

momentum

#42 NOV/DEC 09

THE MAGAZINE FOR SELF-PROPELLED PEOPLE



REVITALIZING PUBLIC SPACES

Following the lead of Mia Birk of Alta Planning in Portland and Fred Kent of Project for Public Spaces in New York

+ **LOS ANGELES**
THE HUNGRY CYCLIST
HELMET MOHAWKS

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Mia Birk

Redesigning cities for people

18



PHOTO BY ERIN JANKE

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PHOTO BY STEPHEN ROULLIER

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

Mia Birk photographed on the Eastbank Esplanade in Portland, OR. In her forthcoming book, *Joyride*, Birk tells the story of how this and other reclamations have happened. Photo by Erin Janke

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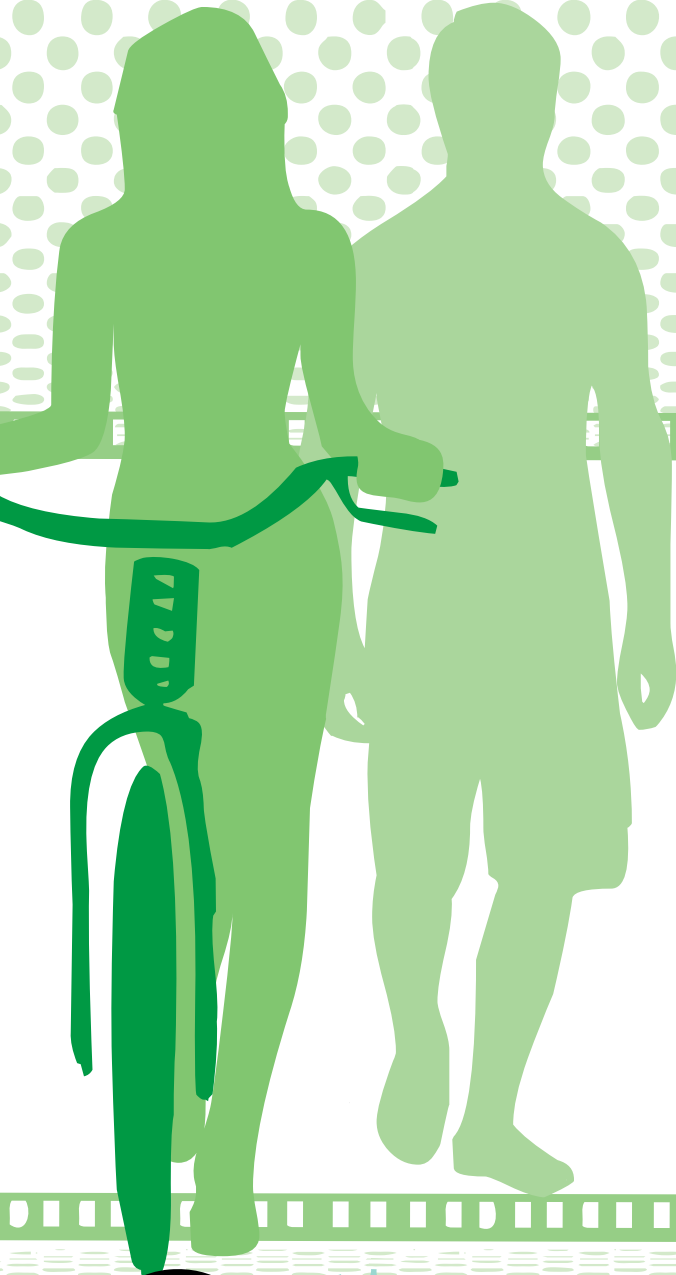


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PUBLISHERS Amy Walker, Tania Lo, Mia Kohout

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Amy Walker
amy@momentumplanet.com

FINANCE & DISTRIBUTION DIRECTOR Tania Lo
tania@momentumplanet.com

MARKETING & ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Mia Kohout
mia@momentumplanet.com

NORTH AMERICAN SALES ACCOUNTS MANAGERS
Maxine Harvey maxine@momentumplanet.com
Dawson Hamilton dawson@momentumplanet.com

MANAGING EDITOR/BOOKS EDITOR Terry Lowe
terry@momentumplanet.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR Sarah Ripplinger
sarah@momentumplanet.com

ARTS EDITOR Stephen Irving
stephen@momentumplanet.com

GEAR EDITOR Jonathon Reynolds
gear@momentumplanet.com

FOOD EDITOR Diane Eros
food@momentumplanet.com

COPY EDITOR Paloma Vita

PHOTO EDITOR David Niddrie
photo@momentumplanet.com

OFFICE MANAGER Lindsey Wasserman

DESIGNER Chris Bentzen | www.thisisplanb.net

COVER PHOTO Erin Janke

WRITERS

Mika Baraket, Andy Cline, Vincent De Tourdonnet, Diane Eros, Bonnie Fenton, Dan Goldwater, Shawn Granton, Stephen Irving, Dena Jackson, Mia Kohout, Terry Lowe, Austin Macdonald, Adam Popper, Jonathon Reynolds, Ron Richings, Sarah Ripplinger, Richard Risemberg, Ulrike Rodrigues, Christina Sikorsky, Kristen Steele, Amy Walker

PHOTOGRAPHERS & ILLUSTRATORS

Brent Barnett, Chris Bentzen, Kimberly Capriotti, Shawn Granton, Deb Greco, Peter Greene, Ashley Helgesen, Myleen Hollero, Erin Janke, josephandjaime.com, Tom Keivill-Davies, Veronika Lenzi, David Niddrie, Brian Percell, Matthew Reamer, Moritz Richter, Richard Risemberg, Dennis Robinson, Stephen Roullier, Douglas Scott, Kyle Thomas, Amy Walker, Neil Wysocki, Ed Yourdon

PROOFREADERS

Terry Lowe, Sarah Ripplinger, Lindsey Wasserman

INTERN Dena Jackson

Send correspondence to:

MOMENTUM MAGAZINE

Suite 214 – 425 Carrall Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 6E3
office 604 669 9850 | fax 604 669 9870
amy@momentumplanet.com

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Reimagining PUBLIC SPACE



BEFORE (RIGHT INSET): A SUNNY DAY IN 1990 IN FRONT OF TIMES SQUARE, NYC. AFTER: PEDESTRIANS LOUNGE IN TIMES SQUARE ON CHAIRS PROVIDED BY THE CITY AFTER THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CLOSED OFF BROADWAY IN JUNE, 2009. PHOTOS COURTESY OF PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

“NEW URBANISM” IS a term we’re hearing more these days. It refers to a growing interest in building or reviving city spaces that are denser, mixed-use, walkable and community-based. It encourages population diversity, walking, cycling and public transit, and affordable housing. It discourages urban sprawl and invites us to reimagine our use of public space.

This is a topic near and dear to my urbanite policy wonk heart. Whether it means creating public squares where none existed before; putting bike lanes into space formerly used for car parking; finding ways to thwart the bureaucratic obstinacy of municipal parking bylaws or creating complete streets on the European model, I’m interested.

When we began examining this theme, we soon found how popular it really is: we felt like latecomers to the party. Herein we present some of our findings, hoping to show that this can indeed be done right here in North America, and to invite our readers to ponder ways they could do the same in their own cities.

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) in New

York has been doing this since 1975, Alta Planning and Design is continuing the work in Portland and beyond, and in Germany it’s become almost second nature. And while Los Angeles, which long ago defined freeways and urban sprawl, might seem an odd place for us to profile, we found noteworthy developments there, too.

“I’m actually getting more impatient as time goes by, and would like to see some results now.”

From my involvement with our local cycling advocacy group, I should have learned some patience by now. “This stuff takes time,” is the message we often get from City Hall. I’m actually getting more impatient as time goes by, and would like to see some results now. We’re starting to see some. Many city planners are cyclists, as are a number of architects, and some politicians. Cyclists vote, advocates are persistent and the zeitgeist appears to be converging towards much more livable cities.

PPS sums up the process best: “If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.” Let’s hear it for – and work toward – people and places. ☘

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“CRAFT” DESERVES GREATER CONSIDERATION

FIRST OFF, LET me say that I appreciate your “make it” editorial in the recent MOMENTUM (Issue #40, July/August – Do It Together)

Having said that I’m going to sound kinda bitter from here on...

Both my girlfriend and I are craftspeople. She’s an artist and a bag maker, I build bicycle frames and racks. We’ve both spent years developing our skills and honing our respective crafts, and spent thousands of dollars investing in our workshops. We both feel that our work speaks for itself, and we’re proud of what we do. Really proud.

I think it’s great that people are making things again. But I’m a little jilted by what I feel is the misappropriation of the term “craft.” In my mind “craft” is honed. It’s learned. It’s handed down. The finished product occupies a space between “commodity” and “art.” The indie craft movement of recent years is largely responsible for the creation of “trinkets” and “stuff,” in our minds. Not “crafts” per se.

Most of the representative images in this

issues’ DIY article represent the sort of things a craftsperson will cringe to see called “craft.” I could go on, but I think I made my point. I don’t mean to belittle another person’s work, but glorifying “trinkets” belittles mine. So what to do?

I know this is not your deal to fuss over, so I won’t take up more of your time. Thank you for your work with MOMENTUM MAGAZINE. It really is typically one of my favorites.

Brad Wilson, Capricorn Bicycles
Amber Jensen, Sketchbook Crafts
Minneapolis, MN

AN OPEN LETTER TO CYCLISTS FROM CYCLISTS

MY BROTHER & SISTER CYCLISTS,

It is with a sad heart that I write this letter. I have been riding the downtown core for almost nine years now, and on a bike full time for most of my life. My bike is my life, my kin and my soul mate. I am proud to be a cyclist and all that goodness that comes with it. As such I must say what is on my mind. I believe that your Critical Mass, as rooted in an original hope of empowering cyclists that it was, has become an antagonistic blemish on bike culture. In a time when cyclists should be reaching out to car drivers in a peaceful and

respectful way, I see nothing but arrogance as you all ride willy-nilly around the streets of Vancouver compounding the aggravation that drivers must face on their commutes home to family and friends. This is NOT the way to make friends and allies, it is turning motorists and even other cyclists away from what is supposed to be an expression of freedom and a love for two wheels. It is compounding the problem you are attempting to solve.

I hope that one day cyclists will gain more respect and equality on the road. I see it happening already. I hope that we attain those rights through qualities that best represent cycling and cyclists: respectfulness, peacefulness and consideration for others.

Rika
Vancouver, BC

Please send us your feedback. Tell us about your local cycling scene. Send us your photos too. Letters may be edited for length.

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CONTRIBUTORS



RICHARD RISEMBERG came to Los Angeles from Argentina in the 1950s. He's been riding the streets of LA since shortly thereafter, founding the advocacy 'zine *Bicycle Fixation* (under a different name) around 1996. He now designs bike clothing to subsidize his writing and blogging on sustainable transport issues. All of this made him uniquely qualified to write a profile of LA's blossoming bike scene, which you can find on page 20. All Richard's present bikes are fixed-wheels. bicyclefixation.com



SARAH RIPPLINGER – Based in Vancouver, BC, Sarah is passionate about her job as MOMENTUM's BC and Assistant Editor, which enables her to explore her passions and continuously learn new things about communities around the world. She also loves riding her trustworthy and sturdy-like-an-ox Raleigh bike and doing what she can to protect the environment. This year, Sarah shrank her ecological footprint by maintaining a small vegetable garden and making fruit preserves. Read Sarah's profile of Project for Public Spaces on page 16.



MIA KOHOUT – Ever since meeting Mia Birk and listening to her keynote speech at the Towards Car Free Cities Conference in Portland, OR in 2008, Mia Kohout wanted MOMENTUM to publish a feature on Birk about the real and inspiring change she has made to promote bicycling in North America (and because it's not every day Mia gets to meet another Mia). Read the full "Mia on Mia" report on page 18. Mia loves to share her love of the bicycle with others and is thrilled to be a part of the evolution of bike culture in North America through her involvement with MOMENTUM.



