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#40

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Craft Revival

Handmade is hot – and through the internet and local markets, crafters are connecting with each other and making a living.

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PHOTO BY JONATHAN HÖKKLO

Montréal

They've just introduced the BIXI bike share but Montréal bikers still want more space to ride on the road.

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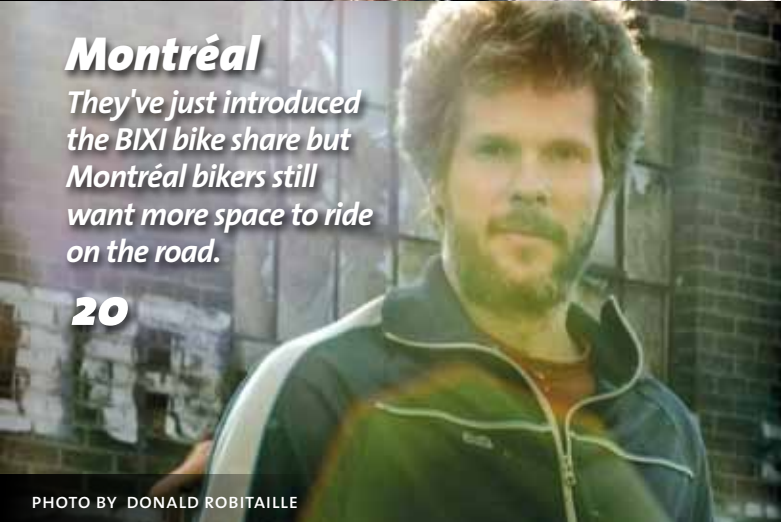


PHOTO BY DONALD ROBITAILLE

Biking with a Belly

Riding a bike when pregnant is often more comfortable than other ways of getting around.

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PHOTO BY DAVID NIDDRIE

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momentum

MOMENTUM MAGAZINE reflects the lives of people who ride bikes and provides urban cyclists with the inspiration, information, and resources to fully enjoy their riding experience and connect with local and global cycling communities.

ON THE COVER

The Oakland scraper bike crew. For more details see page 17.

BACK ROW: Avery, Rich Kidd, Deshawn. MIDDLE ROW: Twin, Free Fred, Tyrone AKA Baby Champ, Cordero, Mario. FRONT ROW: B-Janky, Andre, J-Dub.

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We're Gonna **MAKE IT**

I WAS AT a Free Geek party a while ago and commented on the number of bikes present (despite the rain) and the correlation between bike riders and computer hackers I'd been noticing. I suggested it had something to do with efficiency, referring to Steve Jobs's famous quote about computers being bicycles for the mind. "Partly," was the response. "But it's also because bikes are simple machines, and cheap, and easy to take apart and modify." Thus spoke a true Do It Yourselfer.

The concept of "Do It Yourself" (DIY) encompasses more than changing your own bike tire; it's a simple and basic human urge to make or modify something – whether that be a meal, a bike, clothing, some music, a film, or larger things like an advocacy group or a business filling a freshly recognized need. For each of these, the result is the same: a sense of satisfaction at a job well done and a desire to tell others – to share the story and the knowledge required for someone else to do it.

Because, in addition to being makers of things, people are also innate storytellers. The Internet is the best proof of this, where there is a cornucopia of links about people

doing and making things, and sharing their stories. And that act of sharing is often just as important as the initial urge to create because it serves to inspire others.

Inspiring us in this issue are stories of people doing just that: making things and explaining how and why they do. Crafters, zinesters, builders of pedal-powered sound systems, and the popular Maker Faire: all are featured here. Mitey Miss recounts how she helped to start a cycling club in Goa, and Kristen Steele offers some sage advice on how to keep a cycling advocacy group thriving. We take a self-propelled tour of the city of Montréal, present a step-by-step guide to making a set of stylish wooden fenders, and offer some thoughts on how to keep riding while pregnant.

Doing it yourself (and with friends) is usually cheap and easy, and often exhilarating. Sharing the stories and inspiring others also helps to create vibrant and healthy communities, which benefits everyone. It may seem odd to claim that something as simple as building a pair of fenders can make the world a better place, but I think it's true.

THIS AUGUST *momentum* VISITS COLORADO

MOMENTUM is excited to be sponsoring the Rocky Mountain Bicycle Show (RMBS) in Denver, Colorado, August 22-23. The RMBS is a bicycle show celebrating the community aspects of cycling. The two day show features hand-builders, alley cat races, local beer tasting, community rides, and ArtBike!. The highlight will be the ArtBike! Party at 7pm on Friday, August 21 at the TAXI art gallery. We'll be there and we hope you will be too. www.rockymountainbicycleshow.com

MOMENTUM will also visit Boulder and Fort Collins to get the full Colorado bike culture experience. Let us know about fun events and experiences that we definitely won't want to miss.

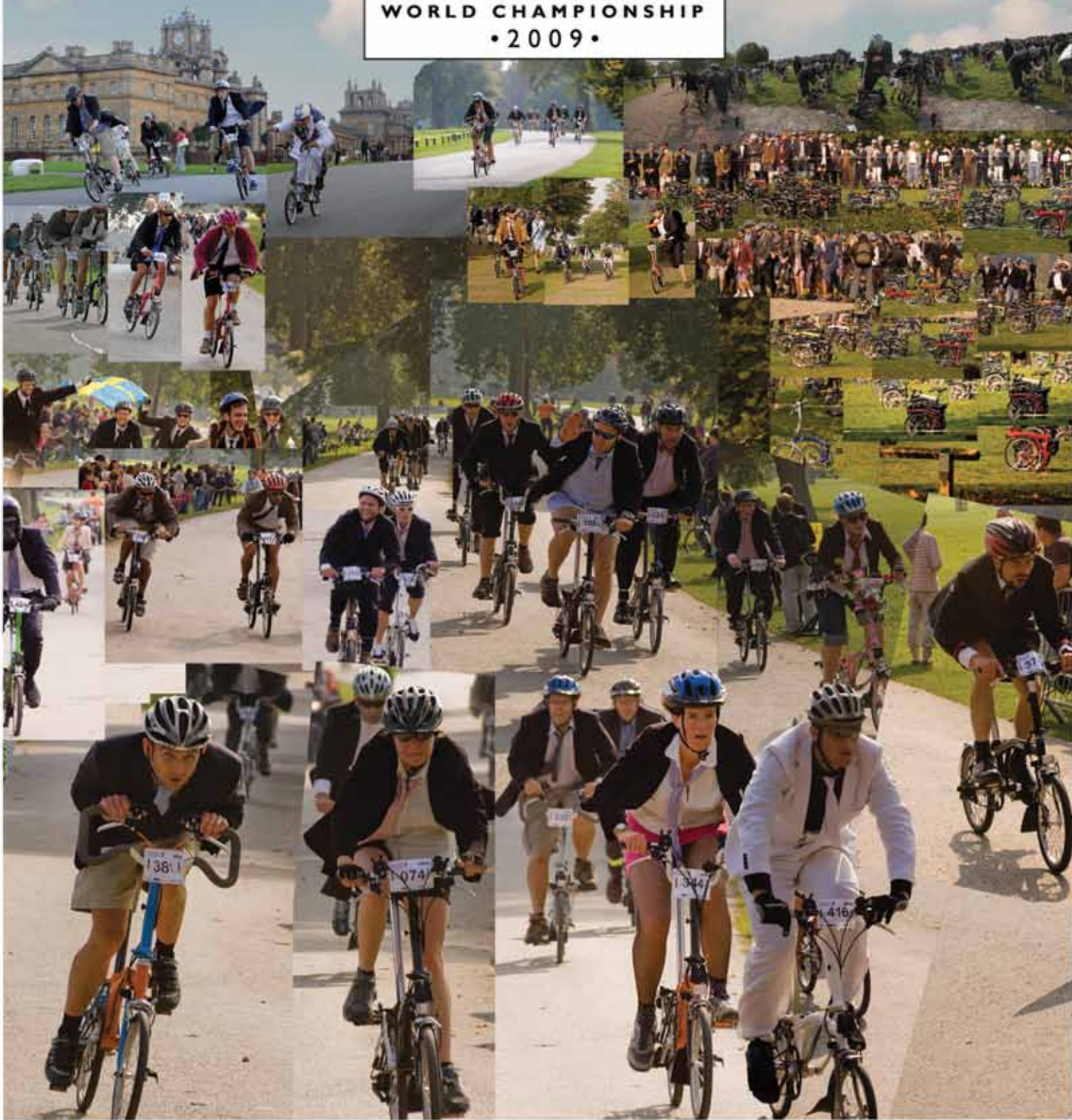
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MOMMA WAS A DIY BIKER

THIS VELO VIXEN had her training wheels on before she knew it. Brought up car-free for the first few years of life, my bicycle-centered lifestyle started at an early age. Karyn, my mom, crafted this homemade kid carrier out of a tricycle, a basket, and a little faux-fur leopard print lining for comfort and style. The carrier would of course not be complete without the side walls, preventing little fingers from making their way into the spinning wheels while riding. If you want an affordable, accessible mode of transportation, that keeps you in shape, and provides plenty of outdoor time for you kids, then why not get out a napkin and a pen, and get thinking of what invention could be next!

Adele Woodyard aka Ginja Ninja
Victoria, BC



KARYN MCCALLUM (MOM), LUKE, AND ADELE.



PHOTO BY DAVID NIDDRIE

WHOOPS!

MOMENTUM #39 – All Ages, p. 26

In the caption for the photo of Omar and son Sachaa, we mistakenly left out one of Sachaa's surnames (Rudrum) on the photo credit. Apologies to Sachaa's mum! Sachaa's full name is: Sachaa Pyar Rudrum Bhimji! 🙏

Please send us your feedback. We seek to continually improve our coverage of self-propelled culture, and we need your help. Tell us about your local cycling scene. Send us your photos too. Letters may be edited for length.

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*So what I'm saying is, essentially,
there needs to be more
hard men out there.
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GWENDAL CASTELLAN is interested in stretching people's perception of what they can accomplish on two wheels. His documentary film Long Road North (www.longroadnorth.com) showed at the "Message to Man" film Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia this June. When not contributing to MOMENTUM he is a home energy consultant for City Green Solutions in Vancouver. Read Gwendal's review of the Yuba Mundo on page 39.



AUSTIN MACDONALD is a Montréal-based travel writer concerned with urban affairs at large. He's an avid cyclist who occasionally disobeys road signals but rarely terrorizes pedestrians. He recently rode a BIXI, Montréal's rent-a-bike, and deems it a WIN. Austin delved into Montréal's bike culture, past and present for this issue of Momentum, and you may read all about it on page 20.



FRANCES MCINNIS is a freelance writer and frequent craft fair attendee. She splits her time between the beachside bike paths of Vancouver and the frenetic streets of New York. Read her article about the revival of traditional crafts and the DIY movement on page 27.



DANA PUTNAM is a library worker, a commuter cyclist, and a lover of zines. The reason she likes cycling so much is because "coasting is the best thing ever!" Her article on zines and Do It Yourself publishing can be found on page 35.



MATTHEW REAMER, who shot the cover of this issue of the scraper bike crew in Oakland, CA is a San Francisco based photographer who spends a lot of time on his bike. When he's not in the saddle or teaching photography to 7th and 8th graders, he's photographing interesting subjects like Scraper Bikes, bowling alleys, or gold miners. He recently completed his first AIDS Lifecycle and can't wait to do it again next year. www.matthewreamer.com

PHOTO BY DONALD ROBITAILLE

PHOTO BY BART NAGEL

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We want to continually improve our coverage of transportation cycling, but we need your help. Please donate to our Editorial Fund. All funds raised go directly to supporting our writers and contributors whom volunteer countless hours to help inform and educate our readers.

