footprint, reliance of fossil fuels, childhood obesity, and helping to change behavior patterns of parents and children. Sim-

ilarly, the NTPP aims to fundamentally change how we consider and fund transportation projects. By demonstrating that there is a real, measurable change in mode shift, as well as a real, measurable return on investment on the facilities and programs implemented as part of the four NTPP communities, it is hoped that the NTPP will move out of the "Pilot Program" designation and become woven into the fabric of our transportation system, benefiting communities throughout America with new transportation policies.

Finally, as this article is going to press, it is noteworthy that the National Complete Streets Act of 2008 was introduced in the Senate on March 3rd, by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and is known as Senate bill S. 2686. Complete Streets are streets that have been designed for all users of the transportation system – including: pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users as well as children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities. A complete street is one on which even the most vulnerable users can travel safely and conveniently, and this bill would require that state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) develop complete streets policies for the use of federal funds. Co-sponsors and supporters of S. 2686 are essential - please call or write to your Senator today to gain their support. Visit the Complete Streets website: (www.completestreets.org/federal.html) for talking points, fact sheets and updated information. A history of Complete Streets can be found in Urban Velo #1.

Safe Routes to School is becoming part of the culture in America. Imagine what this country will look like after the NTPP and Complete Streets become the new standard. Bicyclists: the Future is Now. 

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Bikes on Film

By Jeff Guerrero




Ski Boys

The 2007 Bicycle Film Festival in NYC kicked off with an oddly named piece called Ski Boys. Directed by Canadian filmmaker Benny Zenga, it features Benny and his brother Christian, who take turns filming and performing their own stunts. The film was shot in Super 8 format, an old-school film medium that helped impart a beautiful, dreamlike quality.

The eight-minute film was scored by indie rock artists Jonathan Kane and From Monument To Masses. Each contributed an instrumental song that corresponded wonderfully with the visual narrative. Because there's no dialogue, Ski Boys requires the viewer to infer a storyline. Most will deduce that the film is about having fun, being active and creating your own entertainment.

A visit to Benny Zenga's website reveals more about the film. Zenga was instrumental in creating The Winking Circle, a youth collective with a passion for freak bikes and stunts. The tallbikes and handcycles that appear in the film were built by Zenga and friends, as were the ramps, sleds and assorted instruments of amusement.

We asked Benny Zenga what he's been up to these days and he responded, "I'm working on a film about

riding bicycles across Africa at the moment, teaming up with fellow BFF filmmaker Brian Vernor (director of Pure Sweet Hell). He's been writing a journal for VeloNews, and we will have a shot ready for this year's Bicycle Film Festival." 

Links

Benny Zenga

www.thewinkingcircle.com

Brian Vernor

www.bikebuzz.net/cyclocrossfilm

Bicycle Film Festival

www.bicyclefilmfestival.com

Jonathan Kane

www.myspace.com/jonathankane

From Monument To Masses

www.monument-masses.com

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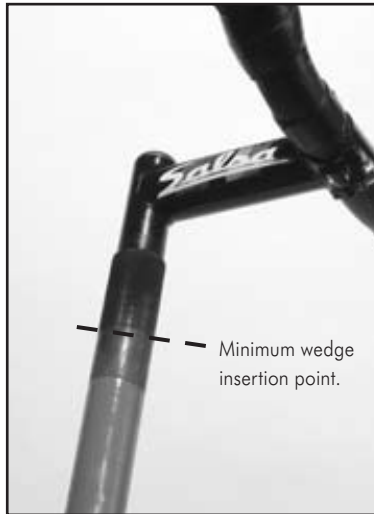
BY BRAD QUARTUCCIO

Minimum insertion lines on seatposts and threaded quill stems are best ignored. While each signifies the minimum insertion to prevent component failure, they say nothing about the health of frame and fork.

SEATPOST

With the advent of sloped top tubes and extended seat tubes, minimum insertion lines for seatposts have become useless. Many times on modern bikes they indicate an overlap that is unacceptable for frame durability. One of the most common ways for a frame to fail is due to a too-short post fatiguing the front edge of the seat tube and top tube junction.

There should be at least two inches of seatpost inside the seat tube below the bottom edge of the top tube to prevent this type of failure.



THREADED STEM

Proper insertion of a quill stem is harder to determine as it depends on how far the threading extends down the fork's steerer tube. Optimally, the wedge or expander of the quill stem should be inserted past the end of the threads to prevent the steerer from bulging or cracking when the stem is tightened. Practically, this may be impossible with given fork and stem combinations in which case use particular care upon tightening the wedge bolt. Older stems with an internal expander rather than a wedge style quill seem to be more prone to damaging modern steerers – use caution.