JONATHAN REYNOLDS – We welcome MOMENTUM's new Gear Editor who began testing cycling gear in 1994 when he started off on a 28,000 mile bike tour around North America. A professional writer and photographer since 1997, Reynolds' work has been published in several languages in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Russia. Jonathon has been a bike commuter in London England, Malmo, Sweden, Ontario, and British Columbia, and has also cycled in Australia and many countries in Europe. The incredible Swedish cycling infrastructure inspired Jonathon a year ago to make a resolution to get involved in getting more people out on their bikes and enjoying cycling.

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BIKE MESSENGERS CONGREGATING AT MECHANIC'S PLAZA LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN, SAN FRANCISCO. PHOTO BY MYLEEN HOLLERO



MESSENGERS ARE PUBLIC SPACE MAGNETS

BY ADAM POPPER

RECENT STUDIES ON the use of downtown public plazas have shown that the presence of other people is the number one reason people frequent these spaces. City places feel safer when other people are around. If a plaza is empty, which is all too often the case, pedestrians and cyclists are less likely to stay for more time than it takes to count spokes on a wheel. The question is, who's going to break the ice?

The answer, in San Francisco and many other cities in North America, is bike messengers. The fast and efficient service they provide coupled with their über-urban style have been credited for keeping the flame alive during the era of the automobile. The two-wheeled peaceful warriors are often behind avant-garde bike activism, and (love it or hate it) the return of fixed-gear riding. In the evolution of public space, messengers are again at the leading edge.

And there is another reason why we appreciate these public space animators. The 1960s through 1980s saw a massive increase in office buildings when real estate developers were allowed to build taller structures if they included public space at the foot of the buildings. Architects mostly designed these spaces to display corporate power; as a result, most are sterile and unwelcoming, offering limited seating or greenery. Many are poorly designed and go underused, even during busy midday lunch rush.

Enter the messengers. By virtue of their need to be close to their clients, messengers sit on steps, benches, walls and bollards at the base of these buildings. While waiting for the next delivery, they prop their steel steeds against lampposts or flip them onto the handlebars for all to see.

Each rider and bike take up a fraction of the space a full-sized delivery truck needs and spew no noxious fumes. Just as important, they legitimize the use of downtown public space. Despite the sometimes inhospitable corporate plazas, bike messengers encourage other sitters to join in and make for safe, well used public places. ☘

THE MESSENGER CONTINUES ON PAGE 13



JOCELYN GREEN LEADS THE GRANDMOTHERS AS THEY APPROACH CENTENNIAL PARK, RIDING UP STELLY'S CROSS ROAD, VANCOUVER ISLAND, BC. PHOTO BY DENNIS ROBINSON. INSET: JEAN MACDONALD CUDDLES HER RECENTLY ADOPTED ETHIOPIAN GRANDDAUGHTER, LYDIA. PHOTO BY DENNIS ROBINSON

GRANDMOTHERS FOR GRANDMOTHERS

CYCLING GRANNIES RAISE \$35,000

BY DENA JACKSON

THESE VICTORIA GRANDMOTHERS and "Grandmothers" for Africa could be heard throughout Vancouver Island hollering like teen-agers as they rocketed through this year's third annual tour. "When we get on our bikes we don't have an age, we're all just kids," said

one of the organizers Christine Scott, 63. During the tour, the 26 riders raised more than \$40,000 for fellow grandmothers in African countries such as Malawi and Ethiopia, so they can afford to feed, clothe, and school their orphaned grandchildren.

Read the full story on MOMENTUM's web site at www.tinyurl.com/cyclinggrannies

Anyone wishing to donate may do so online at www.stephenlewisfoundation.org. Click on the link titled Victoria Grandmothers for Africa 2009 Long Distance Cycling Fundraiser. ☘

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EDUCATING THE POLICE

BY ANDY CLINE

ROBERT JOHNSON, THE education coordinator for PedNet in Columbia, Missouri, will look you right in the eye and claim that encouraging police to enforce traffic laws for bicyclists increases ridership.

Counterintuitive? Perhaps. But Johnson has the results to prove it.

Columbia was one of four US communities to receive a \$22-million grant from Federal Highway Administration's Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program in 2006. The local grant organization, Get About Columbia, works with the grassroots PedNet to educate bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as to design and build streets, lanes and trails that are friendly to non-motorized transportation.

The results are impressive so far.

Columbia earned silver-level status as a Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists in 2009. Education, infrastructure improvements and promotion played a role in that. So did law enforcement, Johnson said.

PedNet believes bicyclists should obey the law for safety and good PR. But many officers don't know what the bicycle laws are and usually feel they don't have the time to enforce them, Johnson said. "It's just not something they are trained on," he added.

That situation began to change when Johnson, and PedNet Executive director Ian Thomas, met Jeff Westbrook, a 22-year veteran with the Columbia Police Department who bicycles daily for exercise. A few rounds of discussions later and they implemented a training session, as a part of ongoing police training, focused on teaching officers Missouri bicycle laws and encouraging enforcement.

"It was very well received," Westbrook said of the training that included all officers on the force. The officers were favorably impressed with Johnson and his desire to see laws enforced. The training began exploding stereotypes of bicyclists as annoying impediments to traffic, Westbrook said. Additional training is planned for 2010.

Officers have the discretion to write tickets or give warnings. "They are pretty actively pulling bicyclists over now," Johnson said.

But the police now see themselves as partners in growing bicycling in Columbia, Westbrook said, so they also participate in encouraging programs such as Operation Light the Night. For several nights in late September of 2009, police officers stopped cyclists riding with no lights. Instead of tickets, the bicyclists received free lights from PedNet. Volunteers mounted the lights on the spot.

Johnson does not believe police involvement hampers interest in bicycling. Just the opposite.

"This makes it more normal and mainstream," he said. "Our police department blows my mind with their professionalism. We have fostered a relationship built upon trust and mutual respect." 

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PARK(ing) DAY

PHOTOS BY MATTHEW REAMER
matthewreamer.com

ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 the Bay Area celebrated PARK(ing) Day, an annual global event that originated in San Francisco when the art collective Rebar began creatively exploring how urban public space is used and playfully asking how it might be used differently in the future. ☘



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A New Kind **OF TRAFFIC**

I WAS REALLY looking forward to my dentist appointment. The adjustment to my nightguard would be pain-free; but more importantly, I would enjoy a long ride across town on one of the city's traffic-calmed commuter bike routes to get there. I hadn't done a good spin on it since before I'd left for India a year ago. When I returned, I worked from home and – you'll only hear this from a cyclist – I no longer commuted as much as I wished. I was curious: had traffic changed while I was away?

I set out in golden autumn air that shimmered off storefronts selling felt hats and pumpkin spice lattes. One foot on the road, one foot on my pedal, I waited for a green light at a busy intersection. A coal-gray Pathfinder pulled up along side me at the white line.

"Hey, hello," called the burly driver across his girlfriend in the passenger seat. I peered into the open window of the SUV, not quite sure what to expect.

"Just so you know..." he motioned to the roadway on the other side of the intersection, "I'm going to pull up ahead of you when the light turns green, okay?" He smiled, and I gave him a thumbs up and grinned back.

I coasted down to where the road intersected my turnoff, made a little manoeuvre to switch roads and this time waited for a green light with a fellow cyclist. She wore a white blouse, brown skirt and a white helmet. We both pushed down on our pedals when the light turned green, and she flashed me a smile and said, "Beautiful day for a bike ride, isn't it?"

"Yeah!" I called after her, "A perfect bike day!"

I continued pedaling westwards and slowed at a four-way stop to check for traffic. A fellow on a department-store bike blew past, noodled a wobbly track stand and creaked on. Others pedaled behind him as if the stop sign and intersection didn't exist.

I joined a clump of cyclists and winced as they turned without signaling, drifted the wrong way around traffic islands, and ran red lights. Some rode too close to slamming car doors, and others skimmed past pedestrians on zebra crosswalks. A woman rode by in the opposite direction, her helmet on backwards. A man thundered through a hospital zone in his highest gear.

The road sloped downwards, and I came to a stop behind a silver sedan at an intersection. It had nosed past the stop sign and now rested on top of the pedestrian crossing. A woman with a white cane waited patiently on the corner then – not hearing the car move – called out, "Thanks for giving me the right of way!"

Sunlight streamed through hand-wide

"I joined a clump of cyclists and winced as they turned without signaling, drifted the wrong way around traffic islands, and ran red lights."

maple leaves, and the street was quiet except for the creak of a dry chain and the chirp of a pedestrian crossing signal.

I leaned around another traffic circle and watched a small-framed woman step off the curb. She held a street map in front of her as she walked into the middle of the residential roadway. She paused without looking up and

I steered wide to her right. Then she whirled around and started back to the curb.

"Whoa!" I roared, "Look out!" She looked up, startled, and I could almost hear her think: "That's not a car... it's too quiet... what is it... doing on the road?!"

I slowed to cross a pair of railway tracks, rode up onto the sidewalk, clicked out of my pedals and locked up to the bike rack in front of my dentist's building. In forty-five minutes I'd experienced good drivers, good cyclists, bad drivers, bad cyclists, good pedestrians and bad pedestrians. Together, they are traffic, but it's a different kind of traffic.

This traffic communicates. It grins, creaks, yells, chirps and bellows. With no windshields to mute or deafen it, this traffic talks to itself; to the vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians that comprise it; to the street that hosts it; and to the city that birthed it. It sounds like people, not machines.

A part of me misses the quiet days when this unmarked route was a speedy secret between us daily commuters. But another part of me celebrates that – though it's still young and loose and uneasy – the city's new kind of traffic has found its own voice. ☘

Ulrike Rodrigues lives, rides and writes in Vancouver, Canada and can imitate an air horn when necessary. Read more adventures at ulrike.ca.

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PUBLIC SPACES

Make a Difference in NYC

BY SARAH RIPPLINGER

NAVIGATING THROUGH THE busy streets of any major city is a harrowing undertaking. Taxis race through intersections; there is a general melee of honking horns, screeching brakes; and pell-mell sounds from stores and people. It's little wonder that, for many urbanites, the focus is getting to their final destinations as fast as possible, not lingering on city streets to take in the view.

That's where Fred Kent and Project for Public Spaces (PPS) step in. For Kent, president of PPS, city streets are an untamed wilderness rife with opportunities for a new and pioneering form of public engagement.

"In the US, there seems to still be a lid on openness and creativity [in the public realm]," said Kent, who headquarters in NYC. "In this country we are defined more by disciplines than by community actions."

Kent and PPS are working to redefine the idea of a city as an organic whole – and not only a commercial Mecca – by uncovering the civic centers lying dormant below looming buildings and crowded roads. A tall order, Kent said, for projects that don't follow the typical rules of the road in city planning.

"The biggest obstacles are designers, traffic engineers and

managers that insist that you have to do it by-the-book. The book is always defined by a narrowly focused discipline that wants to control outcomes and limit public engagement and use."

PPS does the exact opposite: it pushes the limits and dispels common perceptions of how city infrastructure: streets, sidewalks, squares and buildings, should look and function.

Farmers markets form part of PPS's vision for the establishment of more inclusive public spaces. They are one example of groups and individuals reclaiming the streetscape and transforming it into an open-air commercial and community space.

"Markets, starting with farmers markets, have increased exponentially in the last 10 years," said Kent. "But that kind of special market is just the tip of the iceberg. There are all kinds of markets happening everywhere... The other area we see a resurgence in is town/ community squares. Watching a community regenerate itself around the community gathering space is off-the-charts exciting. That is also happening world-wide."

PPS is a key player in the global movement that's transforming urban landscapes from lonely places of concrete and congestion, to places where people can gather, commute, exchange goods and ideas and celebrate. A



BRYANT PARK, LATE APRIL 2009
PHOTO BY ED YOURDON

not-for-profit organization established in 1975 and based in NYC, PPS works to influence policy and policymakers to support community-friendly planning and development. So far, the organization has worked on projects in over 2,500 communities in 40 countries.