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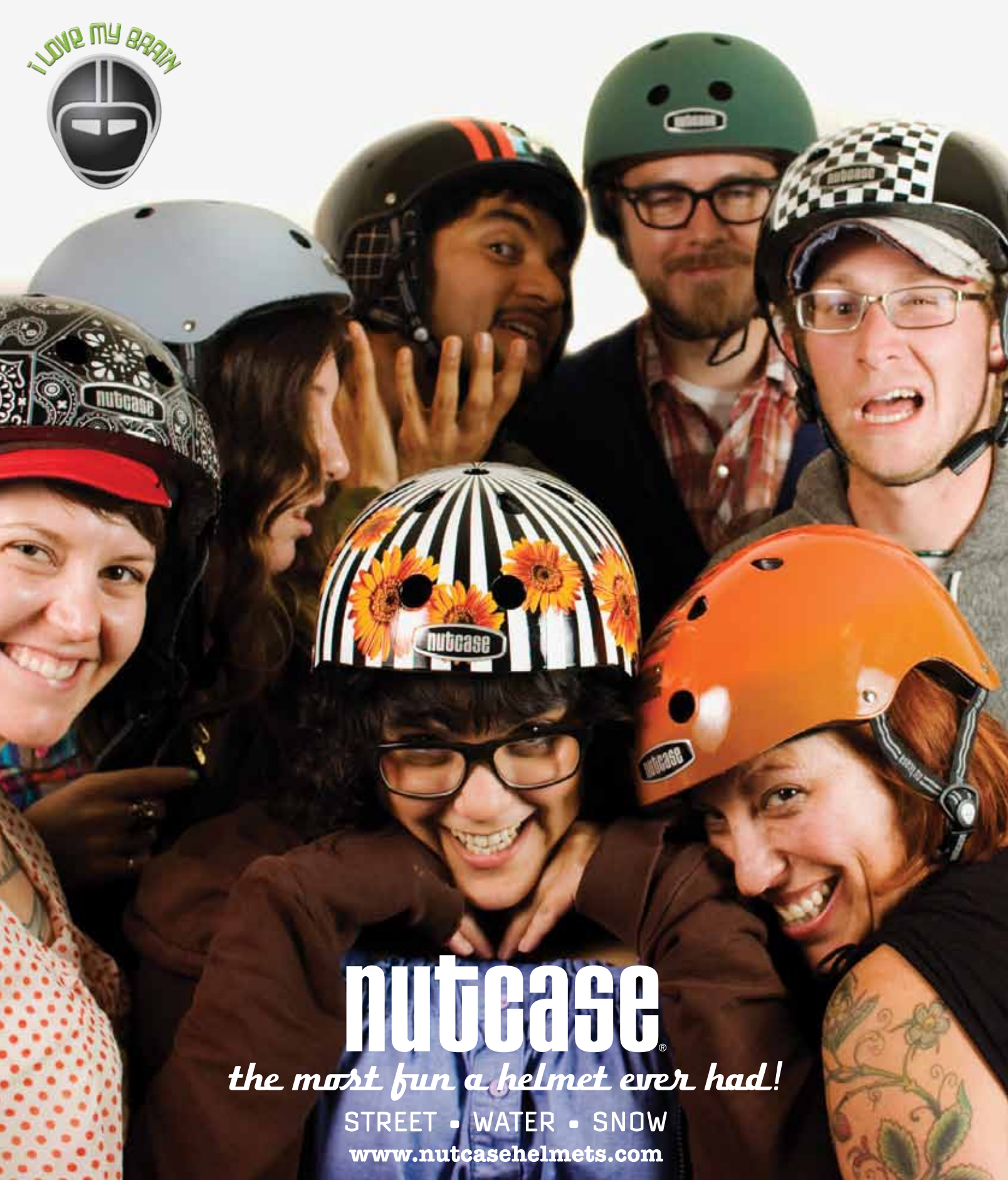
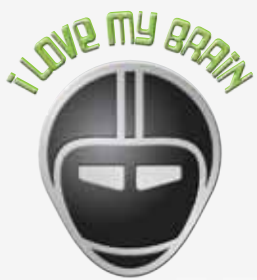
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BY KRISTEN STEELE

TORONTO CYCLISTS WIN BIKE LANES FOR JARVIS ST.

Toronto kicked off Bike Month with a big victory for cyclists. After a day-long debate, the Toronto City Council voted 28 to 18 in favour of including bike lanes and other sustainable transportation infrastructure into a major redesign project in the city's downtown core. This was a huge victory for the Toronto Cyclists Union and Toronto cyclists who packed the seats and standing room of the Council Chambers. See www.bikeunion.to for more details.

ALOHA TO COMPLETE STREETS IN HAWAII

The Islands of Aloha should see more bike and pedestrian friendly streets in the future now that Hawaii Governor Laura Lingle signed SB 718, the Hawaii Complete Streets Bill, into law on May 6th. The new law requires Hawaii's Departments of Transportation to establish policies to accommodate all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, in transportation projects. The bill is a major victory for the Hawaii Bicycling League, PATH (Peoples Advocacy For Trails Hawaii), and other members of the One Voice for Livable Islands coalition. See www.hbl.org for more details.

LA BIKE ADVOCATES SAVES BIKEWAYS DEPARTMENT

Bicycle funding was spared from the chopping block thanks to Los Angeles cyclists who mobilized in protest over proposed cuts. Facing a budget crisis, all City of Los Angeles departments submitted plans on how they would cut spending. The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) proposed to eliminate the entire Bikeways staff. The Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, CICLE (Cyclists Igniting Change Through Live Exchange) and L.A. Streetsblog rallied local cyclists who descended on the City Council hearing and spoke out to save bike program funding. The Council not only prevented cuts to bike funding, but also instructed LADOT to first consult them before proposing any future cuts to the Bikeways department.



PHOTO BY ROB LLITERAS

A WHEEL GOOD TIME AT DC'S BIKE PROM

Over 500 cyclists attended the second annual Washington, DC Bike Prom in May hosted by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. The event was complete with a prom committee who chose the theme, "Wheeling Through Time," valet bike parking, a photo booth, and the crowning of a bike prom king and queen. WABA raised \$3,000 through the event to support their advocacy work.

A NEW STREET CODE FOR NYC CYCLISTS

New York City's Transportation Alternatives launched a new campaign, Biking Rules, which they call, "a new street code for NYC cyclists." Biking Rules is an attempt to promote a better street ethic among the more than 185,000 people who pedal daily in the Big Apple. The simple principle is, "your responsibility as a street user increases with your potential to cause harm to others." Besides promoting safer and saner streets, the new Biking Rules site is also loaded with advocacy briefings, resources, bike route mapping tools, and more. Check it out at BikingRules.org.

TEXAS TO REQUIRE BIKE QUESTIONS ON STATE DRIVER'S TEST

New drivers in the Lone Star State will be more bike savvy thanks to the passage of SB 2041, a bill that will require questions about bikes on the state's driver's license exam, by the Texas House and Senate this May. This legislative victory for the Texas Bicycle Coalition is on its way to Texas Governor Rick Perry to sign into law. For more info see www.biketexas.org.

THE MESSENGER CONTINUES ON PAGE 15

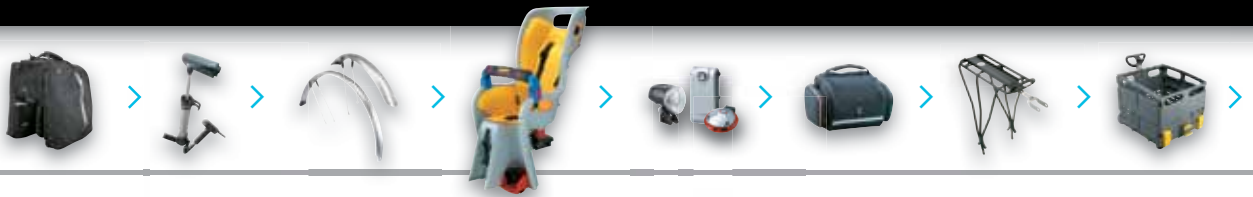


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**DO IT BETTER
THE ZOOMBOMB PYLE
MOVES UPTOWN**

BY MYKLE HANSEN

DOWNTOWN PORTLAND, OREGON has a new landmark: a tiny golden bicycle rising over the corner of 13th and West Burnside like a flower on a long steel stem. An elegant plinth at its base is the monumental new home of the Zoobomb Pyle – the chaotic, colorful jumble of children’s bicycles that brave and foolhardy Portlanders race downhill every Sunday in the weekly tradition known as Zoobombing.

In the last seven years this shifting heap of minibikes has become one of Portland’s most-photographed works of public art. And in that time the Pyle, aka the Portland Bicycle Library, has moved repeatedly due to theft, vandalism and neighbourhood complaints. But now it has a permanent, prominent home, thanks to three years of planning and a generous grant administered by the Regional Arts and Culture Council.

“I don’t think I could have smiled any bigger,” said multi-disciplinary artist Vanessa Renwick, who collaborated with co-artist Brian Borello, RACC, and a committee of Zoobombers to

realize this joyous monument to bike fun. “At the beginning we asked: ‘What’s wrong with the pyle as it is?’ But if it had to change, I think we made it better. It accentuates the shape of the bikes and celebrates the absurdity of monuments. Still, I was blown away that the City of Portland would do this.”

There’s been some controversy over the decision by Mayor Sam Adams to fund minibike-parking-art, but none of the naysayers attended the dedication ceremony on May 30th. A raucous crowd of bicyclists in animal costumes led a parade from the pyle’s old location, then heard speeches from Kirsten Calhoun of RACC, Zoobomb bike librarian “Handsome” Dave Terry, and Mayor Adams himself. The mayor spoke eloquently on the importance of functional public art, bike culture, and keeping Portland weird. Then the ribbon was cut, the bikes were piled on, and dancing filled the streets. 🚲

zoobomb.net

odoka.org/the_work/zoobomb_pyle

INSET: DEDICATION PARTY WITH MAYOR SAM ADAMS AND THE ZOOMBOMBERS. RIGHT: THE BIKE PYLE. PHOTOS BY DAN LIU, BIKEPORTLAND.ORG



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TYRONE STEVENSON AND RONNELL ANGELO PUT SOME MUSIC ON A SCRAPER BIKE AT BEAT SALE PAC-MAN AUDIO. PHOTO BY DUSTIN JENSEN

SCRAPER BIKES ARE a style spawned by teenagers in Oakland, and popularized by the hip-hop group Trunk Boiz on YouTube. Tyrone Stevenson Jr., one of the Trunk Boiz, pioneered the scraper bike style a couple years ago, creating pinwheel decorated spokes with tinfoil, re-used cardboard, candy wrappers and paint. Scraper bikes are a response to Oakland's scraper car aesthetic. The video of the Trunk Boiz song "Scraper Bike" caught attention on YouTube in 2007 and has garnered millions of views since.

Stevenson participated in this year's Maker Faire in San Mateo, CA where the **MOMENTUM** crew had the chance to meet him. He has also started making a living decorating bikes for other people.

The scraper bike crew are aware and proud of that their bikes help promote green transportation, and they have also connected scraper biking with another important cause: raising awareness and unity against gun violence in their neighbourhoods. In 2008 the Trunk Boiz, in collaboration with Bike 4 Life, and Silence the Violence, presented the Scraper Bike 4 Life ride and barbecue in West Oakland. The message was to stop the bullets and violence by calling for a gun truce. It was also a celebration of creativity and expression mixed with a physically active lifestyle and the love of the bicycle. The mile-long bike ride drew over 100 people and consisted mostly of youth riders on colourful scraper bikes. The Second annual Bike 4 Life ride is on Saturday, July 25 starting at 2pm at Lakeside Playground, 468 Perkins St. in Oakland finishing up with a celebration in Demfry Park at 3pm. With all the attention on scraper bikes this year, the ride is sure to have a big, bright, beautiful turnout – and a positive impact on the people of Oakland.

Now bikers from Portland to Albuquerque are making their own versions of scraper bikes. Search for scraper bikes on Flickr, or watch the Trunk Boiz video on YouTube for inspiration – then go build your own scraper bike!

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How To Jumpstart and Maintain **A LIVELY COALITION**

WORKING DAILY WITH budding bicycle and pedestrian advocacy leaders throughout the US and Canada, I've seen many organizations spark and fizzle while others develop into a lasting flame. So what separates the groups whose fire is short-lived from those that go on for decades and go on to win big victories for biking and walking rights? Here are five tips that healthy, lively, and long-lasting advocacy groups almost always follow.

Build a Dream Team: Advocacy is all about relationship building. And a successful advocacy organization starts with a dream team: the board and staff that lead it. Even if you're starting out alone, there are likely many other people in your community working solo on your issue. Pick your board members with caution however; one self-serving individual can be debilitating. Choose leaders with non-profit and business management experience who are passionate about the cause and have something to contribute. Remember the four Ds: board members are doers, door-openers, donors, or dead weight.

Brand Your Organization: Who are you and what are you about? Every organization starts with a name, a mission, and vision. These form the foundation of your group's identity. Use them to build other identity elements: a logo, a website, and print materials. Your mission statement should be short and memorable so that your leaders can easily recite it. Every new introduction should start with your organization's full name and mission statement. Along with identity, persistence and consistency are key!

Have Three Winnable Campaigns on the Burner: Host a planning meeting with your group's leaders and stakeholders to determine which activities should be your priorities. Ideally you will always have three campaigns to work on. Two should be achievable in the near-term and make real changes on the ground (a new bike lane or trail for example)

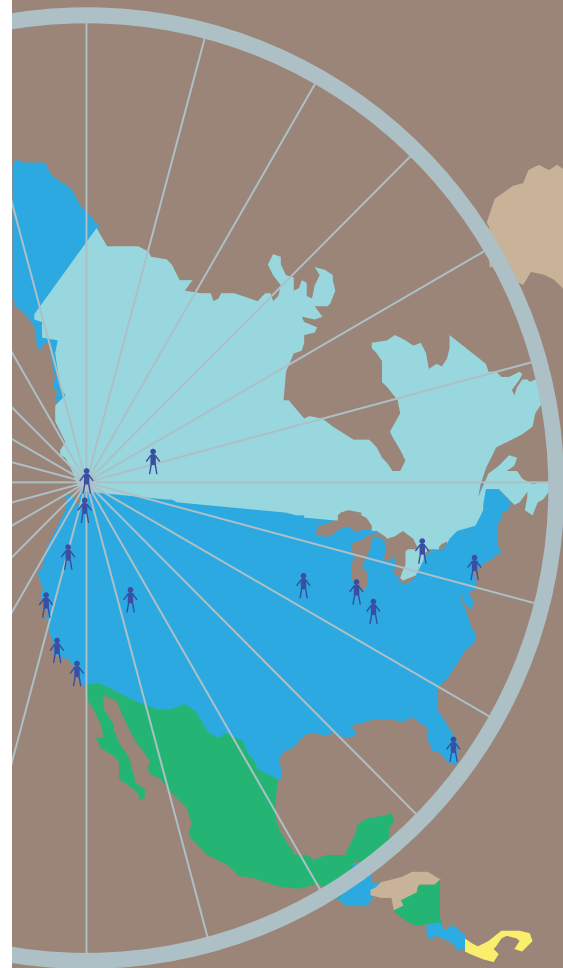
and the other can be a longer-term initiative (a legislative campaign or a bike and walk to school program). Choose campaigns that are winnable, will unite your organization, and will attract new members and supporters. Think of each effort as feeding your growing organization. As you grow bigger and stronger, you will be able to take on even bigger campaigns and make more of an impact.