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DIY TRUING STAND

BY BRAD QUARTUCCIO

Truing stands are key for properly building and maintaining wheels. They also happen to be prohibitively expensive for folks using them just a few times per year. While it is perfectly reasonable to true wheels while still on the bike using the brake pads or a carefully placed thumb, one of the benefits of a truing stand is a clear sight line to the rim and the ability to make subtle adjustments to the gauge. Brake pads can make it hard to determine exactly where a deformation in the rim is located, especially when it comes to subtle adjustments of true.

The combination of a spring clamp and pencil is a simple solution. Clamp it to the fork or rear stay like so and it provides a clear view of the rim passing by the pencil along with an audible sound and mark on the rim at high points. Start at the highest point and work towards a true wheel in slow adjustments, moving the pencil closer to the rim as the wheel is brought into true. This method can also yield a visual gauge for the roundness of the wheel about the axle by removing the tire and placing the pencil above the rim, between the stays. 

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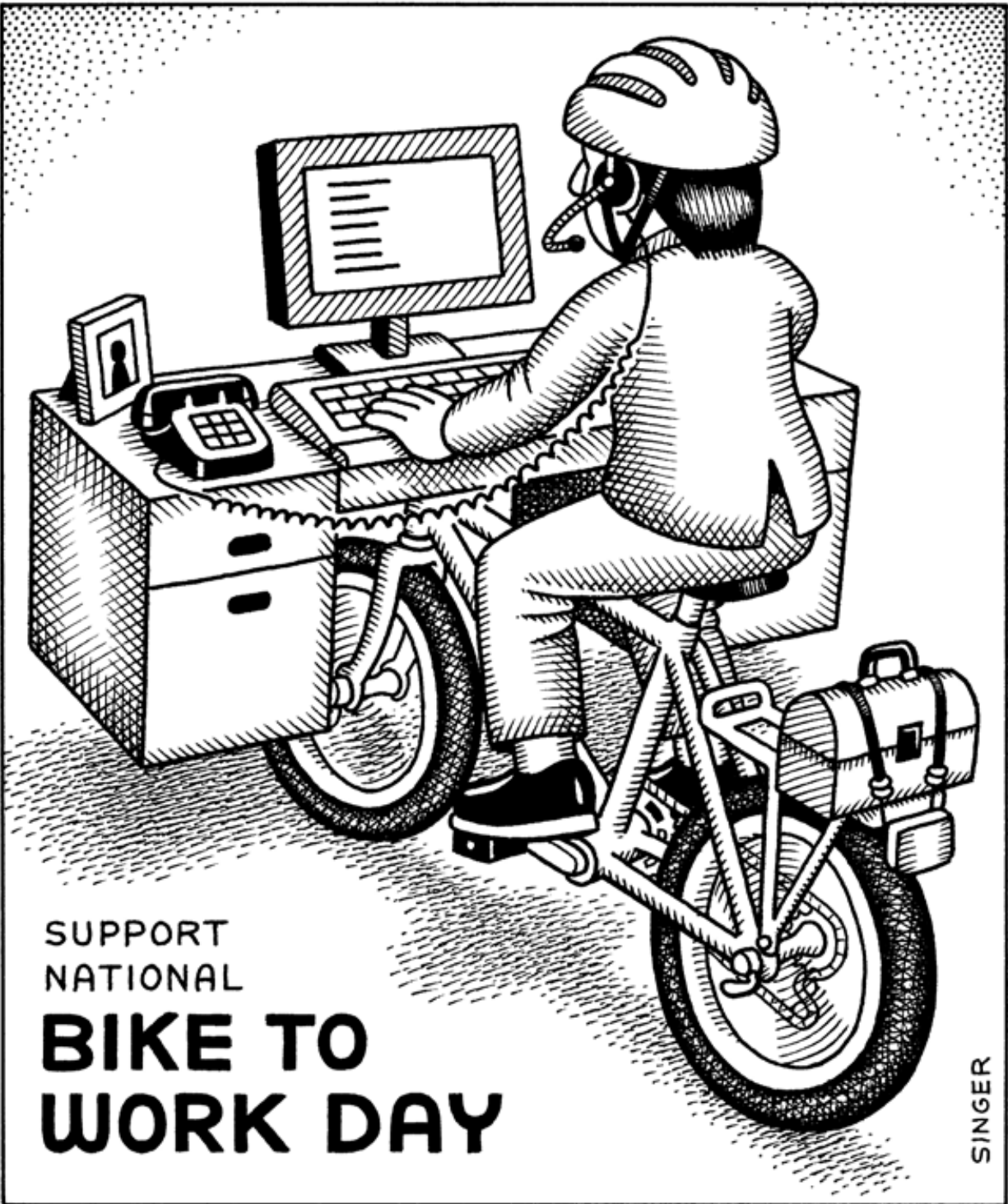


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