Thirty-five years ago, NYC was plagued by economic problems and high crime rates. In Bryant Park, the problem was obvious. Drugs



and gangs had taken over the area located near Times Square – between 42nd and 40th streets – to such an extent that, by 1979, local authorities had pretty well given up any hope of reclaiming the park as a public amenity.

In a 1981 report, William H. Whyte, a mentor of PPS, raised the alarm about the severity of the drug-trafficking problem in the park and the need for changes to the park’s design. As a result, PPS did a master plan and several improvements to the park infrastructure were made, including clearing away hedges to make the park a more open and well-lit space, and introducing commercial uses, such a food and beverage stands.

“Back then, Bryant Park was really in a bad situation,” said Kent. “Today, it’s probably the most successful public square in the world.”

The Rockefeller Brothers Foundation saw potential economic and social opportunities in the park, which sits between Avenue of the Americas and the New York public library main branch, and created the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation to manage its public and commercial aspects. Since the re-development, a slew of public events have taken place in Bryant Park, including free concerts and a summer movie festival. Roving security guards have also been instated to deter criminal activity.

There have been downsides to introducing commercial activity to the park. PPS has argued that hosting large-scale and ongoing events, such as the Barnum and Bailey Circus and bi-annual Seventh on Sixth fashion shows, clash with the design and objectives of the small public space.

Still, the introduction of commercialism to the grassy park has

breathed new life into a spot once controlled by drug dealers. Coffee stands, bocce ball courts, library reading rooms and other amenities all give “people reasons to be there [in a public space] beyond the drug dealing,” said Kent, “and that’s a real paradigm shift.”

Forging ahead in NYC, PPS partnered with Transportation Alternatives and the Open Planning Project in 2005 to co-found the New York City Streets Renaissance campaign. The campaign created a new vision for more pedestrian- and cycling-friendly areas within the city. Many of the community visions have since been built, including that for the Meatpacking District redevelopment – the first plaza to be completed within the NYC Department of Transportation’s public plaza program. Similar to many other PPS initiatives, this project is all about creating a place for people, aka “Placemaking.”



“Watching a community regenerate itself around the community gathering space is off-the-charts exciting.”

FRED KENT, PRESIDENT OF PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES. PHOTO COURTESY OF PPS

Placemaking involves creating more livable roads and nodes within cities: places where people can cycle, walk, soak up some sun and socialize in a safe and inviting environment. It’s a concept that’s driving the future of PPS, according to Kent.

“Placemaking means taking the idea of creating places to a community/ city/ region-wide agenda. We have the simple idea of working through communities to create something we call “The Power of 10.” If a city or community has 10 good to great places, then they are very unusual; but, ask the community what are their 10 best places, 10 worst places and 10 places with the biggest opportunity, and you will get a groundswell of input, and the potential for real action.”

In the Big Apple, the Placemaking experiment is catching on. The Streets Renaissance Campaign spurred two other public space advocacy initiatives: Streetsblog and Streetfilms, which have taken on the task of documenting the successes and failures of NYC’s transportation system. The Livable Streets Network takes this one step further by bringing the core concepts of the Streets Renaissance Campaign to other cities using the Internet as a portal for information exchange.

But NYC is just the tip of the iceberg.

“I think there has been a massive shift in attitude in the past few years,” said Kent. “People in communities are deeply wise about their own social community needs, but they are seldom asked.”

Using The Power of 10, Kent said that he and PPS will continue to work with communities around the world to develop inclusive public spaces, uncovering the oases hidden below urban badlands. ☘



MIA BIRK

Redesigning North American Cities For People

BY MIA KOHOUT

MIA BIRK, PRINCIPAL at Alta Planning & Design in Portland, Oregon, is a 42-year-old mother of two who believes she has the best job on the planet. Every day, she gets to work with colleagues and clients to make North America more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Birk's career began when she was hired by the City of Portland as the first Bicycle Coordinator. Birk later shifted gears and was hired by Alta Planning, where she started the Portland office in 1999; she has since turned her office of two into an office of sixty. Over the past 20 years, Birk has witnessed the radical growth of cycling infrastructure and culture in Portland firsthand. Initially, she says, it was an experiment but now no one can deny Portland's radical transformation over the past two decades: the city is North America's leader in bicycle-friendliness and numbers of transportation riders.

To Birk, "Biking is a simple solution to a lot of problems." It has a transformative effect on cities and for societies problems such as stress, caused primarily by sitting in traffic; health issues related to living sedentary lifestyles; environmental and safety problems (the leading cause of death among young children is car crashes), and to economic and political problems such as our dependency on oil which also leads to wars.

Birk's work at Alta Planning & Design is to plan for a more balanced use of public space where cities allow people to use their own bodies for transportation. As Birk says, "We can't expect people to bike and walk if we don't provide them with the infrastructure to do so. Vast amounts of public space in our cities are dedicated to moving motor vehicles, and we need to shift this balance back to prioritizing biking and walking."

When designing a new facility, Birk adds that the highest priority is creating separate paths for cyclists and pedestrians because the three modes – cars, bicycles and pedestrians – operate differently and need to be treated differently. "So far in North America pedestrians and cyclists have had to share the cookie crumbs of public space, where cities have only allocated three meters for both cyclists and pedestrians. In my experience, this isn't good enough. In almost every instance of building new infrastructure, upon completion the space is at capacity."

Although infrastructure is crucial to the growth of biking and walking trips in North America, education and encouragement are also vital to this process: "We need to educate drivers about sharing the road and the best way to do this is to have them start biking too." Birk offers ideas on how to do this: Drivers Ed classes needs to incorporate sharing the road with bicycles; it has to be tougher for young people to get their drivers licenses; elementary schools should require bike safety education starting in the 4th and 5th Grades. And, Birk adds, "Parents need to realize that the choices they make for their kids affect the whole community – sending kids to private schools far away will change their kids' behavior forever."

"First and foremost the bicycle has to be seen as fun, relevant, exciting, easy and comfortable. Playing on people's guilt is not nearly as effective as showing how fun it is."

Birk also talks about the importance of culture and how we encourage bicycle use in the mainstream. "First and foremost the bicycle has to be seen as fun, relevant, exciting, easy and comfortable. Playing on people's guilt is not nearly as effective as showing how fun it is."

Birk, along with other parents, successfully launched a Safe Routes to School Program at Abernethy Elementary, her children's school in Portland. They added bike parking and the kids learned how to ride safely and properly fit helmets. The parents started "Bike and Walk Fridays," where stylishly dressed parents rode with their kids rain or shine; the kids arrived at school smiling and happy. The adults made

themselves available on the playground to answer questions so other parents could learn from them. They particularly wanted to show working women that they could dress nicely and still bring their kids to school on a bike. "It had to feel normal and daily. No Lycra needed!" Birk and her fellow mothers wore high heels and skirts and stashed their rain gear in their panniers. "We are looking fabulous while biking and this is such an important message to get across. This is not a sporting event; this is just how we get around."

When Birk and the other parents launched the program there were 20 kids who biked to school regularly. This year there were 100 kids on bikes for the first day of school, a five-fold increase. Now 40-50 per cent of students bike and many others use school busses. The program has transformed the entire neighborhood and parents rarely drive their kids to school anymore.

Birk sums up by saying, "People also need to realize that change is not going to happen overnight. In reality, it takes a generation to change things." Birk uses recycling as a perfect example of this. "People are addicted to driving and addictions are hard to break."

What does being a self-propelled person mean to you?

"Health – I never get sick, I rebounded from two pregnancies very quickly, I have fabulous legs and I don't worry about what I eat."

"Empowerment – particularly as a woman"

"Being Free – I smile every single day when I ride my bicycle." 🚲

Mia Birk is working on a new book, *Joyride: One Woman's Journey to Empower People and Transform Communities*, that will be released in the fall of 2009.

THE TOOL KIT FOR SUCCESSFUL BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE IN CITIES:

"We have a tool kit of different kinds of bicycle facility treatments and not one is inherently superior. They all work together to create a cohesive network."

- ▶ Separated paths, not on the road, but may cross roads.
- ▶ Bike lanes and bike boulevards.
- ▶ Additional tools like sharrows.
- ▶ Signage, the glue that holds the system together.
- ▶ Bike parking.
- ▶ Education and Encouragement, to start at the school level.

Los Angeles

BY RICHARD RISEMBERG

LOS ANGELES... AKA 70 suburbs in search of a city, aka La La Land, aka the Ground Zero of Carmageddon; it's where sprawl was born and road rage made its name. The city itself covers nearly 500 square miles and is intertwined with dozens of smaller municipalities, from haughty Beverly Hills to pathetic corners of lost county land that rot away in the sun, forgotten and unmourned. Summer temperatures can run in the 100s for weeks at a time, the brief winter rains can rival monsoons and the banal vastnesses of its coastal plain are regularly cut by 2,000 foot tall mountain ranges. Earthquakes knock down bridges; fires scorch the land and the air, and angry traffic rages along ten-lane streets that would be freeways in any other place.

This is not where you'd expect to find a thriving and remarkably civil urban cycling movement. But here, in fact, it is.

I've been riding the streets of Los Angeles off and on for over forty years, and I remember mighty lonely times on the road after the 1970s faded away; when it seemed as though the only other riders

willing to face the asphalt jungle were hardcore roadies. Even though the one-two punch of the counterculture and the OPEC oil embargo got a lot of folks on bikes, most of them were sold racing bikes which were not particularly suited for commuting in the city, or heavy, knobby-clad mountain bikes which were even less so. Touring bikes disappeared, road bikes became more oriented towards racing, and practical cycling became an undefined and unsupported category.

Now a perfect synchronicity of factors is working to revive urban cycling in the very city that once scorned it most. Add to that a retail culture that is offering not only touring bikes again, but Eurostyle city bikes, ready-made fixies, and even cargo bikes and bakfietsen, and you can see that Los Angeles is poised to leap into the Bicycle Millennium with a joyous "Wheeee!"



MOTHER'S DAY TANDEM RIDE ON THE VENICE BEACH BIKE PATH. PHOTO BY MR. & MRS. ROLLERS

Persistence Pays

Los Angeles has enthusiastically supported bicycle culture several times in its past. The Los Angeles Wheelmen was founded in 1880, and is still around. The Velo Club La Grange has been sponsoring races as well as training and social rides since 1969, before the Seventies Bike Boom and Major Motion (named for Major Taylor) brought the same orientation to the black community in 1975.

There are dozens of group rides to choose from nearly every week – starting, of course, with Critical Mass (CM). There are at least five CM rides in the Los Angeles area: Mid-Wilshire, Northeast Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley, Santa Monica, and Pasadena. Small and sporadic “Critical Manners” rides make an occasional appearance.

The Midnight Ridazz make no bones about being out for fun, and they schedule their rides late at night in part to minimize the probabilities of confrontations. The Ridazz’ website stresses their cooperation with the LAPD and the rides are often hilarious meanders across the varied landscapes of Los Angeles. It all started a few years ago with five friends, but with current rides drawing 1,500 to 2,000 riders, they’ve had to split into several groups to make room for all.

More specialized are rides such as the Wolfpack Hustle, fast cross-town alley cats that may cover thirty miles or more or thematic rides, such as Vélo Rétro’s Rose Bowl Vintage Ride. The Rose Bowl ride has been drawing a coterie of collectors, ex-racers and just plain folks for at least ten years (any bike is allowed, despite its name); riders gather on the first Sunday of each month to gawk at Masis, Colnagos, sparkling Peugeotts, and the occasional Singer or Herse, as well as modern-day classics, before following the legendary Chuck Schmidt along tranquil, tree-shaded lanes to finish with an uphill sprint to be first in line at the Beantown coffee house in Sierra Madre. In spite of the impressive abilities of many of the regulars, “No rider left behind” is this ride’s motto.

Even politicians are getting into the act, with councilmember Tom LaBonge often leading constituents on easy-paced rides of discovery in the varied neighborhoods of Los Angeles –

continuing a practice his friend Richard Riordan established when he was mayor several terms back. These rides are a boon to new riders trying to find their way for the first time through this vast and daunting city on a bicycle.