Tell Your Story: Communicate, communicate, communicate. Keeping your organization's leaders, members, and donors informed of your work is one of the most important elements of success. You might be doing great things, but if no one else knows about it, you won't get the support you need for lasting success. Collect email addresses and contact information at every opportunity. Try to send an e-newsletter or email update at least once a month to invite your supporters to your events, and ask them to take action on your campaigns and/or for donations to support your work.

Reach Higher, Hire: As passionate as your volunteer leaders may be, burnout is inevitable for an all-volunteer run organization. After all, managing campaigns, memberships, organization finances, and communications is a full-time job. Hiring a staff person can catapult your organization to the next level. Your first staff person should be an executive director. Only an ED will have the capacity to lead your organization and fundraise for its continued existence. Base the salary on the local pay scale for non-profit executives. Worried about not having enough money? You only need 4-6 months salary in the bank to hire someone. The new ED will be tasked with working with board members to ensure continued funding. 🚲

Kristen Steele works for the Alliance for Biking and Walking, the North American coalition of over 140 bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations, where she gives advice, develops resources, and leads trainings for advocacy leaders.

"Advocacy is all about relationship building. And a successful advocacy organization starts with a dream team."



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MONTRÉAL



BY AUSTIN MACDONALD

PHOTOS BY DONALD ROBITAILLE

IN LATE 1999, Montréal was crowned North America's most bike-friendly city by *Bike Magazine*. Yet, for Montréal's commuter cyclists, something didn't add up. Their daily journeys were harrowing experiences – punctuated by extreme weather conditions, race-crazed drivers, parked-car “door prizes,” careless pedestrians, rim-rending potholes, and poorly plotted paths. At the time, Montréal was surrounded by kilometres of regional bike routes for leisure and touring but lacked downtown bike paths, and most notably, an east-west artery through the heart of the city.

Two years later, Peter Gibson took matters into his own hands. Under cover of night, he stencilled bike path icons down the middle of several streets in the Plateau and Mile End neighbourhoods, creating an ad hoc network of guerrilla bike paths on Saint-Urbain, Saint-Viateur, Jeanne Mance, and Clark streets as well as on Laurier Avenue.

“The first bicycle stencils I did were pretty crude. They were very simple, I imitated the functional language the city uses,” he explains of the hits that launched his career as Roadsworth – now an internationally renowned street artist. (His *nom de plume* is a nod to the influence of British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy.)

Since then, his illegal ornamenting of cities' road signalling has flummoxed many municipal officials and earned him high-profile sanctioned commissions. In 2007, he painted flocks of flying doves on London's asphalt along the route of the Tour de France's first stage. He was the subject of a recent National Film Board of Canada documentary, *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*, that was a surprise hit at South by Southwest 2009. The film tells the story of how he beat a rap sheet of 85 mischief charges by the city of Montréal, a feat that cemented his notoriety and street cred.

“It seemed strange that there's a dedicated space for pedestrians, there's a dedicated space for cars, yet cyclists were forced to operate somewhere in between,” Gibson says. “I think how you move about in the city determines your relationship to it. Your mode of transportation puts you into a certain camp. So as a cyclist, I felt that we were somehow second-class citizens,” adds the bilingual, out-of-province, Montréal expat, chuckling at his dated allusion.

Indeed, Montréal has always been a fragile experiment in coexistence. Historic linguistic tensions have largely subsided between franco-, anglo-, and allophones¹. Modern day, multilingual Montréal's most politicized battle takes place on the city roads between users of the different modes of transportation; cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians jockey for position in traffic as well as in the hearts and minds of municipal officials.

Solidarity among Montréal's cyclists is strong; numbering around 800,000, they represent a highly visible and mature urban subculture with do-it-yourself community bike shops; municipal pressure groups; a cyclist's café; the Canal Lachine, Canada's busiest bike path; well-attended Critical Mass rides, and even a provincial QANGO², Vélo Québec. This government-funded non-profit hosts an annual calendar of pro-bike events, the high point being the Féria

1. IN QUEBEC, AN ALLOPHONE IS A RESIDENT, USUALLY AN IMMIGRANT, WHOSE MOTHER TONGUE OR HOME LANGUAGE IS NEITHER ENGLISH NOR FRENCH
2. QANGO: QUASI-AUTONOMOUS NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

du vélo, a bike week in early June. The 2009 edition marked the 25th anniversary of the Tour de l'île – a 52 kilometre metaphoric lap of the island by bike – drawing over 30,000 cyclists.

“In the late 1970s, during the oil crisis, bikes became fashionable among adults in Québec as a mode of transportation, but the first Tour de l'île really put cycling on the map,” explains Vélo Québec's president, Suzanne Lareau.

Perhaps what's most remarkable about Montréal's bike riders is the matter-of-fact, low-tech, and utilitarian way the majority of them go about their business, incorporating commuting by bike into their daily lives – weather permitting. As in any urban centre, there are many species of cyclists, ranging from the self-conscious tie-wearing hipsters wobbling by on antique bicycles to courier-inspired Grrl riders with dreadlocks and army-surplus cargo shorts zipping around on fixies. However, as a survey of the few existing downtown bike racks will reveal, the second-hand special or “beater” is the bike of choice for most Montrealers. A stolen plastic milk crate from the *dépanneur* bungeed to a seat-stay rack is the ultimate statement in bike vanity. Often regarded as a fashion-conscious bunch, they're street smart too; many Montrealers shun



MAP ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEFF KULAK

gear and fancy rides in reaction to rampant bike theft. For this reason, a low profile unremarkable bike is every season's new black.

There has never been a better time to bike in Montréal than in 2009. Legions of cyclists are out in visibly greater numbers than ever before, filling the air with the clicking sounds of shifters, and with whispers of “BIXI” on everyone's lips. Launched in mid-May, mayor Gerald Tremblay's bike-sharing system (3,000 bikes at 300 downtown racks, eventually) and the resulting international media hoopla reconfirmed cycling as a chic mode of transportation, placing it front and centre in the city's collective imagination. Whether this will buy cyclists more room on the road and more patience from honk-happy drivers remains to be seen.

Cynical armchair city councillors are quick to comment that Mayor Tremblay timed his BIXI coup for a municipal election year, adding that the second-term mayor won his first re-election in part through a last-minute fit of public works, shamelessly repaving many downtown thoroughfares. It's possible that the slam-dunk success of the new bike-sharing program may make him a hands-down favourite in November.

It's also now apparent that BIXI is only one facet of Mayor Tremblay's wide-ranging, multi-modal transportation plan, which also includes a new branch of the Métro north to Laval, and the demolition and reconstruction of the Turcot Interchange,

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



Céline Bianchi

BY AUSTIN MACDONALD

CÉLINE BIANCHI, HER partner, and their three children live in Pointe-St-Charles, a neighbourhood close to Montréal's downtown. She spoke with MOMENTUM about why her family doesn't own a car.

“It's a lifestyle choice for many reasons, including money; it integrates exercise into your life and of course, the ecological aspect,” she explains.

Ms. Bianchi recently gave birth to a baby girl and recalls the excitement of getting back on her bicycle afterward. “Two weeks ago, when I got back on my bike I literally screamed with joy. I felt like Freddy Mercury.”

The couple gave up their car five years ago, shortly after the birth of their oldest daughter. “Most people think that car ownership is equivalent to freedom. For us there's actually a lot of freedom in not having a car.” They are members of Communauto, a local car-sharing service they use for errands or trips requiring a car.

“We weren't natural born car owners: we used to forget that we had one,” she admits, “When we got our fifth parking ticket we decided to get rid of the car. It was dangerous, expensive, and a pain in the neck.”

Bianchi is preparing for the day when her eldest daughter, now five, will bike on her own. “That's the question and it's a scary one. We've set the example. She sees us cycling, so obviously one day this is going to come up,” she says.

The second-born son, a toddler, already shows a growing road-sense, looking both ways before crossing streets with his parents and boasting about his prowess. “My goal as a mother since they were born was to make them ridiculously scared of cars,” she reveals “I love living in the city but I have a pathological fear of cars since I've become a mother.”



Ingrid Birker

BY AUSTIN MACDONALD

THE FIRST STOP on Ingrid Birker's "Stones and Beer" Bike Tour is on the west side of the Redpath Museum, on McGill's University's gated downtown campus. The current Science Outreach Coordinator of Canada's first museum points to a limestone foundation block containing the fossilized remains of a brachiopod.

"Five million years ago this whole area was covered in a beautiful and nutritious coral sea. This is deep time," she begins, thus launching her three-hour, Sunday evening bike tours of approximately a dozen other arcane points of historic and natural science interest in downtown Montréal. Mercifully, the tour winds up at the McAuslan microbrewery, beside the Atwater market in St. Henri. Beer tasting and hilarity ensue.

As well as being an impassioned and engaging conversationalist and tour guide, she's also part of a rare breed of Montréal cyclists who bike through the winter. "The snow started to fall and I tried it. I took some of the air out of my tires and lowered the seat," she recalls of her first winter riding her bike, "You don't need designer gear. You need boots with flat soles, earmuffs, a scarf, and mittens."

Her nine kilometre route home was the inspiration for her bike tours. "I began looking at stuff along the way." What's the payoff of her daily commute? "For sure I'm one of the happier people who arrive here in the morning. And this is a happy place," she says. 🚲



PHOTO BY RICHARD VACHON

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an expansive basket weave of concrete highways seemingly in a state of imminent collapse. An express rail link to the airport from downtown and rapid bus lanes are also planned.

Truth be told, there is a severe lack of *bonhomie* between the city's cyclists, who slash through busy crosswalks; pedestrians, who jaywalk blindly; and drivers, who may not be able to turn right on reds, but occasionally go straight through them. Chalk up the generalized disregard for traffic signalling to the city's bohemian mindset. In the spirit of good fences making good neighbours, more downtown bike paths are the way forward to soothe Montréal's road rage; reduce rush hour congestion; and encourage alternate transportation, greener living, and greater civility between all three groups sharing the road.

Downtown bike paths will play a crucial role in the city's \$8.1-billion, 20-year master plan. Adopted in 2004, it pledges in part,

"The popularity of cycling isn't something spontaneous, it didn't emerge on its own."

— Suzanne Lareau



"a continuous, efficient bikeway network designed to improve access to the city's main activity areas." In addition to bike paths, the \$134 million earmarked for cycling infrastructure will also build showers and change rooms for cyclists in municipal workplaces and public institutions, and provide secure indoor parking facilities or bike lockers at subway and commuter rail stations.

In 2007, the city's Cycling Action Plan began to yield some actual results. In May, the city announced it would spend \$50 million in seven years for new and existing bike paths, doubling the total kilometres from 400 to 800. And in November, the city inaugurated a curbed, two-way, east-west, four kilometre downtown bike path on De Maisonneuve Boulevard.

"The city opted for a bidirectional path and eliminated parking all along it. Otherwise the cars don't see the cyclists, causing conflicts to arise at intersections," explains Ms. Lareau. It's a hot topic of conversation among Montréal's most nitpicky cyclists, endlessly mulling over other, better alternatives, which usually spiral into cries to eliminate cars altogether. "Listen, we can debate whether it's good or not. Bike paths aren't an exact science. I'm of the mind that we now finally have a great east-west axis for getting around. It legitimizes the presence of cyclists downtown," Lareau responds.

"The politicians and city planners needed to put their money where their mouths were," says Roadsworth. "I think it's changing." Perhaps the city's most tangible commitment to championing

BIXI

North America's First Large-Scale Bike Share

BY ADAM POPPER

MONTRÉAL LIKES TO think of itself as the most European city in North America. So it is fitting that after 30+ years of hosting a vibrant bike culture, Montréal would launch North America's first large-scale bike sharing system. Building on Paris' success with Vélib', the first of Montréal's 3,000 public bikes hit the streets in May 2009. BIXI combines the freedom and desirability of cycling with the convenience of taxis.

Although it is available to tourists for \$5 per day, this system is aimed at promoting bicycling for local residents. Michel Philibert, BIXI's spokesperson, says the system has been put in place "to favour active transportation, in hopes to have fewer cars and more physical activity." BIXI is intended as a complement to the public transportation system and is teaming up with public transit service providers and the non-profit car-sharing service Communauto to offer rebates for combined use.

BIXI has emulated Paris' Velib' and Barcelona's Bici recipe for success. All three focus on providing easy-to-use bikes available 24/7, offer the first 30 minutes free, and have added unique parts to the bikes to prevent theft. Yet BIXI has also taken the design and implementation model to the next level. BIXI is not operated by an outdoor advertising firm – who operate most of Europe's systems in exchange for exclusive street advertising rights – but by Montréal's parking authority.

The BIXI model means that streets are less



PHOTO BY ADAM POPPER

commercialized, but user fees play a larger role in funding the experiment. A season's pass costs \$78, and a month's subscription is \$28. Although pricier than its European cousins, it's still cheaper than having a bike stolen, or even a season's worth of maintenance and replacement parts.