Reaching Out

The last ten years have been rich ones for bicycling outreach and advocacy in this city. And one quiet little intentional community, the Los Angeles Eco-Village, has been a significant influence on the movement – one of the side effects of its urban-sustainability program.

Joe

In the middle 1990s a fellow named Joe Linton, now 46, came to Los Angeles to attend Occidental College, where he befriended – among others – Janette Sadik-Kahn, who is now doing so much for cycling in New York City. Linton soon found himself immersed in environmental activism. The first Gulf War cinched it, and he gave up his car and became a transportation cyclist. In 1996, he moved into the Eco-Village neighborhood, where he met Ron Milam of the Surface Transportation Policy Project the following year.

Linton knew a lot of the “lone wolf” bicycle activists of the day and felt there should be a better way to promote cycling infrastructure and bike-friendly policies. When Chris Morfas of the California Bicycle Coalition suggested that the city was ripe for a local advocacy group, Linton and Milam jumped on it, publishing their first newsletter before even naming the nascent organization – which became today’s Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition.

Although Linton frets that car culture still rules at the Los Angeles Department of Traffic, there have been successes, mostly in the establishment of numerous bike lanes and paths – although they have been built in “drips and drabs,” and there is no true network yet.



CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



SEAN AND MARK ON SUNSET – BIKE TO WORK DAY. PHOTO BY STEPHEN ROULLIER



PHOTOS BY RICHARD RISEBERG

Jimmy Z

Thirty-four-year-old Jimmy Lizama is a paradigmatic Angeleno of the future: fully bilingual, literate, and joyously nuts in the good sense of the word. He was born in Los Angeles and went to school around the corner from the Eco-Village, where he too now lives. He has never owned a car and earns his living as a bike messenger, devoting his free time to getting Angelenos onto bike seats, mostly through the famed Bicycle Kitchen organization.

The Bicycle Kitchen began in the Eco-Village when Jimmy asked if he could repair his bikes in an unused kitchen in one of the buildings. Friends began to hang out with him and Ron Milam suggested he open up to other riders. Within two years, the “cooks,” as they call themselves, began looking for a storefront. They found one, at Heliotrope and Melrose Avenues in East Hollywood – and suddenly Los Angeles had a physical nexus for its burgeoning bike scene.

Now the corner boasts a full-service retail bike shop, Orange 20 Bikes, operated by two former Kitchen volunteers and selling everything from ready-made fixies and BMX bikes to touring, city and Dutch cargo cycles. You can get anything from top-tube pads to Brooks saddles there, and all are welcome and made to feel welcome – anybody, any bike.

Next door to Orange 20 is Pure Luck, a former Korean hostess bar transformed in a vegan pub owned and run by cyclists and garnering excellent reviews from Los Angeles’ puzzled food journalists. For the über hip, there’s also a tattoo parlor and a hookah bar – and for the young and ambitious, Los Angeles City College is on the same block. The corner has earned its own moniker, when another Eco-Village resident once blurted “Hel-Mel,” and the name stuck.

The Kitchen is now a registered non-profit with an educational mission in which Jimmy Z participates with energetic pleasure. He’s currently working on a manual for people wanting to start their own Kitchen, and hopes in the future to begin building bike frames for daily community riders.

The Kitchen has served as an inspiration to other neighborhoods: there are at least two local spinoffs, each also associated with a community-oriented bike shop: Bikerowave on the Westside, across the street from LA Brakeless, and the Bike Oven, two doors down from Josef Bray-Ali’s shop, Flying Pigeon LA.

Bray-Ali sells only transportation and cargo bikes at his shop. And, like Jim Cadenhead and TJ Flexer at Orange 20, who were “cooks” at the Bicycle Kitchen, he began as a volunteer at the Bike Oven, which he founded in emulation of the Kitchen.

Harv

Also associated with the Bike Oven is Harv Woien who has been pedaling bicycles and peddling bicycling for nearly 55 years. Woien was born in New York City, obtained his first full-sized bike when he was eleven and said, “I taught myself to ride in the street in traffic, and I have ridden only in the street, in traffic, since.” He keeps a pickup truck in the garage, but drives it so seldom he fills the tank up only twice a year.



MAP BY DOUGLAS SCOTT

Woien’s family moved to Los Angeles when he was twelve, and “As soon as the bike was off the moving van, I was all over this city.” He rode everywhere, night and day, buying his first ten-speed just in time for the 1970s Bike Boom. His experience made him the local “expert” for his colleagues who became interested in bikes and he founded the DWP Bicycle Club, leading rides all over the city.

Now retired, he is busier than ever with volunteer advocacy work for North East Los Angeles Bikes (NELA Bikes!) and Cyclists Inciting Change thru Live Exchange (CICLE.org) in Pasadena. But the Bike Oven, just down the hill from his Montecito Heights home, is where he spends much of his time, helping with outreach and educational programs that go beyond just bikes. One of their more recent efforts provided a delivery bike for a South-Central Los Angeles food co-op.



Dorothy

At the other end of the age spectrum is 24-year-old Dorothy Kieu Le, who works as Planning and Policy Director for the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, (LACBC) founded by Linton and Milam when Le was barely past kindergarten.

She grew up in Manhattan Beach, a charming beachside town with plenty of cycling. Although a former boyfriend nagged her into getting a car, claiming she “couldn’t appear mature” without one, she rarely drives it, preferring her bike, or Los Angeles’ rapidly-improving Metro system. Her second year at UCLA brought her back into the cycling fold when she chanced upon the Santa Monica Critical Mass ride. She realized that “if I could do it in a group, I could do it alone.” That led her into on-campus bicycle advocacy and the position at LACBC.

Her first project at the Coalition was in support of better cyclist and pedestrian access to Metro stations. Her big push now is to get funds from Measure R, a tiny boost in the local sales tax dedicated to “traffic relief and transportation upgrades,” allocated to bicycle projects. LACBC feels that a sliver of the \$40 billion to be allocated would go a long way towards providing attractive and effective bicycle infrastructure to the cities of Los Angeles County.

Another important LACBC function in which Le is involved is “City of Lights,” an outreach program in English and Spanish trying to help the area’s vast number of Latino cyclists upgrade their bikes to street safety standards, primarily through providing lights for night and early-morning riding, as well as brochures and workshops in safe riding. Thanks in part to LACBC’s attentions, traffic deaths of cycling immigrant workers are no longer routinely ignored by the LAPD and these riders are being drawn in to the cycling community, and hence into the city as a whole.

That’s the recent past. What Le hopes to see in the near future includes the “road diets” Linton also spoke of: the reallocation of space from cars to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as an expansion of Los Angeles’ city council and county board of supervisors to ensure that neighborhoods have more say in what happens to them.

James & Pedro

Getting it done – without waiting for the powers-that-be to help – is what James Spooner, 33, and Pedro Balugo, 41, are all about. Both are biracial punk-rockers who drift among more different worlds than most people know exist in Los Angeles. Spooner is the producer of Afro-Punk concerts and documentary film and one of his many goals is to open the local black community’s eyes to the possibilities available to them in this city, which was once considered the most segregated metropolis in the US. “I know from experience,” Spooner, said, that “Black folk don’t feel included in ‘open’ invitations,” so he began producing black-specific events that he says help people of color believe that worlds often thought of as “white,” such as punk rock – or bicycling – are for them as well.

Black folk need a “place to relax, a ‘safe space’ where they can be themselves,” and Spooner, remembering the intense feeling of freedom of his own first bike ride, wanted cycling to be one of those safe spaces. After a chance meeting with the black owners of Bikestylers Customs in Hollywood, Spooner started “Black Kids on Bikes” (which is not limited to kids or black folk) and began organizing the “Freedom Rides” under its aegis.

As Balugo says, “Kids” refers to their feeling “kind of like unsupervised grown-up teenagers,” but the rides tend to be mannerly and oriented to community-building among participants. Balugo heard of the Freedom Ride through Afro-Punk but was wary of joining in as he had a white girlfriend at the time. He asked Spooner if he could bring her, and the answer was, “Why would it matter?” Balugo adds, “There’s no hidden agenda; we’re just out to ride and have fun. It’s a bike ride. Simple as that.” Anyone who shows up can ride.

Many of those who do show up haven’t been on a bike for fifteen years or more. Spooner keeps a couple of “invitation bikes” that curious but wheel-less riders can borrow. So far, every rider who has borrowed one has ended up buying their own bike, and two of them are now riding to work every day!

But there’s always the pull of athleticism, so the pair has started another ride, their answer to the Wolfpack Hustle – a fast-paced midnight ride called Zulu Dawn. Fast-paced – but still no spandex! They’ll always be punk-rockers at heart.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



PHOTOS BY RICHARD REISEMBERG



PHOTO BY RICHARD REISEMBERG

COMMUNITY

LADOT Bicycle Services:
bicycledla.org

LADOT Bike Racks:
lacity.org/ladot/bicycle/Parking.htm#Sidewalk

Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC):
la-bike.org

Bikeways Maps: labikepaths.com
planning.lacity.org/cwd/gn/pln/iranseti/BikePlan/BikeMaps.htm

Metro:
metro.net/projects_studies/bikeway_planning/default.htm

Los Angeles Eco-Village
laecovillage.org

California Cycleway
californiacycleways.org

C.I.C.L.E.
cicle.org

Bicycle Kitchen:
bicyclekitchen.com

Bike Oven:
bikeoven.com

Bikerowave:
bikerowave.org

RIDES

Velo-Retro Rose Bowl Vintage Ride:
velo-retro.com/roseBowlViniRide.html

Black Kids on Bikes:
www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61886896636

Critical Mass:
cicle.org/cm/criticalmass.html

Midnight Ridazz:
midnightridazz.com

Ride-Arc:
ridearc.org

SHOPS

Orange 20 Bikes:
orange20bikes.com

Flying Pigeon LA:
flyingpigeon-la.com

LA Brakeless:
labrakeless.com

Michelle

In mid September, I rolled into the vast underground garage of the CalTrans building downtown: a huge building that also houses the Los Angeles City Department of Transportation (LADOT), which is home to the Bureau of Capital Programming where Michelle Mowery – a vigorous, willowy fifty-year-old – is the Senior Project Coordinator of Bicycle Outreach and Planning.

Mowery, who has held the position since 1994, has managed to get a good bit of bicycle infrastructure on the ground in the last fifteen years. She has come to realize that “a huge part of my job is talking to people who always say ‘No,’ till they finally say ‘Yes’ to bicycle projects. But it isn’t easy.”

Still, there have been successes: when Mowery began at LADOT, there were no public bike racks in Los Angeles; now there are 3,500 of them, with more going in weekly. Mowery also began working on parking meter retrofits ten years ago – a hard pull back then. But now that parking meters are being phased out in favor of pay-stations, Mowery has persuaded LADOT not to uproot all the old meters, but to slip a lock-on adapter over them and convert them to bike racks, complete with LADOT logo and a little silhouette of a bike.

Mowery lives thirty miles away in Long Beach but makes the round trip by bike at least once a week, coming in by Metro most of the other days and driving only about once a week. She’s been a street rider since her teen years but she understands that not everyone is comfortable facing Los Angeles’ notorious traffic and so has worked hard to establish bike routes, lanes and paths throughout the city.

The new Bicycle Master Plan for Los Angeles strives for a comprehensive network of “bike friendly streets,” some of which may eventually become full-fledged bicycle boulevards. This she sees as her most important job for the next ten years – a job complicated by the fact that Los Angeles City comprises only 39 per cent of Los Angeles County

and that the mishmash of 88 cities that forms the Greater Los Angeles Area means lanes will often disappear at an invisible line in the street, as you roll from one city to another, or into unincorporated territory.

Mowery in particular is trying to get more bike lanes on arterial streets – the ones that get you to work the fastest. And with the help of individual citizen activists and local NGOs, especially the LACBC, it looks like we’re finally getting someplace after a long dry season.

Los Angeles Today

It used to be that when I met people who saw me riding a bike on the street, the only question they would ever ask was, “Oh, do you race?” They couldn’t imagine that anyone riding a bicycle in the city could possibly have any reason other than training for competition.

I haven’t heard that question since, I think, around the year 2000. More often now I get a thumbs-up and shouts of approval. More people are riding and more shops are offering practical bikes. Drivers are more polite, and sometimes even deferential. And government is slowly catching up to the realities on the street and the impact of sprawl, global warming, the public health burdens of sedentary lifestyles, and the myriad of other social and physical ills that active transportation, including bicycling, can forestall.

It’s not a cycling paradise yet, by any means, but it’s becoming a place where it’s not only possible to ride (because it’s always possible) but it’s pleasurable as well. 🚲



Picture THIS!

BY THE TIME we reach a certain age, we stop believing in things like unicorns, fairies and the Easter Bunny. For most of us, we believe it when we see it. In the US and Canada, the story we're told and which most of us have seen, is that streets are for cars. And most North Americans believe it. Why wouldn't they? They've never seen streets in any other way. But increasingly, communication-savvy advocates are using the power of images and videos to shift paradigms and win converts. The digital era is creating new opportunities for showing people what streets can be – an often necessary step in changing our existing streets.

Streetfilms is a pioneer in getting images out to the public and to policy makers to show what is possible for streets to become. The organization locates inspiring examples of what cities are doing to open streets for people and promote biking and walking; they film it, then share the story as widely as possible. Because seeing is believing, these films are creating ripples in streetscapes around the world.

Streetfilms' *Ciclovía* video was critical in engaging city leaders to start San Francisco's Sunday Streets. According to Leah Shahum of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, "Showing the video to our Mayor was the next best thing to flying him to Bogota to witness the joys of *ciclovía* firsthand." Cheryl Brinkman of Livable Streets was also involved in bringing Sunday Streets to San Francisco and calls Streetfilms' videos their best marketing tool. "So many times at community meetings the images would lead people to talk about similar events, either seen in Europe while on vacation or living abroad or from their childhood and to say how great the idea of Sunday Streets was. Seeing the images brought good feelings to the surface, the memories of being happy, feeling friendly and having fun in the streets."

Streetfilms started when Clarence Eckerson Jr., director of video production, made a 20-minute short *The Case for a Car-Free Central Park* which was presented to 700 people at a packed rally. According to

Eckerson, "Not long after we got some action from the Department of Transportation (they closed some entrances to the park) and Mark Gorton (Streetfilms' primary funder) seeing the power of film to convince people, hired me to start making similar short films." Now over 250 Streetfilms have had over 2.5 million plays, have been viewed on six continents and have had public airings in 45 states.

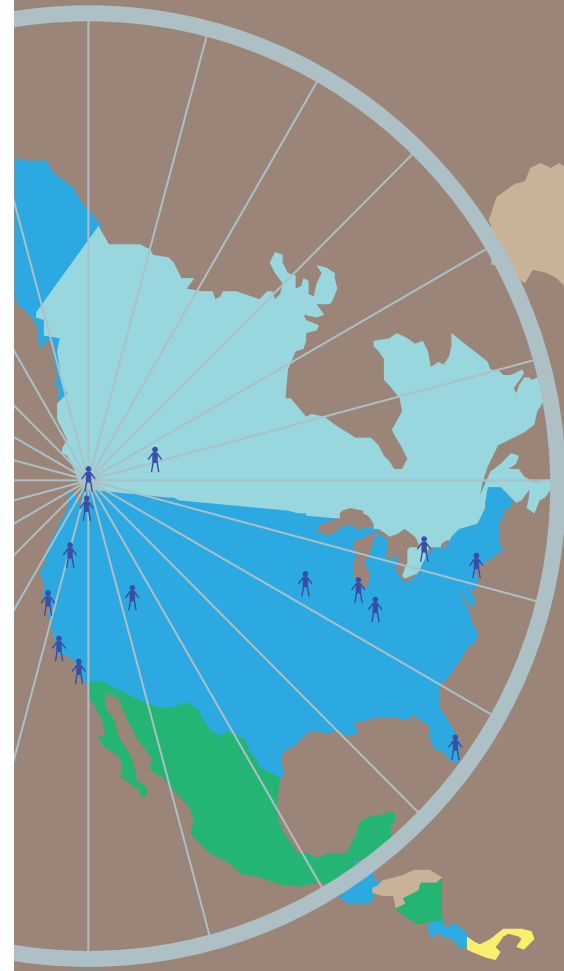
Photovoice is another community-change tool that uses the power of images to trigger decision makers to act. The Kaiser Permanente program piloted in Park Hill, Colorado in 2006; local residents were given cameras and sent out into the community to document the barriers to active living and healthy eating. Their photos were then blown up and presented to local decision makers at an invitation-only showing. One photo depicting an under-utilized park was used to leverage a city bond to renovate the park. According to Michele Wheeler of the Northeast Park Hill Coalition, "We'd been trying to do something for years in this neighborhood and nothing ever got done. We talked with city leaders and had meeting after meeting, and Photovoice was the first thing that brought results to fruition."

Pictures are powerful advocacy tools, both to show the barriers to biking and walking, and to show the types of streets that are possible. Images help people imagine a new story around streets, one filled with kids biking, old people walking and young couples strolling. These streets are filled with games, laughter and smiles. Seeing these sorts of streets, why wouldn't people believe in them and why wouldn't they want their streets to be like that? 🚲

.....
Streetfilms: streetfilms.org
Get your cameras out!
peoplepoweredmovement.org/photocontest
.....

Kristen Steele works for the Alliance for Biking and Walking, the North American coalition of over 140 bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations, PeoplePoweredMovement.org

"Images help people imagine a new story around streets"



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ROBERT SILVERMAN AND CLAIRE MORISSETTE
POSE WITH A TRAIN CONDUCTOR IN THIS
PHOTO FROM THE 1991 "CYCLE AND RECYCLE"
CALENDAR. THANKS TO JOHN DOWLAND FOR
SENDING THIS. PHOTO BY BRIAN PERCELL

*"It was an epiphany;
I got an instant pleasure
when I rediscovered the
bicycle over 35 years ago."*

got a lot of members in the early days, about 500. This was harder back then, there wasn't the Internet then. We were photocopying and typesetting on Gestetner machines and really primitive things."

While they've since disbanded and his most ardent days as a *Bikeshevik* may be behind him, "Bicycle Bob," now 74, reflects on the bike movement's journey in his distinct *joual* of bike-speak. In late September he was a speaker and the guest of honour at the opening of Montréal's *Vélo Vélo*, a bicycle coop conference.

The following is a sort of glossary of

some terms used by Robert Silverman throughout the interview, along with their definitions, in his own words.



BIKESHEVIKS

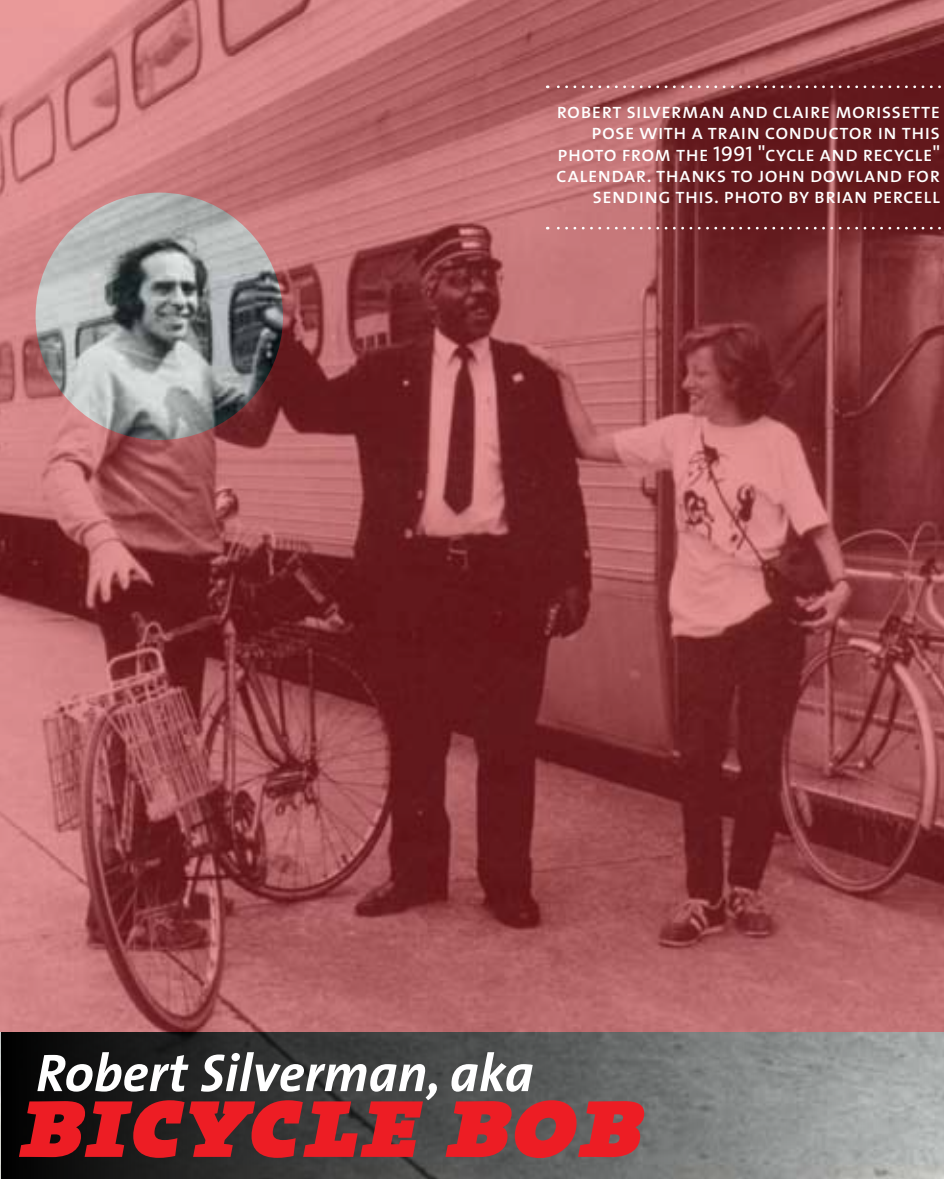
"I am, I was a *Bikeshevik*: a person who

works full-time for the revolution, a person who's really disciplined in their thrust for biking infrastructure in cities. It comes from an article that I wrote in 1980s published in *Open Road* an anarchist publication out of Vancouver. At LeMàB, I was considered the theorist of the movement. I never finished university but became a scholar about the social history of the bicycle. I just focused and devoured all these bicycle related and urban transport related books."

"Ivan Illich's *Energy and Equity* is the cyclist's bible. It was initially suppressed but all of his ideas are coming true, especially with the collapse of the auto industry."

CYCLOCONSCIOUSNESS

"That's the thought that the reversal of the car movement is historically important and you're prepared to do something to accelerate it. What we saw this past weekend at *Vélo Vélo* was unbelievable. No one cared about themselves, people teaching others, it was



Robert Silverman, aka
BICYCLE BOB

BY AUSTIN MACDONALD

CULMINATING IN THE inauguration of the Claire Morissette bike path downtown and the runaway success of BIXI, the first decade of the 21st century was a watershed for cycling in Montréal. Robert Silverman, the quixotic co-founder, in 1975, of Le Monde à Bicyclette (LeMàB), Montréal's first citizen lobby group for cyclists, a godfather of North American bicycle activism, is pleased about Montréal's recent pro-bicycle and alternative transportation victories. A co-conspirator with the late Ms. Morissette, it's been 34 years since LeMàB's first meeting in his Plateau apartment.

The first event organized by LeMàB was a "commuter challenge" type of event with a cyclist, a car driver and a public transit user. The second was The Great Cyclists parade on May 31, 1975. "We got 3,500 people that day. It rained at the beginning and boy were we nervous! We plastered the city with posters

but we also got a lot of newspaper and radio coverage." LeMàB coordinated The Great Cyclists Parade with other cities like New York, Paris and London for 10 years. The event was eventually taken over by *Vélo Québec* and lost most of its political content. It is now known as the *Tour de l'Île*, which draws approximately 30,000 riders each May.