Although the cycling season never ends for some, snow up to your knees is Montréal's primary cycling obstacle. To face this challenge, the BIXI season runs from May to November. BIXI has implemented, Philibert says, "a system that is easily installable, transportable, and removable. The stations are solar powered and wireless."

The bike design has also been heralded. BIXI was rated one of TIME Magazine's Best 50 Inventions of 2008. Its design features a carrying rack, lights powered by the bike's movement, and a comfortable, adjustable seat. The thick tires add weight, but prevent damage and make the system more dependable.

Another important ingredient to this model's success is the visibility of the shared bikes. Not only are they located near places of interest and along existing bike routes (never more than 300 metres apart), but real-time info about bike availability and station location is easily accessible on the web.

I test rode BIXI and found it heavy yet easy to ride. It handled smoothly and easily adjusted to my body. With its three internal gears, it will manage Montréal's hilly terrain but it's not a mountain climber. Most impressive is the button on each bike that sends a wireless signal to the mobile repair fleet when a bike is not working.

Philibert is optimistic and believes this is the model for North America's cities. "We are interested in sharing our expertise with other cities. We have already displayed the system in Boston, New York, and Toronto. Other cities want to know how to favour active transportation." 🚲

cyclists at the expense of cars has been eliminating many downtown parking spots, whether for bike paths or for BIXI bike racks. Montréal's parking authority operates BIXI in large part because it has the curbside real estate to install the solar-powered stands. In the meantime, forever-circling drivers looking for parking continue to fume.

It's suddenly a new golden age for biking in Montréal and the future looks bright. Michel Labrecque, founder of Vélo Québec, is now head of the Société de Transport de Montréal. What? The former head of a provincial bike lobby at the head of the city's transit commission? Why, that's unheard of in North American, big city municipal politics.

It wasn't always this way and it didn't come without a fight. "The popularity of cycling isn't something spontaneous, it didn't emerge on its own," says Ms. Lareau about Montréal's longstanding bike activism.

In addition to Vélo Québec's activities between 1976 and 1997, Claire Morissette was another voice of the movement, co-founding Le Monde à Bicyclette – a militant citizens group of 300 to 400

members. They excelled at direct action and guerrilla theatre. Circa 1987, MAB members stormed the Métro system carrying all sorts of improbable sports equipment, skis, toboggans, ladders, and giant cardboard elephants onto the subway to protest the absurdity of its rule banning bicycles. Since then, cyclists are able to transport their bikes on Montréal's Métro and commuter trains except during peak hours.

Ms. Morissette's legacy includes an annual "Die-In" (September 22), a direct action where bicycle activists delight in sprawling and playing dead at a major intersection. She didn't bear the company of cars gladly and was a leading lobbyist for more bike paths and for opening the South Shore to cyclists via the bridges.

Often referred to as "Joan of Arc on a bicycle," Ms. Morissette died in 2007 due to illness. The following summer, Montréal's city council voted unanimously to name the new downtown cyclist artery along De Maisonneuve Boulevard: Piste Cyclable Claire Morissette.

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JUST AFTER A FLASH STORM, THE SUNSET ON LAURIER WEST PROVIDES A GOLDEN AMBIANCE FOR CYCLISTS CAUGHT IN THE RAIN. PHOTO BY JONATHAN-CLARK.COM

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Montréal's extreme winters of ice, snow, and freezing temperatures mean that BIXI, or biking in general, can't be a year-round, sustainable transportation option for all. Only the bravest cyclists commute through the winter. It's a testament to Ms. Morissette's vision, that in the late 1990s the devout cyclist started Communauto, Montréal's commercial car-sharing service (called "Communist-auto" by its suburban detractors).

It's just one more ingredient in Montréal's "transportation cocktail" that city officials and alternate transportation advocates will be promoting in the future – anything but single-occupant individually-owned cars in the downtown core. Clever commuters could combine various modes of transportation on one journey: Home-Walk-Métro-Bixi-Work. And an increasing number of Montrealers are drinking the intermodal Kool-Aid.

"We use Communauto, it's very square in a sense; you plan it ahead, you have to bring it back at a certain time, and you can't be spontaneous. When we want to keep our options open we look at public transit," says Celine Bianchi, film festival coordinator, mother of three (including a newborn), and matriarch of a cycling family. Location is key. "The difference between us and a suburban

family is that we have services and ways to get to them that don't require a car," she says from her backyard deck in Pointe-St-Charles, an up-and-coming neighbourhood near the downtown core.

"Within the city, cycling's quicker – there's no two ways about it."

"I'm set up for two," she says as she ponders how she and her partner will now configure their bikes as a family of five. "We have a double buggy, where I can put the three-year-old and the five-year-old but then there's nowhere to put the baby. The buggy actually rigs to the seat of the bicycle, so you can't use the baby seat as well. So, yeah, it's a bit of a puzzle."

"We both like to take bike paths with the kids. People are insane on the road," Ms. Bianchi continues, "Something happens, you're not quite the same person you are when you're cycling. I'd like to think that if everyone were a bit more of a cyclist it would help."

Roadsworth's bike lane stencils are long gone, washed away by weather and tire friction. "I had imagined a cinematic fantasy in my head that people would take to the streets on their bikes," he recalls. "In the end [the stencils] were a playful suggestion."

Yet the artist remains adamant. "If we really are interested in promoting alternative transportation, then the infrastructure needs to be there. Montréal needs dedicated lanes for cycling." 🚲

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FULL CYCLE

Serving Meals on Two Wheels with Montréal's Santropol Roulant

BY FIONA O'CONNOR

AT THE SOUTH-EASTERN foot of Montréal's scenic Mont-Royal and less than a block away from Jeanne Mance Park, a kitchen full of volunteers is packing up some eighty freshly baked meals to be delivered throughout the city by foot, bike, and car. On the menu: coconut chicken curry served with Brussels sprouts and turnip purée, a choice of a fresh fruit salad or green salad, and a homemade dessert or pudding.

Hot, hearty helpings like these – served five days a week to a total of 150 regular and occasional clients – are the essence of Santropol Roulant, a Montréal community organization that aims to break social isolation and connect generations of city dwellers through the common language of food.

Roulant runs a gamut of projects: The Rooftop Garden, which provides roughly 30 per cent of their organic vegetables in the summer months; SantroVélo, a community bike shop serving both the public and meals-on-wheels volunteers; year-round cooking workshops; intergenerational events and activities; and a worm composting project designed to meet the organization's zero waste and minimal emissions operations goals. Yet despite its multi-faceted nature, the central purpose of the non-profit charity is one and the same.

WHILE EN ROUTE DELIVERING MEALS, SANTROPOL ROULANT VOLUNTEER TOM QUINN STOPS AT AN INTERSECTION IN THE MCGILL GHETTO, ONE OF EIGHT MONTREAL NEIGHBOURHOODS SERVED BY THE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. PHOTO BY FIONA O'CONNOR

"I think it all comes down to the meal delivery at heart," said 28-year old Tim Murphy, Sustainability Coordinator for Roulant. "Everything we do is about that core mission of getting meals to people with a loss of autonomy... As we grow, what keeps us focused and together is the act of preparing and delivering the meals."

Though the majority of its meal service recipients are seniors, the organization's reach extends to Montrealers whose autonomy is limited by other factors, such as poverty, disability, or cognitive impairments.

"For some people it can be a temporary injury, like someone's broken both of their wrists or something, so they need help for a while getting food," Murphy said. "For some people it's more permanent – they're getting on in age and they find it difficult to cook for themselves or to eat well – otherwise they're eating cookies and tea, or a fried egg every night."

As a community organization, Santropol Roulant does not determine who is eligible to receive their \$3.50 a-day meal, made – as much as possible – from organic, Québec-produced ingredients and surplus from local grocers. Instead, clients – who become members of the organization upon receiving



SANTROPOL ROULANT VOLUNTEER PAT QUINN DELIVERS A HOT MEAL AND A FRIENDLY SMILE TO ROBERT JAMES, ONE OF 150 RECIPIENTS OF THE MONTREAL ORGANIZATION'S MEALS-ON-WHEELS SERVICE. PHOTO BY FIONA O'CONNOR

a meal – are referred through social workers, doctors, or local community service centres.

Santropol Roulant's mandate of fostering contact between generations serves the needs of the elderly or socially isolated, and strives to engage youth for whom a sense of kinship is equally vital. Rooted in Montréal's minority anglophone community though not limited to it, Roulant's weekly team of over 100 volunteers is an eclectic mix of out-of-town university students and Montrealers by both birth and affinity who range in age between 14 and 35.

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A VOLUNTEER MECHANIC HELPS A SANTROPOL ROULANT MEMBER WITH SOME REPAIRS ON THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF SANTROVÉLO. PHOTO BY FIONA O'CONNOR

Thirty-one year old Pat Quinn is one of Santropol Roulant's longest-standing volunteers. The Ontario-born musician and part-time bartender has been delivering meals by bike for four and half years. For him, the Saint-Urbain and Duluth hub is like a home away from home. After a stint living in Toronto, Quinn returned to the French-Canadian metropolis and the organization that first helped him get to know it.

"As soon as I came back, I started right back at Santropol Roulant like it was the only family I knew here ... there's something very warm about it," he said.

Having worked in various areas of the organization, from fundraising to the kitchen, Quinn said he most prefers delivering meals by bike for the personal freedom and level of social interaction it affords him.

"The delivery, for me, is just a fun thing to do," he said. "I like to get out and bike around the city anyway and it gives a good justification for doing that because you can see that it's helping people and many of the clients are so thankful when you stop by. You can just tell that they appreciate the smile and the generosity that we try to bring them."

Over half of the meals delivered are done so on foot or by bike. In the case of Santropol Roulant, the marriage of cycling and food is the logical outcome of a value system premised on sustainability and outreach. It's also a primary means of effecting social change at the grassroots level. Santropol Roulant, the bike shop housed in a section of Roulant's basement and which often spills out onto the Duluth sidewalk on nice days, is one of the organization's many entry points for

community members and volunteers alike.

Established in 2006 for the purposes of maintaining Roulant's fleet of three delivery bikes, Santropol has since evolved into one of several low-cost cycling co-ops in the city. For either five dollars a visit or 15 dollars for an annual membership, cyclists of all persuasions can use the space and its tools to repair, tune up, or build their bikes from scratch, drawing on the expertise of friendly and laid-back volunteer mechanics.

Through the sale of memberships, parts and bikes, Santropol is one of Roulant's self-financing initiatives, complementing the funding it receives from federal, provincial, and municipal governments; private donors; businesses, and foundations. But with no specifically allocated funds, Santropol relies heavily on its reputation within the community and therefore, on the quantity of bikes and bike parts it receives through donation.

Santropol Roulant, like the bikes its members build, is an emblem of regeneration. With its efforts focused on improving the quality of life for all citizens and its mandate to equip youth with the professional skills to do so, there is no doubt the social value of organizations such as Roulant will only increase in the future – something Pat Quinn is as sure about as his love of Montréal:

"So many people could benefit from this experience as a way of immersing yourself in the city life, meeting new people and exploring parts of the city you wouldn't normally visit, plus seeing a lot of different types of elevators! For me it's fun, and good karma." 🚲



Wearing their Way

OUT OF MODERN MASS CONSUMPTION

MEMBERS OF KNITTA AND VOLUNTEERS COZY UP PARKING METERS IN BROOKLYN. PHOTO BY JONATHAN HÖKKLO

BY FRANCES MCINNIS

IF YOU WERE strolling in Brooklyn Heights, New York on the morning of May 14, 2009, you might have passed 69 parking meters sporting cheerful knitted cosies: blue and yellow stripes; crocheted cartoonish flowers, a rainbow of thick acrylic yarn. The Knitta graffiti crew had struck again! Members of the Houston-based crew (who go by aliases like PolyCotN and MascuKnitivity) have “tagged” everything from abandoned beer bottles to Notre Dame Cathedral with their spray-paint-free graffiti. They have also inspired copycats around the globe who congregate online to share photos of their own knitted capers: a pre-Industrial-Revolution pursuit at work in a post modern world.

Knitta is part of a thriving Do-It-Yourself craft movement. Today’s DIYers are reviving the hand-making skills that, only a generation or two ago, were a normal and necessary part of daily life. “The craft movement went through a phase when it was all about your grandmother. Now it’s starting to be more people in our age group,” says Andrea Tucker, who, with her black hair pulled back, looks younger than her 29 years. Tucker organizes an indie craft fair in Vancouver, BC called “Got Craft?” with husband Robert, 31. She says that the indie DIY scene is miles away from the average community centre craft fair – more underground punk zine than Little House on the Prairie. “Before somebody discovers these kinds of shows, they have no idea crafts can be like this.”

Knitted human hearts (aorta included) and felt perogies filled with organic catnip are displayed next to sturdy messenger bags and kitchen tools at the May 2009 “Got Craft?” held this year at the Royal Canadian Legion building on Commercial Drive, an eclectic, ethnic area of the city. The room is packed. The shoppers who lined up outside the doors this morning include a mix of hipsters, hippies, and moms with baby on hip (mostly female, though I do spot a couple



SWALLOW AND BIKE BELT BUCKLE WITH RECYCLED INNERTUBE BELT

(will make you ride faster or at least look like it!)