Silverman came in contact with John Dowland of the Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition. Dowland, the man behind The Bicycle Network and Cycle and Recycle Calendar, sent Silverman material that showed that in many cities in the US and abroad there were bike activists groups: London Cycling Campaign, *Amis de la Terre* in Paris, Melbourne and San Francisco. They were all over the world.

LeMàB also adopted policies for bike parking, a network of bike paths, access to the subway, bike parking all over the city, police enforcement, teaching bicycle mechanics in high school. "And," said Silverman, "we



DON'T PLAY IN THE STREET

BY BONNIE FENTON

“DON’T PLAY IN the street” is a message children across North America receive from the time they learn to walk. While the intention is understandable, the result is a general feeling that unless you’re sitting in a car, you don’t belong in the street. Germany, by contrast, includes “playing in the street” in its national highway code.

Although best known for its no-speed-limit Autobahn, Germany also has streets at the opposite end of the speed spectrum. Traffic-calmed areas, commonly called Spielstrassen (“play streets”) generally have no sidewalks but include extra bends and other devices

to encourage slow speeds. The speed limit is walking speed.

Anne Arnold-Winkenbach lives in a play street with her husband and two sons, and her boys have been playing in the street ever since they were able to crawl. When they learned to walk, they would pack up their toys and pull them up and down the street in wagons or trade them with the other kids in the street in

a game of “store.” They were just doing what all kids do – in a space shared with moving cars.

David and Jonathan Winkenbach are now 15 and 13. Their wagons and toys have been replaced by bikes, skateboards and a ramp for jumps and stunts, but they still spend a lot of time in the street.

Asked what he thinks about the street he grew up on, David, an outgoing and active teenager, first stated the obvious: “It’s quiet and safe.” But after a moment’s reflection,

he added that it has probably also played a role in the way he’s grown up and developed.

Anne agreed, noting that the kids benefit from having a social space and community right outside their front door. The neighborhood children learned early to share, to settle disagreements, and to watch out for the younger children.

But like most mothers, Anne still worries about her children’s safety around cars, noting that drivers sometimes go too fast down the

street. How fast? Ten (6.2 mph), 15 (9.3 mph), sometimes even 20 km/h (12.4 mph).

By comparison, recent initiatives in North America have tried to reduce speed limits on neighborhood streets from 40 (24.8 mph) or 50 km/h (31 mph) to 30 km/h (18.6 mph). While it’s certainly a nod to the safety of children, it’s still definitely not an invitation to play in the streets. ☘

almost evangelical, showing them the way of the bicycle.”

“In the past, the papers would say that Silverman did this and did that but it really wasn’t true. It was the expression of a certain consciousness. LeMàB was pretty democratic, very democratic when you consider that some of these groups are not.”

CYCLOFRUSTRATION

The many bike activist groups in other North American cities and abroad made me see that my own cyclofrustration that I was feeling wasn’t just in Montréal; it wasn’t just me. It’s a universal contradiction between the rediscovery of the bike and the lack of facilities for biking in cities. And it was all in rich countries. It was all in places where the car problem was making cycling dangerous.

We were all cyclofrustrated but with various differences. If you live in the suburbs you’re not so cyclofrustrated, but if you live downtown you are. At LeMàB we thought: Why isn’t there a bike path? Why can’t I get on the subway? Why can’t I get across the river?

In the early days there weren’t enough roads, it was before the Route Verte, you could get cut off and it was dangerous. There was a lot of cyclofrustrations.

CYCLOTHERAPY

“I wrote a poem: ‘Killed by a car, reborn by a bike. /That’s the story of my life.’ It sounds crazy but it’s true. It gave me a will to live. It was invigorating, not only the pedaling but the thinking about it.”

“It was an epiphany; I got an instant pleasure when I rediscovered the bicycle over 35 years ago. That’s really what happened. The same with me, the same with Claire, the same with thousands of others.”

“When you get therapy by bicycle, you see life in a different way, from a different seat, you spend less, you’ll be less artificial, you’ll maybe work less hours because you don’t have to have a car, you look forward to your day more, you get the physical fitness.”

CYCLODRAMAS

“We were considered really good at publicity stunts; they were called cyclodramas, there were two kinds: targeted cyclodramas to emphasize a certain point and general cyclodramas.”

“We did die-ins. We invaded the auto show covered with ketchup as fake blood and played dead in front of the Cadillacs and then got dragged out. That got publicity.” ☘

THE HUNGRY CYCLIST

By Tom Kevill-Davies

Harper Collins, 2009, 368 pages
\$17.95 in Canada, \$13.17 in the US
REVIEWED BY DIANE EROS



TOM KEVILL-DAVIES

TOM KEVILL-DAVIES RODE out of New York City on an empty stomach. He spent the next 15,000 miles filling it on a gastronomic cycling adventure that took him from the Big Apple to Rio de Janeiro. His goal? To find the perfect meal.

In his travel memoir, the British cyclist turns the open road into a buffet and takes us on a two-year ride through the highways and back roads of the Americas, propelled by a burning compulsion: to fuel his engine. No one can pedal on an empty stomach, he argues, and there is no better way to build an appetite than to cycle the very terrain that produces the food for your next meal.

Kevill-Davies' adventure takes us on a culinary and sensory overload as he describes the mouthwatering meals he encounters along the way. We find him at a powwow in Northern Ontario, eating wild rice and bannock; in greasy-spoon dinners in the American Midwest downing piles of bacon and eggs, and at tail-gate parties in Oregon sampling some of the best barbecued ribs America has to offer.

His travels aren't without pain and grit; he suffers the highs and lows of life on the road, the loneliness, the monotony of the highway, the flat tires and the close calls with semis. He

faces uphill battles in alpine terrain, and the heat and sand of the Baja peninsula. But his efforts are well rewarded with lovingly prepared, and sometimes purely blissful, homemade food.

The route Kevill-Davies chooses is unusual as far as pan-American bike tours go. Instead of the classic West Coast route from Alaska to Argentina, he opts to start in New York, travel north and then west, looping through parts of Ontario and the American Midwest, then down the West Coast to Peru, where he cuts through the thick of the Amazon to reach Brazil.

Along the way he is exposed to divine flavors, always tied to the land he cycles and the people who live there. In the northern portion of his trip, he samples moose burgers. On the West Coast, he feasts on buttery Dungeness crab. He discovers steamy, juicy *barbacoa* lamb in Mexico, slow-cooked in a hot pit. He even shares ice cream with a scary but soft-centered military general in Guatemala.

As engaging as the food he enjoys are the people he meets, who generously take him

into their kitchens to share some of the food they are most proud of.

The book is dotted with recipes throughout, a nice touch, although sometimes with ingredients hard to come by (beaver tail soup, snapping turtle stew, roast guinea pig). Other recipes, like his *pupusas* and *chiles rellenos* are accessible and authentic.

One frustration for the reader is his approach to big cities. If you have any interest in finding out what people eat in Toronto, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Mexico City or Quito, you're out of luck. While he cycles through these cities, he omits them from his travel tales, where the reader might long to hear stories of the hustle and bustle of downtown eateries.

Regardless, Kevill-Davies instills a sense of adventure and culinary discovery. Yes, he tells us about a great cycling trip, but he always reminds us that food is his fuel and its pleasures are his drive. 🐝

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thehungrycyclist.com
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SPROUT TRUCKETTE



PLUMA PANNIERS



CHIRP HIP HOLSTER

**HAND
MADE
IN PORTLAND
OREGON**



KITCHEN SINK SALAD

BY MIKA BARAKET

A MEAL IN a bowl, this bang-it-together, protein-rich salad is very adaptable. Try swapping the tofu with leftover chicken or a can of oil-packed tuna. Or use a different combination of vegetables: shredded carrot, blanched green beans, steamed broccoli, bean sprouts – just be sure to include something crunchy! This salad keeps well unrefrigerated and packs easily. Makes two portions

- 150 grams firm tofu cut into ½ inch cubes
- 1 teaspoon canola oil
- 150 grams fine rice noodle
- 2 cups iceberg lettuce, shredded
- 1 cup red bell pepper, julienned
- 1 cup english cucumber, seeded and julienned
- 1 large handful of mint, torn
- 100 grams raw cashews
- A pinch of sea salt

In a non-stick pan over medium heat, fry tofu in canola oil until golden on all sides. This

should take about five minutes. Remove from oil with a slotted spoon and set aside.

Boil a kettle of water. Pour water over noodles in a bowl, away from the heat. Soak for one to two minutes until tender. Drain, rinse with plenty of cold water, squeeze excess water from noodles one handful at a time and tear lightly.

Toast cashews in a dry skillet over medium heat. Toss every minute or two until golden, about five minutes total.

Combine all ingredients and toss with dressing (below) just before serving. Serve with a quarter lime wedge per person.

DRESSING:

- 2 limes – reserve half of one lime for garnish
 - 1 teaspoon tom yum paste (available in Asian markets)
 - 1 tablespoon agave syrup or honey
 - 1 teaspoon soy sauce
 - 1 tablespoon sesame oil
 - 1 green onion, chopped fine
- Whisk together. ☞



PHOTO BY NEIL WYSOCKI, ENTHIRTY.COM

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FROM RAILS TO TRAILS

Winnipeg's Heritage Through
The Sculpture Of Jordan Van Sewell

Raise Money For Women's Health

BY CHRISTINA SIKORSKY

IF YOU FIND yourself riding along the Trans-Canada Highway into Winnipeg, Manitoba – just west of the longitudinal centre of Canada – you should take a tour of the new North Winnipeg Parkway that winds itself along the lazy, meandering Red River. It is here you will find the studio of one of Winnipeg's finest pedal-powered sculptural artists, Jordan Van Sewell.

A fourth generation railwayman in this city born of train and grain, Van Sewell draws on the history of Winnipeg and his Point Douglas neighborhood for artistic inspiration. He recounts his days of riding across town to Point Douglas on his lime green Canadian Tire Supercycle to his first job as a Canadian Pacific Railway porter. "It developed a patina," notes the sculptor whose bronze works are now developing a patina of their own. Derailed by this memory, he recalls his first bike – shiny red with white fenders – a "Mountie" from Eaton's. He rode every Prairie boy's dream bike into the 1960s.

Van Sewell rides out of the dense foliage around his Point Douglas home, past riverboat docks, new condominium development and the theatre district to The Forks – a centuries-old meeting place where the Red River and the Assiniboine River meet. Within meters, cyclists can find his 2004 series of large-scale steel sculptures which adorn the North Winnipeg Parkway. The various sculptures and their interpretive plaques celebrate and commemorate the lively history of the riverbank – the site of early industrial development and immigrant neighborhoods.

The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, an



epic moment in Canadian labor history, was one of these riverbank events that inspired Van Sewell. The strike primarily occurred in Liberty Park, formerly known as Victoria Park after Queen Victoria. Apart from Van Sewell's towering sculpture topped with its tottering rollercoaster, there is little evidence of the turbulence of 1919, when workers marched into the park en masse and immobilized the city. Only when the City of Winnipeg's Mounted Police stormed the silent parade of striking workers six weeks later on Bloody Saturday did the protest end and work resumed. Van Sewell marks the site with his inscription *Queen Victoria and Prince Albert merrily riding around, oblivious to the changing times below them.* "The Queen would not have approved," he speculates.

The rattle of a freight train on an overhead bridge drowns out Van Sewell's attempts to describe his "Grain is King" sculpture situated below. The plaque reads *Grain has built this town and has driven the economy of Winnipeg for many years.* He glances up at the passing train carrying China Shipping and Maersk Lines containers, not a single grain car among them, and notes the changing times.

Having finished our tour of his sculpture series along the North Winnipeg Parkway, Van Sewell leads the way home. Settling into a chair in his Little Galleria, he is surrounded by his robots, newts, skeletons, grieving praying mantises and hapless humans. Some drive cars or motorcycles or lean out of boats and trains. A small ceramic Van Sewell rides a vintage motorcycle high on a shelf. He ruefully comments on the absence of bicycles: those works have all been snapped up by collectors. The small figures may be static but the gallery is alive with his wry and bemused, yet gentle take on the curious ever-changing world we inhabit. ☘

For more on Jordan Van Sewell's work visit www.jordanvansewell.com

Christina Sikorsky lives and rides in Winnipeg.