MAKER: Kyla Hubbard of Cyclona Designs

LOCATION: Victoria, BC

DATE COMPLETED: 2009

TOOLS & MATERIALS: Image (this one is from a vintage 1938 Schwalbe bicycle poster), acrylic resin, varnish, lead free solder, copper foil, electric soldering iron, buckle blank, used innertube, belt snaps, and setting tools

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: a few hours, plus drying time for acrylic and varnish.

.....
cyclonadesigns.etsy.com

.....
PHOTO BY KYLA HUBBARD

.....
DIY PROJECTS COLLECTED BY ERIN GIBBS

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UTILITY POUCH

MAKER: Erin Gibbs

DATE COMPLETED: 2008

TOOLS & MATERIALS REQUIRED: Old inner tubes, scissors, basketry techniques, form around which to weave.

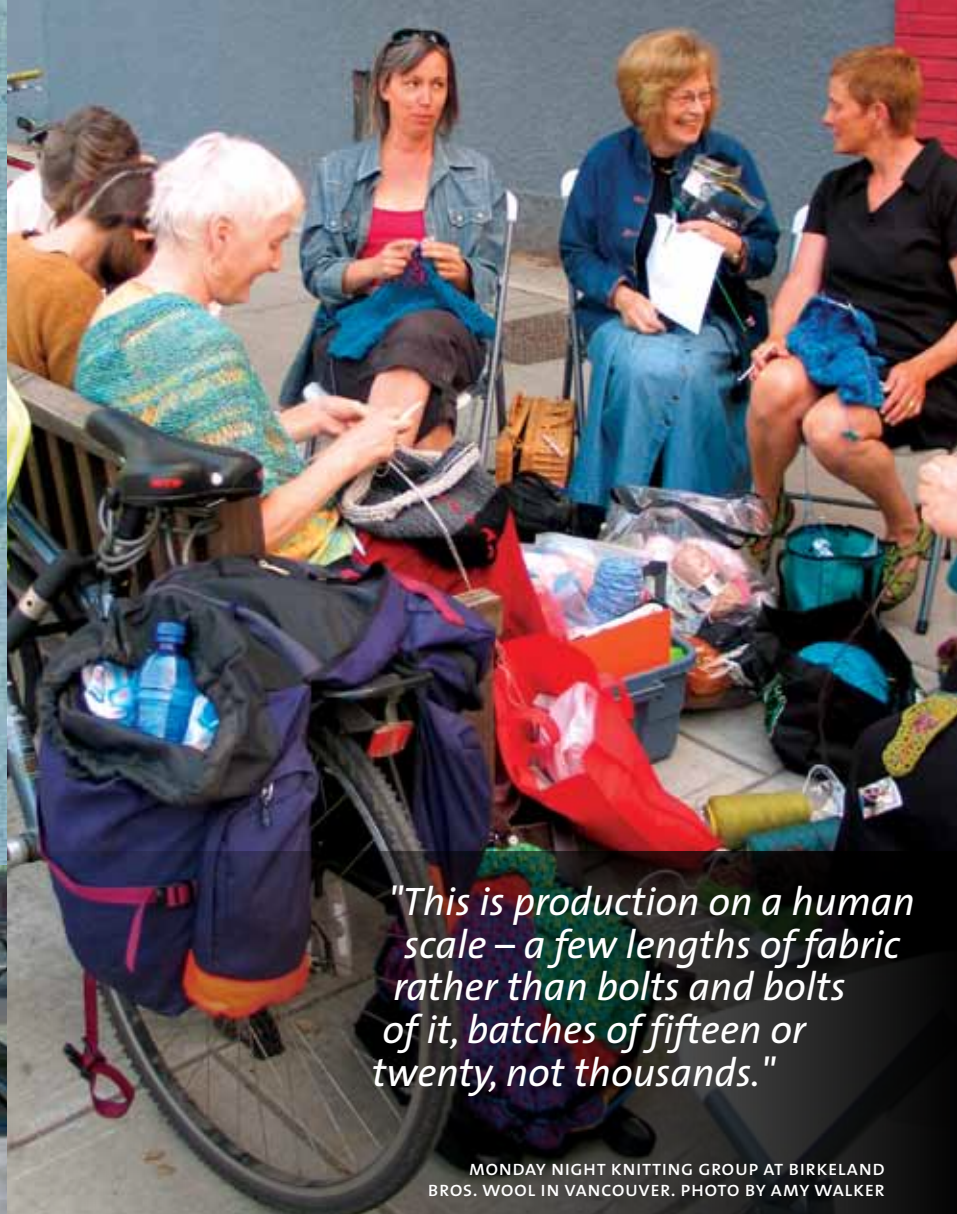
COST: Very little if using free old inner tubes

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: 8 hours

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ABOVE: ERIN GIBBS' BICYCLE BIKE RACK KNIT GRAFFITI (AND DETAIL). KAILUA BAY, HAWAII, 2009. BELOW: SUITCASE PANNIER WITH DETAIL OF HOOK FOR THE RACK. PHOTOS BY ERIN GIBBS



"This is production on a human scale – a few lengths of fabric rather than bolts and bolts of it, batches of fifteen or twenty, not thousands."

MONDAY NIGHT KNITTING GROUP AT BIRKELAND BROS. WOOL IN VANCOUVER. PHOTO BY AMY WALKER

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of gents). At some tables, a sharp elbow is required to get close enough to see the homespun creations. Despite a global recession that has left malls empty and consumers spooked, it seems that alien monkey plush toys are in hot demand.

But DIY craft is not all quirky stuffed toys and making a buck. The movement, which grew out of punk rock's Do-It-Yourself ethic, is a reaction against mass-consumerism. This is craft-as-antidote, enlisted in the fight against pollutant-emitting factories and unfair labour practices.

"DIY is our generation growing up and saying 'I don't want to shop at Wal-mart,'" says Stephanie Menard, 30. Menard's political and environmental ideals were the engine behind a decision to quit her job three years ago to be a full-time crafter: "In terms of picking a career, I didn't want my life's work to be about taking from the earth." DIYers are keen recyclers who give new life to bike chains, old curtains, and plastic bags; Menard uses reclaimed fabric to make her jewellery and portrait dolls (which are anatomically correct and carry tiny fabric beer cans and iPhones). Doing so keeps money in her pocket and the fabric out of landfills. Reusing fabric, she says, also means her pieces have a past, a history spanning back to the previous owner.

Menard clearly cherishes the objects she produces, and it does seem logical that handmade objects would be more meaningful than their mass-produced counterparts. When you make something, you create a shared history with that object. You pick its colour, design, and materials. You unpick the crooked seam or re-stain the wood when it comes out the wrong shade. It makes you furious a couple

of times, but when it is done, you feel fantastic. And every time you see it, wear it, or use it, you feel the effect of that process of creation.

The process of creation is on display at the shared studio space of crafters Julie Chung and Tiffany Ho; the brightly-lit room is filled with works in progress, sketches, and racks of samples. A few half-empty cups of coffee sit cooling on a table littered with magazines. Mismatched chairs are arranged in a semi-circle, and two Boston bulldogs lie asleep on a precarious turquoise couch. This is production on a human scale – a few lengths of fabric rather than bolts and bolts of it, batches of fifteen or twenty, not thousands.

DIYers do not insist on making everything and buying nothing – after all, many crafters make their livelihood selling their creations. Rather, they encourage us to think about the lifespan of the objects in our everyday lives. Beyond the country of origin, what do we know about the provenance of the stuff we buy and use? Where did the materials come from? Who put it together? What machines and

CERVELO, TEN-SPEED AND HOT SHOT BRACELETS QUICK RELEASE KEY CHAINS TANDEM EARRINGS

MAKER: Christine Brennan

DATE COMPLETED: 2008

TOOLS & MATERIALS: bicycle chain, chain breaker, jewellery clasper, earring clasps, coloured tiger tail wire, clamping beads, bracelet clasp, sewing needle & thread, bag strap material or cuffs.

COST: \$0.50 - \$3

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: disassembling and washing one chain takes 3-5 hours, 10 minutes to 3 hours for assembly of different items.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE BRENNAN



processes were used? “We are promoting buying something from someone you’ve met, from someone who made it themselves, and who knows where it came from,” says Robert Tucker. Online craft marketplace Etsy.com also wants “to reconnect producer and consumer, and swing the pendulum back to a time when we bought our bread from the baker, food from the farmer, and shoes from the cobbler.”

The hope is that this rapprochement of producer and consumer makes handmade goods more personal and less disposable than mass-produced ones. Craftsmanship takes precedence over producing objects quickly and cheaply. Objects are customized and made to fit the consumer perfectly. We can slow the relentless pace of consumption simply by loving the objects in our lives, and keeping them around.

“What’s more DIY than a bicycle?” asks Elly Blue, managing editor of BikePortland.org. There are certainly lots of bikers who craft, and crafters who bike. Blue believes this is because cyclists are DIY naturals. “When you buy a car, there are all sorts of accessories to buy, but with bikes, it’s often better and more fun to make things yourself. Plus, you need to do the basic maintenance on your own bike,” she says. She also sees the DIY ethos at work in the way cyclists actively get involved, campaigning for local bike infrastructure and organizing community rides. DIYers and bikers, she says, share ideals about sustainability and making small-scale changes to change the world.

Blue is currently organizing BikeCraft, a bazaar of bike-themed handmade goods that was first held in 2005. In searching out vendors for the event, she has seen



PHOTO BY SIMON CLAY

TRON BIKE

MAKER: Aaron White & Simon Clay

COST: \$500. Monkeylectrics x 2 = \$143.89, EL wire kits x 3 = \$88.42, approximately \$300 worth of parts, tools, and electronics gear.

TOOLS & MATERIALS: Soldering iron, wire cutter/stripper, solder, drill, wire, so many zip-ties, velcro straps, headphone jacks, 22 AA's, snaptop 12V battery pack, old radio buttons, 8 female headphone ports, hammered black all purpose spray paint, ammeter, switch, switch safety toggle, 12V Red LED ring, 12V blue LED ring, 12V blue silicon LED rope, 2x sequentially firing LED tape, 2x monkeylectrics, 2x 8 Foot Dark Blue EL Wire, 15 Foot Power green EL Wire, 3 Inverter kits, 1 Ram GPS mount (double ball joint) with clutch grip and plate mount, scwhinn frame bag, black fenders, bits of rubber for adding on the spoke mounted inverters, the bike used is a Nishiki Rally 15 speed. It's heavy, old, and I love it, I think it's from about 1984.

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: Way too long. Over the last eight months, I've probably clocked a couple solid weeks of time attaching components, testing them out, browsing through the electronics shops trying to find nice parts. But let's say 100 hours of labour plus at least 15 hours labour from my friend Simon Clay. He helped quite a lot with the construction and design of the mounted switch board for the frame components.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: There's a master switch box mounted on a full positionable arm to the handle bars. It's got headphone jack ports for plugging in 12v components. There are still a bunch of empty slots, so I can easily solder a headphone jack onto any lights I want to add in the future.

.....
www.designerwhite.ca
.....



PHOTO BY LISA BRIDEAU

STYLISH BIKE CUFF

MAKER: Lisa Brideau

DATE COMPLETED: 2009

TOOLS & MATERIALS: Fabric, velcro, sewing machine.

COST OF PROJECT: A few bucks, depends on how fancy your fabric is.

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: 1-4 hours depending on your skill with a sewing machine.

.....
www.maked.ca | maked.etsy.com



BIKECRAFT IV: LEFT: JENE-PAUL LEMIEUX WITH BIKE HEADLAMPS MADE OUT OF VINTAGE TEA POTS. RIGHT: GRAM SHIPLEY SELLING HANDMADE, LEATHER MUD/FENDER FLAPS. PHOTOS BY JONATHAN MAUS, BIKEPORTLAND.ORG

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

bottle-cap rear-view mirrors that attach to glasses or helmets; reflective handlebar bags made out of duct tape; headlamps made from teapots and cameras, and hand-sewn leather shoe-straps and cycling caps. Bike-minded crafters convert bike parts into clocks, wind chimes, jewellery, stencils and screen-print, and/or letterpress bike motifs onto furniture, clothing, and stationery. "Anywhere in the punk DIY community," she says, "biking has always been a theme."

A fairly experienced screen-printer herself, Blue says she enjoys DIY projects for the same reasons she loves cycling: they are "real, hands-on tasks that get done." Both biking and crafting, she explains, offer her an escape after working all day in front of a computer, a chance to trade the virtual world for a more tactile one.

Faythe Levine has just cleared security at the airport in Kansas City, Missouri when I call her. She is traveling the length and breadth of North America screening Handmade Nation, her documentary about the rise of the DIY movement. Dubbed "the ambassador of handmade" by the New York Times, Levine is a maker, a craft fair producer, and the owner of a boutique and gallery in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. (She also plays musical saw in the band Wooden Robot, which provides the soundtrack for the film.) Although she has previously worked on music videos and commercials, this is her first foray into feature-length.

"I'd become so immersed in the DIY craft community and felt I wanted to capture it, make sure they were getting the respect and acknowledgement they should. My concern was someone outside the community would come in and do an exposé of cute girls at a craft fair," she says. Levine travelled 19,000 miles to complete some 80 interviews. She financed the work largely on credit cards, and



PHOTO BY KINYA HANADA

PAPIER MACHÉ BICYCLE

MAKER: Mumbleboy / Mumbreeze

DATE COMPLETED: May 2009

TOOLS & MATERIALS: Recycled plastic, paper flour glue, acrylic paint, acrylic varnish, brush.

COST: \$5

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: Approximately one week.

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mumbreeze.etsy.com



SPOKERS

MAKER: David LeBlanc

DATE COMPLETED: Ongoing

TOOLS REQUIRED: Computer and printer, laminator, scissors, cutter.

COST OF PROJECT: Less than a dollar.



PHOTO BY DAVID LEBLANC



PHOTO BY FRANCIS CHOW

HOMEMADE CARGO BIKE

MAKER: Francis Chow

DATE COMPLETED: May 2009.

MATERIALS: Two mountain bike frames, scrap steel tubing (from snow shovel), longer rear brake cable, longer rear derailleur cable, paint, used plastic snowboard, steel brackets from hardware store, front suspension forks with good brakes (optional).

TOOLS: bike tools (chain tool, crank puller, wrenches, and screwdrivers), home arc welder (from ebay for \$150), hacksaw, dremel tool.

COST: Scrounged bike frames; front suspension forks with good brakes; scrap steel tubing, snowboard or skateboard – FREE! Longer derailleur cable and brake cable \$5. Steel join plates and welding sticks \$15.

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: Two weekends part-time (elapsed time, approximately four hours). First weekend for cutting and welding the two bikes, replacing the front forks and connecting the brake and derailleur cables. You can test ride it after this. Second weekend for cutting and welding the cargo rack.



MARTIN LEUGERS AND TRICIA WRIGHT FROM CRUD (CHOPPER RIDING URBAN DWELLERS) WORKING ON A CHOPPER BIKE IN SAN FRANCISCO. JUNE 2, 2009
PHOTO BY DUSTIN JENSEN

her risk seems to have paid off. After viewing an eight-minute trailer on YouTube, the Princeton Architectural Press commissioned a book of the same name, co-written by Levine's friend and fellow crafter Cortney Heimerl.

Handmade Nation casts DIY as a social phenomenon, a movement based on community and friendship. "It's a way to support different communities; it's a way to meet people," says one of the film's crafters. Makers often work together to share studio space, tools, opinions, and advice or just to "shoot the shit," as one of them put it. DIY is not about connoisseurship, or even necessarily skill, it's about joining in.

Levine says the Internet has been crucial in allowing like-minded crafters to connect. Crafters post photos of their masterpieces on Flickr and Facebook groups. They are prolific bloggers, sharing tips, articles, frustrations, and inspirations. They tweet, they podcast, and they gather in forums. They buy and sell on Etsy.com, and sign up for craft swaps to exchange handcrafted gifts with strangers. Diving into the web browser history of a DIY crafter yields a range of content, from a thoughtful essay about DIY's ties to third-wave feminism, to a photo gallery of craft-inspired tattoos, to a forum discussing how to repurpose toothpaste tubes and three-ring binders.

Despite the varying range of interests shared by individual crafters, there is a sense that all are working toward a common goal – a goal to make everyday life more sustainable, communal, and fulfilling. One parking meter cozy at a time, DIYers are knitting together a new way to live. ☘

Handmade Nation indiecraftdocumentary.blogspot.com

Bikecraft bikeportland.org/bikecraft

Knitta knittaplease.com



PHOTO BY KENT PETERSON

TOBY'S COROPLAST FENDERS & PANNIERS

MAKER: Kent Peterson

DATE COMPLETED: January 2007

TOOLS & MATERIALS: Recycled campaign signs, zip-ties, velcro (for latches), elastic bungee cord, reflective tape.

The only tools needed are a Swiss Army knife and a ruler.

COST: About five dollars.

TOTAL TIME TO MAKE: A couple of hours.

kentsbike.blogspot.com

How to Start a BICYCLE MUSIC FESTIVAL IN YOUR TOWN

BY PAUL FREEDMAN

A BICYCLE MUSIC Festival is a day-long mobile festival of local music, powered by the community – on bikes!

Discover great local music and trust your ears. When you see a band you dig, tell them you're planning a festival in a couple months and you'd love it if they'd perform. Since BMF is a busking festival, bands get paid directly by fans immediately after their performance. Even established bands are often willing to play a busking festival if you ask them in advance and emphasize the community nature of BMF. The Golden Geese are the volunteers.

A Pedal Powered Stage is one of the most inspiring aspects of the Bicycle Music Festival, but also a major project, both in terms of time and money. Using Pedal Power means using older, power hungry amps and speakers. If you're starting from scratch, figure on spending a minimum of \$5,000 on audio and pedal power gear. If you plan your



LEFT: ROCK THE BIKE. RIGHT: GINGER NINJAS. PHOTOS BY DUSTIN JENSEN

festival far enough out, renting or borrowing Pedal Powered Stage gear may be an option. www.rockthebike.com/pedalpoweredstage

Get some roadies. A Bicycle Music Festival packs up and moves several times during the day. Pull in cargo bikers and expert haulers from your bike community to be roadies at your festival. Dispatch roadies to help bands get gear to the venues, turning bands on to bike-based performing and touring in the process.

Pick venues and routes that emphasize the best of local biking. SF's BMF uses two park venues and is un-permitted, relying on community approval for our use of pedal powered – but still amplified – music.

BMF is a great example of the "Stone Soup"

way of doing things. You put a vision out there, and people bring their individual contributions. Have faith in the concept when you're asking people to help. Try to schedule a date that's at least four to six months out, so you can anchor your festival. Leave each venue cleaner and more inspired than you found it. ☘

Paul Freedman is the co-director of the San Francisco Bicycle Music Festival, Founder of Rock The Bike, and the civilized alterego of Fossil Fool, The Bike Rapper.

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bicyclemusicfestival.com
rockthebike.com
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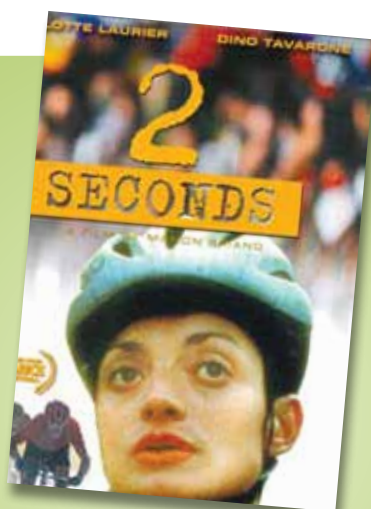
BIKE
MOVIES

2 SECONDS SLOWING DOWN TIME, TWO SECONDS AT A TIME

BY GREG BORZO

WARNING: DON'T EXPECT to watch this film from 1998 in one sitting because it'll make you want to take a bike ride. Few movies feature as much saddle time or as many beautifully photographed biking scenes – from mountain trails to city streets.

In this French-Canadian film made in Montréal, cars are portrayed as instruments of evil. Each time the car-driving villain runs over a bike it reminds us that some in our "autoholic" society disdain bikes.



Laurie, the heroine who quits racing and finds refuge as a messenger, loves to bike so much she often ends up in the countryside between deliveries, oblivious to her whereabouts. "I just want to ride," she moans.

Lorenzo, another former racer, helps Laurie along the way. He has adjusted to

"civilian" life by opening a bike shop. With curmudgeonly Lorenzo as a father figure, Laurie figures out how to adjust – watch them comparing injuries to determine who has been more scarred by bicycling.

Time chases Laurie. Clock hands are made to resemble the spokes of her ever-spinning bicycle wheels. Laurie's nerdy brother explains that time is suspended as you approach the speed of light, which could explain why Laurie courts speed: The bike becomes her fountain of youth, a way to slow down time.

In any event, Laurie discovers that two seconds, suspended or not, can be a long time. It's long enough to lose a race or to make life-changing decisions. The take-home message is watch out for potholes and opportunities – on bike rides and throughout life. ☘

Hip-Deep In The Future At **MAKER FAIRE**



LEFT: MONKEYELECTRIC'S BIKE WHEEL LIGHTS AT MAKER FAIRE ON SATURDAY MAY 30, 2009. ABOVE: ABOUT 100 MAKER'S MEET UP AT DOLORES PARK TO RIDE DOWN TO MAKER FAIRE.

BY MYKLE HANSEN
PHOTOS BY DUSTIN JENSEN

IT'S RUSH HOUR at Maker Faire 2009, and I'm stuck in human gridlock. In an entrance lobby of the huge Expo Hall at the San Mateo Fairgrounds – where DIY inventors and craftspeople from around the world have gathered at the behest of *Make Magazine*, showing off their creations to over 80,000 thrilled visitors. Is there a word for the fear of being trampled to death at an inventor's conference? Is this the car-free future?

But a moment later, the scrum breaks apart and I'm ejected into a perfect sunny California day. Shaken, I seek out the calmness of Bike Town, an outdoor oasis of sanity and space in an otherwise all-too-thrilling faire. Organizers provided this area for the demonstration and test-riding of bicycle inventions like the Gyrobike and the wooden concept bikes of woodenbikes.com.

The first Maker Faire in 2006 attracted 20,000 visitors, and each subsequent year has added tens of thousands more. Faced with the enviable problem of too many customers and not enough parking, faire organizers laid out the red carpet for bicyclists this year. On Saturday morning, a ride to the faire organized by Rock the Bike! brought nearly two hundred riders all the way from San Francisco. Valet bike parking staffed by the Silicon Valley Bike Coalition provided space for 2000 bikes, and bikers got a \$10 discount and their very own secret entrance to the faire. Inside, pedal-driven carnival rides from Cyclecide awaited them, as well as a bike-powered music stage, booths from Xtracycle and NuVinci, an adult-sized Big-Wheel, a solar touring bike, electric tandems, and more.



MOMENTUM HANGING OUT WITH TYRONE STEVENSON AND HIS SCRAPER BIKES AT MAKER FAIRE. INSET: THE RIDE TO MAKER FAIRE.



No matter what you're a nerd for, the Faire is a feast for the mind and senses, and the enthusiasm is contagious. Ten minutes after fleeing the exhibit hall, I eagerly dive back in. Maker Faire is huge, amazing, tiring, and inspiring, and bikes make it better. Just don't forget to breathe!

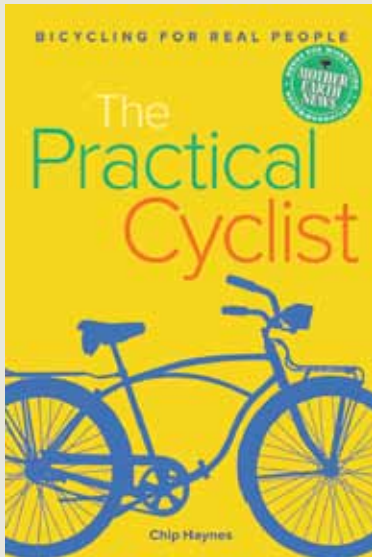
Maker Faire comes to Austin TX, October 2009. 🚲

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makerfaire.com
cyclecide.com
theygrobike.com
.....



LEFT: MOMENTUM BOOTH AT MAKER FAIRE. ABOVE: HENNEPIN CRAWLER AT MAKER FAIRE.

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THE CYCLIST'S MANIFESTO

By Robert Hurst

FalconGuides, 2009

224 pages, \$16.95 USD

REVIEWED BY ANDY CLINE

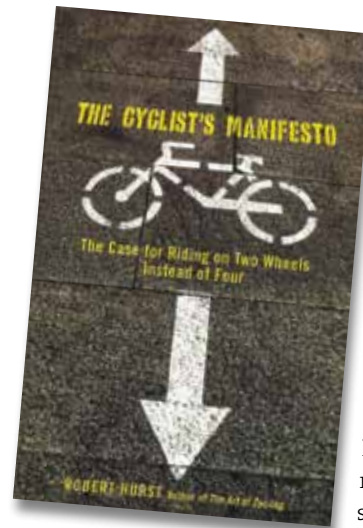
I TRY NOT to drink anyone's Kool-Aid straight up, no ice – but Robert Hurst's Kool-Aid is particularly refreshing. This self-described “weird little book” covers a wide range of issues in 200 pages. Hurst is a smooth and entertaining writer, so the weirdness is easy to forgive; his pointed statements, however, may not be, depending on what Kool-Aid the reader regularly drinks. Hurst is skilled at annoying nearly everyone at least once in any given text. And that is the reason you should read this book.

Hurst approaches his work from a very particular bicycling perspective: he's ridden thousands of miles as an urban bicycle messenger. You can't ride as much as he has in chaotic environments and come away with an ambivalent attitude about how to ride properly on the streets.

Bicyclists must take responsibility for their own safety. One can't simply rely on traffic rules and the good graces of drivers. Hurst writes: “The truth remains that the ‘control’ lies substantially with the bicyclists, whether they want it or not. Any experienced rider will tell you that.”

And sometimes bicyclists are their own worst enemies. Hurst says: “Some of the anti-bicyclist sentiment is deserved. ... Bicyclists have a tendency to, first of all, break laws and take liberties that the brilliant machine makes possible, that's true; on the other hand, they tend to be quite defensive about their personal space in traffic. Slight encroachments are met with, at the least, glares and indignation. It's not so much the lawbreaking or the indignation but the combo of the two that does it. To the motorist it can appear bratty, selfish, and hypocritical.”