BY STEPHEN IRVING

THE LADIES BEHIND the 2010 TyK (Thought You Knew) calendar are about to take the streets of Chicago by storm. Created to challenge stereotypes about women and bicycling, the TyK Project is comprised of everyday female commuter cyclists who have created a 13 month calendar of sizzling hot bicycle chick pinups to raise money for the Chicago Women's Health Center – the only collectively run women's health center in the United States.

Photographer Michelle Nolan returns to capture the allure and tease of Chicago's sexy lady cyclists. Joining the ladies this year will be a second calendar, TyK/B (Thought you Knew BETTER), featuring the men of the bicycle dressed as Superheroes doing their part to raise money in support of women's health, with photography by Christopher Dilts.

Look for the 2010 TyK and TyK/B calendars online and in select bike shops and stores worldwide on 14 November 2009, just in time for the holidays! ☘

www.thoughtyouknew.us

JUNE KO, SASHA HODGES, AND PRODUCER ALEXIS FINCH. PHOTO BY KIMBERLY CAPRIOTTI

PORTLAND and the rest of West-of-Cascades Northwest sees one or two light snowfalls a winter, stuff that usually melts away in a day. December of 2008 was the glaring exception, two and a half weeks of snow and sub-freezing temperatures. It was the most snow we had in over 50 years.



We quickly dubbed it "Snowpocalypse."

During Snowpocalypse it was easy to sort out "who's who."



Just moved here from a colder climate



Been away from "real winter for far too long. Or from California.

Snowpocalypse or not, I wasn't going to let all that snow stop me from bicycling! Heck, what else was I going to do? Walk an hour to work? Rely on Tri-Met?*

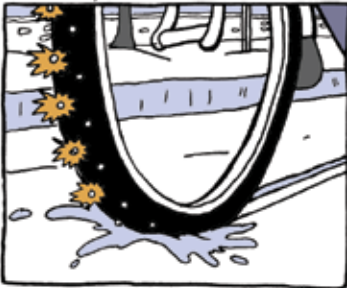


*our local bus/transit system

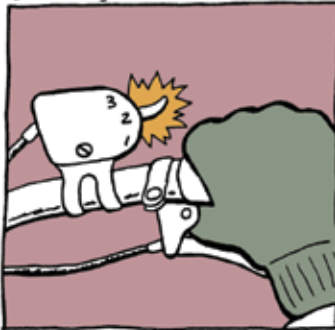


Lessons From Snowpocalypse BICYCLING in the SNOW and ICE

Appropriate tires are a must. Good knobies (under inflated) should do o.k. in snow. Ice is another matter. I got studded tires before Snowpocalypse, and they worked beautifully in it. I slid a few times, but not once did I fall.



Derailleurs can freeze up or get jammed with snow so I stuck to my 3-speed internal hub bike. Single-speeds are good, along with fixies.



And let's not forget appropriate wardrobe! I hadn't bundled up like this since living in Connecticut!

big wool Swedish Army great-coat (\$10 bucks at a Berkeley surplus)

thick "commando" wool sweater under coat (\$3 thrift shop find in Courtenay, B.C.)

thermal top and bottom as base layer

surplus Swiss Army wool pants converted into knickers

two layers of wool socks

wool spats!

Can you figure out that "wool" is a recurring theme here?

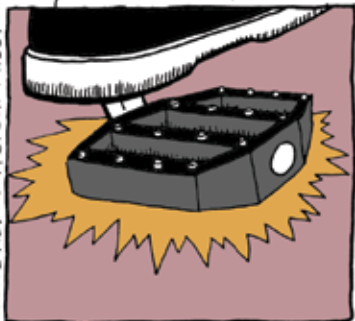
scarf

wool cycle cap with earflaps

army surplus wool mittens over winter-weight cycling gloves

waterproof boots

I avoided clipped and clipless pedals in favor of good grippy flats. That way I could put my foot down quickly and easily if I needed balance.



And shoes—wear your heaviest-duty boots with the best tread! I put on some "ice grips" over my boots, so when I put my foot down I don't slip!



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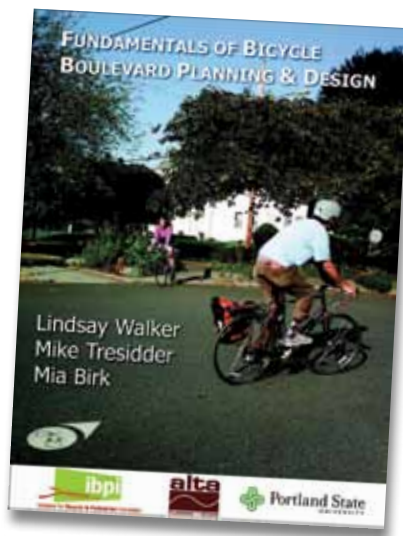
Shawn granton *sept 2009 *tfrindustries@gmail.com

FUNDAMENTALS OF BICYCLE BOULEVARD PLANNING & DESIGN

Alta Planning + Design and IBPI, 2009
94 pages, free PDF download
REVIEWED BY TERRY LOWE

WHETHER CALLED A bike boulevard, route or bikeway, these are streets often adjacent to major arterials that have been optimized for bike travel. This publication is a “planning and conceptual design guide” for anyone wanting to know what makes urban bike routes work. It is comprehensive, with chapters on planning, design elements, marketing, maintenance and concludes with a number of case studies from cities around North America.

In more detail, it discusses route location, resident access, emergency response considerations, traffic calming and reduced speed limits, signage and markings, route maps and connectivity, medians, intersection treatments, cost estimates and references. It is illustrated throughout with diagrams and photos.



An effective mix of traffic calming and reduction, along with reduced speed limits greatly increases the safety of all road users. Bike routes are a cheap and easy way to attain that goal and this guidebook shows how to do it.

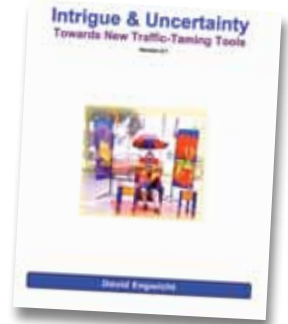
IBPI is the Institute for Bicycle and Pedestrian Innovation at Portland State University. Alta Planning + Design specializes in bicycle, pedestrian, trail and park planning and design. ☘

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ibpi.usp.pdx.edu/guidebook.php
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INTRIGUE & UNCERTAINTY TOWARDS NEW TRAFFIC-TAMING TOOLS

By David Engwicht
Creative Communities International
Undated, 32 pages, free PDF download
REVIEWED BY TERRY LOWE

BRISBANE-BASED David Engwicht is the author of two books that present his counterintuitive methods for slowing car traffic and reclaiming streets for their local residents. This booklet introduces those ideas.



Drivers have a false sense of security inspired by the predictable design of the roads they use. Their natural response is to increase speed. Engwicht’s reaction is to “undesign” the street, and he recommends decoration as a starting point. A street festooned with loose chairs, banners, archways and such begins to resemble a room – a “place” rather than a chute for cars. Add people and approaching drivers slow to a crawl, as if they are guests in someone’s home (which is exactly the point).

Theory aside, Engwicht also explains how to do Instant Street Reclaiming events. Anecdotal evidence abounds. A favorite was a simple child’s balloon tethered to a stone and placed in the middle of the street. Traffic stopped. ☘

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creative-communities.com
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SPACING MAGAZINE

BY TERRY LOWE



SPACING MAGAZINE TAKES a long, fond and often critical look at the city of Toronto’s urban landscape and interprets it for their readers. *Spacing’s* creators are passionate about their city and how people create and interact in its public spaces “through random acts of beauty and intellect.” The magazine is dense, handsome, wide-ranging, eclectic and interested in *everything*. The polymathic spirit of Jane Jacobs presides throughout.

Launched in 2003 on a hunch that other people were as curious about the city as its founders were, it has gone on to win critical kudos and potloads of awards. It has grown from 40 to 80 pages and has launched

successful online presences in the form of blogs – *Spacing Toronto*, *Spacing Montréal* – and podcasts – *Spacing Radio*. It has also sponsored political debates, gallery shows and parties and a successful and thought-provoking urban design competition.

More importantly, *Spacing* has started and maintained a dialogue on how a healthy city works (or sometimes doesn’t work), and continues to examine and discuss the role of the public realm in that process. While unabashedly Toronto-centric, *Spacing* will make you look at your city differently.

For example? Does that schoolyard have any trees in it? If not, why not? And what can we do about that? Why are there fences all around this park? Whose idea was that? Why are there *still* no bike lanes on this street?

In an era where it sometimes seems that we have almost forgotten how to build livable cities, and where distant car and freeway-dependent suburbs have come to be seen as conventional and “normal,” *Spacing* reminds us that more creative answers to urban space problems involve looking a little harder and more imaginatively at what already exists around us. ☘

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spacing.ca
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READY to ROLL

BY AMY WALKER

"WHY IS MOMENTUM so interested in fashion?" People ask us. Truth be told, we at MOMENTUM are not interested in fashion for its own sake – but we are interested in expanding people's perceptions of what we can look like when we ride our bikes. And we're interested in seeing clothing makers take the needs of everyday cyclists seriously. Though we started asking models to ride bikes on the catwalk as a whim in the summer of 2008, we have gathered steam on the runway in 2009 – with two more shows under our belts this autumn, and one more to go at the San Francisco Bike Expo, November 21.

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For details see: sfbikeexpo.com
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On September 24 at Interbike MOMENTUM presented the 2nd annual "Urban Legend Bike Fashion Show" as part of the trade show. We were encouraged to see a number of new exhibitors this year making high quality clothing for the everyday cyclist.

See a complete catalogue and video from this show at: momentumplanet.com/news/interbike-2009-urban-legend-bike-fashion-show-video-and-catalogue

On October 10 we presented "Ready to Roll" at Portland Fashion Week. We were nervous – as Portland is North America's cycling mecca and we saw a beautiful, well-turned-out person riding a bike on every other block. But we did it! The show was well-received by local Portlanders and drew a mixed crowd of bikers and fashionistas.

See a complete catalogue and video from this show at: momentumplanet.com/news/ready-to-roll-portland-2009

Each show has been a little different than the last, with different venues, coordinators, stylists, models, bikes, clothing, etc. If you are still scratching your head and wondering why we are focusing on style, it's simple: people wear clothes every day and care about their appearance. When they decide to bike to work, school, and the grocery store, that doesn't change, so we want to encourage designers to create stylish, functional clothing that works on a bike and looks great. In the future we definitely aim to keep it functional, sustainable, down-to-earth and fun. We're looking forward to expanding our fashion shows to incorporate more one-off and creative pieces. If you are a designer with a passion for creating clothing that is bike-able, show us what you've got! 🚲



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FROM READY TO ROLL:

PAGE 34: YELLOW SORCERER'S APPRENTICE WRAP; ICEBREAKER BLK SUPER FINE PIZARRIO DRESS; NUTCASE GOLD SPARKLE HELMET; BIKE: RALEIGH ROADSTER. PHOTO BY PETER GREENE, OSI IMAGING. TOP LEFT: SHOWERS PASS PORTLAND JACKET, CAP & HYBRID PANTS; SIMPLE SHOES CARWALK; BIKE: RALEIGH ALLEYWAY. MIDDLE LEFT: TWO OF HEARTS GIGI DRESS; VINTAGE BELT FROM LIZARD LOUNGE; NUTCASE HELMET; SOCK DREAMS SPACE DYED TIGHTS; SIMPLE SHOES CARRY ON BOOTIE; QUEEN BEE CREATIONS PINK WING PANNIERS; BKE: RALEIGH ROADSTER. PHOTOS BY BRENT BARNETT, OSI IMAGING. BOTTOM LEFT: BETSEY JOHNSON RED EMBROIDERED DRESS; FLUEVOG BODY PARTS RED PUMP; BIKE: SOMA MIXTE. PHOTO BY PETER GREENE. TOP RIGHT: ICEBREAKER JETTER JACKET; OSLOH COAST JEANS; FLUEVOG ANGELS: HENK; QUEEN BEE CREATIONS SPROUT BAG; BIKE: SOMA. PHOTO BY BRENT BARNETT

FROM INTERBIKE:

MIDDLE RIGHT: B.SPOKE TAILOR CYCLING SUIT; POCAMPO FRONT AND REAR BAGS; BIKE: GIANT TRANSEND DX W. PHOTO BY DEB GRECO. BOTTOM RIGHT: SHERPANI BAG; HINCAPIE PANT; SHEILA MOON TURTLENECK; OLIE MOSS GREEN SHAWL; NUTCASE FLOWER POWER HELMET; SOCK DREAMS SUPER DREAMY STOCKINGS; BIKE: MASI SOULVILLE. PHOTO BY VERONIKA LENZI

Designed for **URBAN RIDERS**

Ulrike wears Sheila Moon:
houndstooth jacket and cap,
cocoa fleece hoodie
and black riding pants.