Hurst asserts a few differences with Vehicular Cycling. His criticisms boil down to this: “As a bicyclist, then, the primary task is not to plug oneself into a shaky system [traffic], but to withhold trust in it



on the fundamental level. In traffic we find the very essence of fallibility. Its most important feature, if not its most prominent, is the basic human mistake. ... That's not to say bicyclists should shun the rules of the road, mind you. They just have to

be realistic about them. The task is to ride always with the understanding that you could be overlooked easily by this or that mistake-prone motorist and to remember the potentially very serious consequences, and ride accordingly, rules or not.”

The Vehicular Cycling crowd dislikes separate bicycling infrastructure. Their favourite straw man is that these systems treat bicyclists as inferior (and that is true if that is the kind of infrastructure you build). Hurst is not against bicycling infrastructure, but he seems to think that a country that can put a man on the moon cannot match, say, the Netherlands, in building a superior bicycling system. It is certainly more politically troublesome in the United States, as Hurst makes clear. But it could be done if we could muster the political will.

Hurst's thinking leads him to a silly conclusion: “The American way of bicycling does not need to be fundamentally changed; it only needs to be enhanced. We could actually do Europe one better in our bicycling future. We could ride farther, and faster, on sportier bicycles, and just generally have more fun with it.” The “sportier” crack leaves me scratching my head. Sportier does me no good at all when I'm grocery shopping.

Hurst's book helps focus an important idea for me: We need to change our traffic design and engineering. We need to re-think how we control traffic and under what circumstances.

I'm a Hurst fan, but I want plenty of ice when I drink his Kool-Aid. I appreciate his humour, insights, and no-nonsense approach to his subjects. It is impossible to come away from this book without learning something, without being challenged, without finding moments of connection, and without feeling moments of exasperation. Not bad. ☘

BIKE ZINES: SELF-PROPELLED SOCIAL CHANGE

BY DANA PUTNAM

ZINES ARE HOMEMADE publications. They can cover any topic and come in many shapes and sizes. Usually they are: photocopied, self-distributed, cheap, or even free if you have one of your own to trade, filled with art, text, cut-and-paste images, or cartoons; raw, personal, funny, and/or sad, and notoriously low-tech – they are the beacons of do-it-yourself culture. Reading a good zine is like having a conversation with a friend at the kitchen table – informal, engaging, direct, honest, and relevant.

The zine is an accessible and democratic form of publishing which has a history of ever-changing uses. The medium gets reinvigorated as each era's needs and technology evolve: from political pamphlets to sci-fi or punk fanzines, to DIYs about fixing your bike and "growing" bike culture. Zines are created out of a need for self-expression and a desire for sharing knowledge and building community – not for profit. Because of this, zines can be culturally significant artefacts or snapshots of a time and place: an archive of a subculture.

Both the zine and bike cultures exemplify the Do-It-Yourself ethic and personal control over the means of production. Hence, zines are an important contribution to independent media just as cycling is an invaluable contribution to developing alternative transportation systems. Both cycling and making zines are forms of self-propelled social change.

Since most cities with strong bike cultures also



tend to have pretty strong zine scenes, it follows that Portland would be the bike and zine mecca of North America; more than a few well-known bike zines are made there. Spokes of Hazard (a series of zines by Cait Giddings) is "an outlet for sharing stories

relating to bike messengering, bike touring, and riding bikes in general," and Giddings does an excellent job of pulling together very entertaining stories including one that delves into why bike messengers are also known as "elevator jockeys."

Another famous Portland zine is the Urban Adventure League's Cycle Touring Primer. It's a resource guide for planning a bicycle tour (and I hope to use it for making the trip to Portland on my bike one day). It includes a recipe for making "your own damn energy bars" because store-bought energy bars are "as expensive as f*ck and taste like ass..."

Vancouver, British Columbia has produced some wonderful bike zines too. My all-time favourite, Stoked on Spokes: a Community Cycling Resource Guide (a collaborative project by The Purple Thistle Centre and Pedal Play, edited by Juls Generic) is a charming compilation of stories, tips, and artwork by people who are using cycling as a form of social change as well as a way to get around town.

You can't find zines in the usual places you find mainstream publications. Instead they are found in coffee shops, independent

bookstores and music shops, online distributors and archives, and zine fairs. And of course from the zinesters themselves, either through word of mouth, face to face exchanges, or by mail order. Microcosm Publishing, an online zine distributor, is a great way to explore the bike zines Portland and other North American cities have to offer. Some public and academic libraries have developed strong zine collections and their catalogues are a good way to hunt for titles. There are also independent zine archives assembled by people and groups who are passionate about zines.



Finally, serendipity has a lot to do with finding zines. The very first bike zine I ever met took my breath away. It was sitting innocently on a table at an independent media and local community group information fair. I was so surprised and charmed by its sincerity. It was just two bucks. Best two bucks I ever spent. ☘

Resources for finding out more about zines:

- Microcosm Publishing microcosmpublishing.com
- Etsy www.etsy.com
- The Book of Zines: Reading from the Fringe www.zinebook.com
- ZineWiki zinewiki.com
- Broken Pencil: The Magazine of Zine Culture and Independent Arts www.brokenpencil.com
- Zine World www.undergroundpress.org
- Zine Library (downloadable pdfs of zines) zinelibrary.info



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While the Fargo can take you up and down the Great Divide, across the continent, or around the world, it won't be slighted by shorter trips. Whether you're heading across town with a laptop and office wear, or picking up a couple sacks of groceries and a bottle of red wine on the way home, Fargo will...well, roll with it.



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TANIA & THE BIRIA EB7. THANKS TO JV BIKE IN VANCOUVER, BC FOR PROVIDING THE BIKE FOR REVIEW. WWW.JVBIKE.COM PHOTO BY DAVID NIDDRIE

BY TANIA LO

I WAS ON the hunt for a bike that would make cycling while pregnant easy and comfortable. I'd found that as my new growing friend in the belly took up more room, I had to abandon riding my bikes with horizontal top tubes. I went out searching for bikes made for those of us with a smaller range of motion in the hips and, from what I hear, upcoming balance challenges.

I found the Biria Easy Boarding 7, a unique aluminum step-through frame bike designed in Germany. The model I tried came with a 7-speed Shimano derailleur with grip shifter, upright handlebars, kickstand, rear rack, and fenders. I also asked for a bell and a rear detachable basket (\$25-50 CAD) for my laptop bag.

Out of habit I threw my leg over the rear wheel and then laughed at myself for not easily stepping through the frame. The ride was incredibly smooth and stable. I was cruising through the flats feeling very comfortable. When I came to an incline I did wish I had a

few more gears. I asked what my options were. The vendor suggested changing the freewheel to one with a mega-range, or changing the front chain ring (\$30-40) for a better gear ratio. The other options would be to go for EB Lite 8 model or the Super Lite 8 that come with a Shimano Nexus Internal 8 speed hub.

While cruising on the flats was seamless, I felt a "thwumping" from the front rim when braking downhill. The brakes were touching a seam on the inexpensive stock rim which resulted in less than smooth braking at higher speeds. After a while, I stopped noticing the "thwumping" and it had no real effect on my braking.

This bike retails for an accessible \$450 US (\$500 CAD) and is a great value for someone riding a bike for the first time, or who might have smaller range of motion in the hips, or who is expecting a baby. The EB7 comes in two sizes: 40 cm (15.5") and 46 cm (18").
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biria.com
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BIKING WITH A BELLY

Pregnancy and Cycling Can Mix

BY DANA BIDNALL

CONGRATS! YOU'RE NEWLY pregnant, and are already daydreaming about hauling your future toddler behind you in a trailer, or on a bike seat. You look forward to sharing your love of biking and a healthy lifestyle with your child. However, at this stage, is biking while pregnant safe? Won't it get uncomfortable?

"The risks for a pregnant woman and their growing fetus related to bike-riding are much the same as the risks for anyone riding a bicycle, so pregnant women should take the same precautions that they normally would," says Candace Plohman, a registered midwife with The Midwifery Group in Vancouver. "Another risk specific to pregnancy is that a woman's centre of gravity shifts forward as her belly grows, and she has softened joints from the hormones of pregnancy, so it's sometimes easier to lose balance or sustain over-extension injuries. Any woman who experiences trauma to her pregnant belly in the second or third trimester should check in with her health care provider."

Plohman added, "Exercise should be continued in pregnancy in order to promote fitness and normal weight gain, regular activity helps to maintain a normal blood pressure, normal blood sugar levels, and overall physical fitness, which can be an advantage to any woman as they go into labour since labour itself is very physically demanding. Exercise also assists in promoting emotional well-being and managing depression. Cycling is a great form of physical activity in pregnancy."

Many women can't imagine giving up cycling, even temporarily. Said Sarah Dennis, a mother of one in Chicago: "Why did I ride throughout my pregnancy? Because I can't not ride. I'm addicted. During my second trimester, still feeling nauseous and exhausted all the time, I managed a few days a week for about a half hour, just for fun. I took the pace really easy and enjoyed the scenery."

Jessica Roberts of Portland, on the other hand, has been riding as her main form of transportation throughout her pregnancy. She said, "For me, riding is one of the more comfortable things to do. It's walking that's the biggest problem, actually. Because it's so painful and slow; if I stop biking, I won't be getting any exercise. This is one very



SARAH CHAN OF EDMONTON RIDES HER BIKE AT 36 WEEKS EN ROUTE TO A DINNER DATE. SHE HAS SINCE HAD A HEALTHY BABY BOY, DEXTER. CONGRATS, SARAH! PHOTO BY DON IVESON
INSET: JANET WALKER, MISSY CLARKSON, AND TANYA BARHAM BIKING WITH THEIR PROUD BELLIES.

compelling reason to keep biking for as long as I can." She added: "As far as safety goes, I continue to do all the things I normally do to maximize safety. I use a mirror, choose low-traffic streets wherever possible, and communicate with drivers if I feel like it will help (by signalling turns and lane changes and making eye contact)."

In her blog, *Girls and Bicycles* (girlsandbicycles.blogspot.com), Sarah Chan of Edmonton wrote about cycling during her recent pregnancy. "In my opinion, I thought it was healthiest not to compromise the things I believe in," she explained. "It's not like I cruise the streets in some reckless fashion. I'm an experienced rider, and being on a bike makes me so happy! I think my physical resilience during pregnancy, labour, and in the days after having the baby was due to being healthy and active prior to."

As Roberts mentioned, there are many things women can do to make cycling more comfortable and safer as you move along in your pregnancy. Some of these include:

- ▶ Adapt your bike so you can sit more upright and have room for that burgeoning belly. Move your handlebars up or install different ones.
- ▶ Invest in a wider saddle for better support and comfort.
- ▶ Switch from clipless to regular pedals if

you're worried about getting out of them fast enough.

- ▶ If you find your balance is affected, lower your seat height so your feet can more easily reach the ground when stopping and consider a step-through frame, or lean your bike to one side to get onto it.
- ▶ For commuters, consider changing your usual route to incorporate less traffic-heavy streets and roads with designated bike boulevards.
- ▶ Slow your pace and ensure plenty of time for getting to destinations.
- ▶ Take extra precaution if riding through heavy rain, snow, or ice, or don't ride at all in bad weather.
- ▶ If possible, consider switching to an upright model such as a Dutch or cruiser bike.

Above all, pay attention to your body. Every woman is different and every pregnancy is different. Whatever your situation, you needn't give up your ride altogether. With some common sense, listening to your (ever-expanding) gut, and some tips and tricks, you'll be riding safely and comfortably in the weeks and months ahead. ☘

Dana Bidnall enjoys riding in and around Vancouver on her 14-year-old Trek and works for a local car-sharing organization.

How to Make Your Own Wooden BIKE FENDERS

BY ERIK NEUMANN

FENDERS ARE OFTEN one of the biggest annoyances of biking: they go out of alignment, rub on your wheels, crack, and break. Every year I dread putting them on, but regret it when I don't have them. Wood fenders are strong, relatively easy to build, and are affordable to make. They require little more than basic woodworking experience and access to a shop. Here is a basic "how to" on wood fenders, for those with a little carpentry experience or those just curious about how it's done. Please read the entire article before beginning to make your own.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- ▶ Six strips of wood, three inches wide by four feet long, 1/16th - 3/32nd inches thick.
- ▶ Two or three pieces of MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard) big enough to trace a plastic fender on (about 26 X 26 inches)
- ▶ Glue: wood glue or epoxy
- ▶ A large band clamp
- ▶ Table saw
- ▶ Band saw
- ▶ Measuring tape
- ▶ Rasp, file, sanding block with several grits sand paper
- ▶ A plastic fender as guide

SELECTING YOUR WOOD

The strips of wood (called "laminations") should be thin enough that you can easily bend three pieces at a time. The wood grain should run length-wise, and should be clear of any knots or cracks. Softwoods such as fir and cedar are more likely to hold their shape when removed from the jig.

MAKING A JIG

Jigs hold several pieces of wood in place where they can be fastened together and hold their shape. For this project, a jig will create the curve of your fender by sandwiching your laminations together with glue. Once dry, the laminations will retain the jig's curve.

To make your jig, you'll need an existing plastic fender to trace its curve. Be sure to use a fender, rather than a wheel or tire. A fender is larger than a wheel; if your jig is based on a wheel or tire, your wooden fender will be too small.

First, glue the pieces of MDF together so the resulting slab is roughly the width of your laminations (three inches). Clamp and allow to dry. Trace the curve of your plastic fender



TOP: THE FINISHED FENDERS. INSET: THE JIG. ABOVE: LAMINATIONS READY FOR GLUING. PHOTOS BY GALEN MAYNARD

onto the fiberboard. Now, cut out the curve on your band saw. It is best to cut just outside of the line, and sand the remaining distance to the line to prevent bumps. This is your jig.

GLUING

First lay enough newspaper down so that your jig is not touching the floor – there will be some wet glue. Take three of your laminations and glue them together in a stack. Apply glue only between the laminations – NOT where the laminations touch the jig, otherwise your fender will be glued to your jig! Next, use a band clamp to tighten the laminations around your

jig. A band clamp is a nylon strap that can be tightened around curved surfaces. You can also use C-clamps with a smaller jig, or bar clamps. Allow to dry for as long as your glue requires.

Once dry, release the clamps and remove your rough fender from the jig. Using a table saw, cut a smooth, square edge along one side. Then measure, mark, and cut the desired width for your fender. Mine are 1 5/8 inches wide, but it depends on what looks good to you, and the mounting space available on your bike (space between fork and seat stays).

SHAPING YOUR FENDER

Using a rasp, file, or sanding block, smooth your fender's square edges and shape the ends into a curve. Sand until smooth with a coarse grit sandpaper, such as 80 grit. Repeat with finer 220 grit for a smoother surface.

SEALING YOUR FENDER

Once your fender is shaped and sanded it's important to seal it – after all, you now have something on your bike that can rot! Use varnish, paint, or a coat of epoxy to seal your fender and protect it from rain and UV rays. I use a coat of epoxy resin, brushed on to add strength and bring out the fender's wood grain. ☘

The second part of this article, about making your own brackets, may be found online at www.momentumplanet.com

View more photos by Galen Maynard aka "Dapper Lad Cycles" at [flickr.com/2kings](https://www.flickr.com/photos/2kings/)

THE YUBA MUNDO

A Bike with Wheels on Two Continents

BY GWENDAL CASTELLAN

WHEN YOU SEE the Yuba Mundo you can't help noticing the large Schwalbe Fat Frank tires. Although balloon-tire cruisers may be stylish in North America, when Yuba designer Benjamin Sarrazin chose them he had a completely different landscape in mind; the big tires offer the most basic suspension to smooth the ride on Africa's bumpy dirt roads.

A Yuba Mundo rider in the developed world benefits from a bike designed for a lifetime of tough conditions. The frame is made in Germany with oversized steel tubing, which allows any welder with a basic kit to do repairs. Another feature that sets this cargo bike apart is the reinforced 48-spoke back wheel with a huge 14mm axle. This is the bicycle's foundation and what allows it to claim load capacities of 440 pounds (200 kg).

I invited Francois Bernaudin, a pastry chef who runs a small *crêperie* and catering service, to test out the Yuba Mundo. He was very interested in a bicycle that would allow him to carry the two 44-pound bags of buckwheat and white flour he regularly picks up from his supplier.

The Yuba Mundo comes with the choice of one, six, or 18 speeds. Your choice should reflect the geography of your riding area. We tested the six-speed version and found that the default gearing is fine for most of the hills we tried with 100 pounds of cargo. The frame has very little flex, which makes the bike stable and easy to manoeuvre.



FRANCOIS BERNAUDIN, OWNER OPERATOR OF ET VOILÀ! CRÊPERIE AND CATERING IN VANCOUVER, BC CARRIES 90 LBS OF BUCKWHEAT FLOUR ON THE YUBA MUNDO. WWW.ET-VOILIA.CA PHOTO BY GWENDAL CASTELLAN

Each side-loading platform can handle 110 pounds of load, but depending on the shape of your load it might need modification. In Francois' case we had to add a wood plank to create a solid platform for the flour bags. The strong rack will test your creative skills with straps and bungees: you will be tempted to carry very large items of all shapes and sizes. Keep a couple of straps and bungees on hand at all times! The 85-litre waterproof Go-Getter bag accessory is easy to put on and remove, and frees you from needing to know how to use straps, if you prefer; its double lining and movable compartment separator make it an ideal grocery bag. The only challenge arises when trying to store this wider-than-normal bicycle since the side-loader platforms are not quickly removable.

The one-legged kickstand was woefully inadequate to hold the bicycle while loading.

I suggest foregoing the stock kickstand and ordering the bi-pod (double) kickstand instead (MSRP \$44 USD).

The Yuba Mundo was designed to create economic opportunities in the developing world by making transportation reliable and relatively inexpensive. Likewise, in the developed world, I think it will contribute to more stuff being moved by bicycle than we ever dreamed possible.

The Mundo one-speed is \$799 USD, the Mundo six-speed is \$899 USD, and the Mundo 18-speed is \$1099 USD. Distributed in the USA by Yuba Bicycles LLC / Rock the Bike, and in Canada by Vancouver Long Bikes. vancouverlongbikes.ca

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Justin Eichenlaub hauls Kelly Gregory and Estrella on a mattress while doing a bike move from Proterro Hill to the Mission District in San Francisco. Photo by Dustin Jensen



FROM AARON GOSS OF AARON'S BICYCLE REPAIR, SEATTLE:

I had my house rebuilt (green, of course) and the sheet metal was my old tin (steel) roof and aluminum gutters. I hauled it 15 miles to the local scrap metal yard for recycling. It weighed well over 600 pounds! Steel recycling is free, but they buy aluminum. My 20 pounds of gutters got me \$7. The trailer is made by Haulin' Colin (www.haulincolin.com). He is our local Seattle bike welder. He has a can-do attitude and is very approachable. He is also a true inspiration to me. He is a renaissance man in every sense of the word!

Dave Fitton (pictured right) hauling plywood. Dave is a true "lifestyle cargo biker" He inspires me every time I see him!



PHOTO BY AARON GOSS

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The Accidental **ACTIVIST**

HERE AT HOME, I consider myself just another person in the city who rides a bike. I keep a pretty low profile compared to the cycling artists and advocates I admire. But something radical happened when I bought an Atlas bicycle, rode it, and wrote about riding it in Goa, India for six months. I became an accidental activist.

“Hi Ulrike,” wrote a reader in response to one of my *Girl Gone Goa* blog stories, “We’ve recently returned from the UK, to resettle here. I’ve brought back a bike, but as it needs some basic work, I’ve not begun pedalling here. Everyone here tells me I’d be crazy to try, so it’s good to hear of your experiences.”

“We” was Luis Dias and his wife Chryselle. They were Goan and keen to ride, though eight-month-pregnant Chryselle admitted she’d need to have the baby first. Luis and I headed to the Panjim ferry jetty and cycled and chatted along the Mandovi River. He said he was looking for a community project to dig his teeth into.

A few weeks later, a writer colleague forwarded an email from Anibel Ferus-Comelo. She was also Goan, had also lived in Europe, and defied convention by riding a bicycle around Panjim with her husband Martin and two children.

I suggested we become acquainted over tea at Luis and Chryselle’s place and by evening’s end, we’d agreed to start a bicycle club to bring people together who wanted to ride in safety. We even joked about staging a Critical Mass ride and a car-free ciclovia.

I whipped up a rudimentary web site with wordpress.com (a free blog publishing platform), tacked on a photo gallery and a “Contact” page and *voilà*: the “Goa Cycle Club” was born. Now anyone – Goan, Indian, tourist – who was interested in cycling in Goa had somewhere to start.

I invited friends to come along on my weekly Sunday rides, and then added scenic, persuasive photos from the day onto the club web site. “I’ve lived here all my life,” said a new cyclist on a 30-kilometre ride to Chorao Island, “I’ve never seen any of this!” She and her brother had borrowed bikes to come.

A month or so later, Joe Rodrigues phoned.



GOA CYCLE CLUB (L-R) MARTIN (WITH PIA IN CARRIER), ULRIKE, MILAN, ANIBEL AND LUIS

After we settled that we weren’t related, Joe told me that he’d heard about our club, and had started a group of his own called “Goa Riders” on Facebook.com. He was a karate instructor and had already persuaded eight students to join. Plus, he said, a newspaper reporter wanted to do a story.

“Listen,” I said, “Would you consider changing your Facebook group’s name to ‘Goa Cycle Club’ so we’re joining efforts and no one gets confused?” Joe agreed.

The story about Joe appeared in *Gomantak Times* in April. Soon, other stories about the new interest in cycling appeared in other newspapers across India – and they listed the fledgling “Goa Cycle Club” with established bike clubs in Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata!

It kept on building: a hotel owner told me she’d bought four bicycles to rent to tourists. A hostel director wanted ideas on what to do with twenty bikes he’d acquired for a tour. A neighbour and facilitator for Goa’s Regional Plan 2021 wanted to know if I’d come meet his staff, a city politician, and a director for India’s Centre for Sustainable Transport at his office – as a representative of Goa’s cycling community!

I was flattered. I was awestruck. And I was leaving it all to return home in a few weeks.

“Don’t worry,” Luis reassured me when I worriedly met him for a last cup of tea. “We’ll make sure the club keeps rolling.” Sure enough,

the last time I checked, the club had grown to 160 members; Luis and Joe were leading *nine* weekly rides; and a Mumbai news channel wanted to do a story on the club.

I’m back in North America now, and I’m back to being just another cyclist in the city. I’m not as visible or vocal as the activists here, and I wonder how me and my daily ride actually make a difference.

But I realize that I learned something in India: that sometimes, just riding a bike is enough. People see you ride everywhere and they think you’re an expert. They come to you with questions, and the next thing you know, they’re on a bike too. You invite them on a ride, and it grows from there. Word spreads. It’s a pedal-ution.

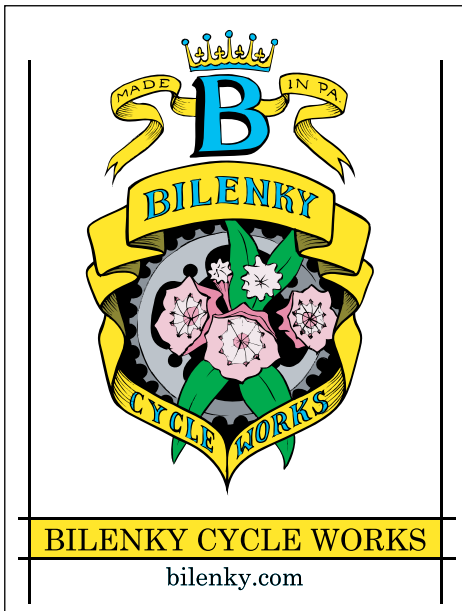
Anthropologist Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” I’d add that a little weblog and social media DIY seems to help, too. 🚲

Ulrike Rodrigues wrote 60 stories about living and riding in Goa. Click the GIRL GONE GOA link at www.ulrike.ca.

Read more about Goa Cycle Club at www.goacycles.wordpress.com.

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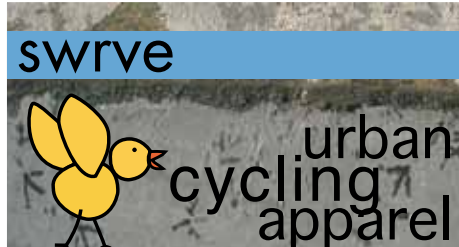
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PHOTO BY ROB AINSLEY, LONDON
WWW.REALCYCLING.CO.UK

These cargo tricycles, produced by Cycles Maximus, are mobile tourist offices that can go wherever needed and mix in with the tourist trade. These small, quiet, non-threatening, and non-polluting vehicles are pedalled to where tourists gather.

So why don't cities everywhere use similar trikes? Why indeed? Maybe they just need to be shown that there is a better way. Perhaps this will help.

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www.cyclesmaximus.com
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WEDDINGFIETS ▶

THE WEATHER WARMS, the juices begin to flow. Creatures everywhere engage in mating rituals.

And what better way to transport the blushing bride (Katie) and groom (Jamie) from their ritual than on a custom made cargo bike with an oak platform. This bike was built from scratch by Jamie, resplendent in formal cargo-biking attire and with no spandex anywhere.



PHOTO BY ALAN BARNARD, WWW.ECOVELO.INFO

LONG ▲ HAULERS

WHAT IS IT about this mural and bike in Roseville, California that catches my attention?

Well, aside from the roughly matching colour schemes, the Surly Long Haul Trucker touring bike and the railway locomotive share some interesting heritage.

Although earlier versions of both existed, by the end of the 19th century, both had reached a usable level of sophistication and were in common use. In both cases they were the most efficient way of carrying their respective cargos. And with the exception of the power plant in the loco, they remain the most efficient modes of travel today.

The Long Haul Trucker gets its distinctive handgrip colour from the cork material used to make it. The leather Brooks saddle is in a matching shade. Both of these were in common use 110 years ago, and remain so today. This certainly is a well-regarded touring bike. In fact, the bike could be part of the mural and not look out of place.

The mural reflects a time when paved roads were first being developed in many areas, with much of the initial push for the use of cyclists. It was only later that roads came to be largely seen as the domain of the car.

So perhaps I am drawn to the bit of history that the photo represents.



PHOTO BY GABRIEL MCGOVERN,
GABRIELMCGOVERN.COM

Jamie is the co-owner of Metrofiets in Portland, Oregon which builds work bikes inspired by Danish and Dutch cargo designs.

This couple shows that they are headed for a mobile and active but environmentally friendly future. After descending through

Rocky Butte park they did a pedal-powered tour through Northeast Portland neighbourhoods, to the cheers of people in the streets.

Good for them! 🚲

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www.metrofiets.com
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