Bike: Breezer Uptown 8
(full review in our Gear Issue
in January 2010)

Photo By David Niddrie



Real life on a bike

XAVIER HELGESEN

Rides to Work at Better World Books in Roswell, Georgia

How long have you been using a bike for transportation and why did you choose to bike? I've used a bike as my primary means of transportation for most of the last seven years. I got into biking post-college when I wanted to travel. I bought a bike from eBay, read the books on bike touring, and figured I'd sort out the rest on the road. I ended up biking from Norway to Italy, and learned a lot. In particular, I really learned street skills, which are critical for riders who are new to bikes. Once you're confident in your street skills, a big city can seem a lot less scary.

What do you love about riding in your city? I just moved from San Francisco to Roswell (a northern suburb of Atlanta). I loved biking in San Francisco because of the scenic beauty, the bike culture, and that everyday you'd see something unique. Roswell has none of these, but it is still a lot of fun. There's something subversive about cutting through car dealerships, strip malls, parkways, and every other ugly part of suburbia. The back streets are wide, leafy and green, and don't have many cars at all.

What do you hate about riding there? These people don't seem capable of owning a vehicle that isn't enormous. There's nothing like the roar of a Ford Excursion behind you on a road with no shoulder.

What could be done to improve things in your city for cycling? Roswell is actually better than most Georgia cities. They do have bike paths on some streets, some "share the road" signs, and a few mixed-use pathways. Obviously a few more dedicated bike/walk paths would go a long way.

What is your favourite piece of gear or clothing for riding? Why? My Arkel panniers seemed way too expensive when I first bought them, but there is something about paying for quality. These bags are incredibly well designed, and always seem to have room whether I'm commuting to work or touring for months.

What does being a "self-propelled person" mean to you? It takes a certain kind of person to ride in the rain, ride when you're not feeling well, and shake off that brush with the SUV. It's the same kind of person who makes things happen in the world, and does it their own way. Some of the most interesting people I've met are riders, and I think the world would be a better, fitter, happier place if a lot more people did it.

Anything else you'd like to add? How horrible of an idea was cash for clunkers? We, the cash-strapped taxpayers, give people \$4,500 to trade their old car for a new one that only gets four miles per gallon more? How much more could we have done for health care costs, the environment, and the economy by using those billions of dollars to make cities more bikeable?

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
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PHOTO BY LAURA ASHLEY HELGESEN



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JAN/ FEB ISSUE #43

THE GEAR ISSUE

BY JONATHON REYNOLDS
AND DENA JACKSON

WE ASKED OUR readers for recommendations for cycling with kids. What is the best kids stuff for cycling?

The response was overwhelming and many items appeared again and again. The holiday season is now here so this is an ideal time to look at presents for your children (and, let's face it, for ourselves) which will make cycling a better experience for both our children and ourselves.



HELMETS

Mentioned most often were helmets. Topping the list was the Little Nutty from Nutcase, and running a close second was the Bell Zoom. You can encourage your child to protect themselves by allowing them to choose a helmet that celebrates his or her creative individuality.

The bright active graphics of Nutcase's Little Nutty have shown to be so effective, that some kids don't want to take their helmets off in school! The easy-twirl adjustment feature makes the Nutty easy to use. Louis Garneau also offers a great adjustable helmet that a kid can grow up wearing, which may save you money, if your child doesn't ever lose it. Another option is the blue Bell Zoom helmet with decorative animals. Its protective vent system will keep small creepy crawlies out, while protecting your child from the sun and rain.

Also numerous were comments about parents wearing helmets. If you care enough about your child to have him or her wear a helmet, how about caring enough about your child to wear one yourself? Both to protect you in case of an accident (how are you going to take care of your little one if you are brain damaged – or worse!), and you will be setting a safe example of helmet use for your children. Get a helmet that fits and is comfortable and your child will get used to wearing one.



TRAILERS

After helmets, trailers were the next big choice. Most recommended getting higher quality gear, preferably with shock absorbers, because everyone uses a trailer far more than they think they will initially. Trailers carry picnics, toys to the beach and pretty much anything too big to fit on a rack. Specific brands recommended were Chariot, Schwinn and Burley.

The bright yellow Burley Honey Bee is a roomy model; it can carry two children and up to three bags of groceries (maximum of 100 pounds). No matter the weather, when you nestle your little busybodies into the Honey Bee, the clear UV-resistant windows keep bugs, wind, rain and sun away.

When choosing a trailer it is important to consider how your precious cargo's weight will be distributed. The Chariot Cheetah-1 is just big enough for a baby, or one small child. The



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:
Kokua Push Bike, iBert Safe-T-Seat
(\$94.95 USD & \$98 CAD),
Chariot Cheetah-1 (Chassis Only:
\$400 USD, \$450 CAD,
Cycling Conversion Kit: \$65 USD
\$75 CAD), Burley Honey
Bee (\$349.00 USD),
Bell Zoom Helmets
(\$16.99 USD, \$23.93 CAD),
Nutcase Little Nutty Helmet
(\$45 USD \$50 CAD),
Wee Ride Front Carrier
(Standard Model: \$59.99 USD,
\$89.99 CAD. Deluxe Ltd Model:
\$79.99 USD, \$109.99 CAD)



Cheetah's mobility is key: it has a low center of gravity, so you will have greater control to protect your youngster when you ride.

The Schwinn Joyrider trailer is a mid-priced trailer with a unique design that makes it look a bit like a section of a caterpillar, which is sure to be a hit with the kids. The heavy-duty components make it very tough and give the kids a smooth ride.

All of these trailers fold flat, which is great for apartment dwellers, and can convert to jogging strollers with add-on kits.

FRONT-MOUNTED CHILD SEATS

Child carriers mentioned were the Wee Ride, iBert, Bobike and other similar carriers which place the child in front of the parent and allow for far more interaction, aside from the fact that your child doesn't have to spend the

ride staring at your backside. The iBert safe-T-seat is great because it improves the bikes center of gravity, which gives more control and stability for you. The “T” shape gives your child plenty of room to stretch his or her legs out, as opposed to the “Wee Ride,” which is like a kangaroo pouch with little foot cups. When your child is in the Wee Ride, his or her weight actually improves the bike’s stability, because of its central, compact position. Your child’s safety is improved because you can “kangaroo” them in your arms. Bobike offers four similar front-mounted seats, ranging in size from infant to up to 10 years old.

PUSH BIKES

Training wheels have been soundly discouraged all around as they keep the child from learning balance for far too long, and removal of the training wheels can be a difficult emotional experience for both parent and child.

The wooden Like-A-Bike and Skuut push bikes are a hit with kids. The process is similar to a rocking horse. Children can familiarize themselves with the seat, and then eventually kick themselves into motion with glee, coasting to freedom and independence as they develop the balance they will need to ride a bike.

Another great idea is to remove the pedals from a kid’s bike, so your child can push the bike forward with his or her feet. Once your child is ready, you can put the pedals back. A great site to visit for help is bicycletutor.com.

Everyone who mentioned push bikes also mentioned the word “fun.” Besides being the best way for kids to learn balance on a bike, this in itself is reason enough to get a your little one a push bike. ☘

NIHOLA

A Sweet Kid’s Ride

BY KRISTEN STEELE

AFTER OUR SON Axel arrived, we began exploring options for how to bike with him. Child seats were a little scary because of the effort required to balance them. We tried a bakfiets thinking it would be the perfect bike, but again found balancing the weight challenging. My friend with the bakfiets suggested the Nihola. As he put it, bakfietsen are cargo bikes that can carry kids, the Nihola is a kid’s bike that can carry cargo. He was right!

The Nihola can carry two kids and groceries or other cargo. A tricycle with a very low center of gravity, it left me with none of the balancing paranoia of other child-carrying options. It offers a comfortable seat and upright riding position. The front wheels turn independently of the frame, making it extremely easy to handle. Axel (now 15 months old) looks like a king in a chariot, drawing lots of smiles from onlookers as we ride.

The Danes know how to make a quality bike and the Nihola is no exception. The Nihola is the lightest three-wheeled bike on the Danish market. The Dutch cycle club Fietsersbond named it the best transport bike, beating nine other bikes in the test.

Typical of many Danish bikes, it comes with a built-in wheel lock, a brake lock on the handlebars and features a front cabin with a bench seat and two safety belts, and a removable rain hood. One drawback



KRISTEN STEELE & HER SON AXEL IN SAN FRANCISCO. PHOTO BY MYLEEN HOLLERO

we’ve found is the lack of head support for a sleeping child. There is also a lack of hooks or places to attach bungees or rope when hauling cargo.

For people with young kids, I’d highly recommend the Nihola. It’s easy to handle, feels secure and what kid wouldn’t want to ride in a tricycle chariot? \$3900 CDN and \$3500 USD ☘

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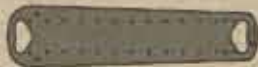
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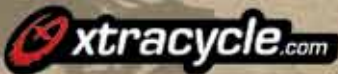
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Let's Get **VISIBLE**

BY JONATHON REYNOLDS

IF YOU RIDE after dark or around dawn or dusk, you will need a good light. After a helmet and good riding skills, bike lights are the best safety tool a cyclist has for being seen by drivers. Many lights are "be seen" lights: they will not give enough light to navigate by but they are very visible to cars. If you have a commute that is on lighted streets these are all you need. Some are super small and very easy to attach and have with you at all times.

If you are riding in areas where there are no street lights or other light sources you should move to a bigger more powerful light

– not only will you be seen but you will be able to see the road surface better.

A major factor of bike light use is attachment to the bike – if it is easy and the light is small you are far more likely to use it. I have had several 'permanent' lights stolen from my bike so I prefer lights and mounts which are easily removed. Systems with a failsafe to ensure the light does not accidentally turn on in your bag are a extra bonus: no point having a light with you is it has no power left when you pull it out and turn it on.

Bottom line: look at your lighting needs and match the light to your needs and most importantly – use it! A light in your bag does no one any good. ☘



LIGHT AND MOTION – STELLA 120

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LIGHT QUALITY: Awesome! Great light beam. Well focused. Can be used for actually seeing where you are going. More than just a "be seen" light, this is a real commuter powerhouse.

ATTACHMENT SYSTEM: Mounts very simply on almost any bike or helmet, bar or stay with one piece rubber attachment.

POWER SOURCE: rechargeable battery separate from light – velcro mount. Two hours runtime at highest light setting.

PLUSES AND MINUSES: The battery disconnects from the light so it cannot be accidentally turned on in your bag – a real bonus.



BLT FANTOM x10

MSRP: \$60.00 CAD, \$52.99 USD

LIGHT QUALITY: Good clear light. Not bright enough for navigation in some situations but ideal for commuting.

ATTACHMENT SYSTEM: Bracket separate from light. Easy to mount.

POWER SOURCE: Three AAA batteries. 20 hours runtime at highest light setting.

PLUSES AND MINUSES: waterproof, magnetic switch, I would prefer another power system that is reusable, turns on too easily in a bag.



BLACKBURN FLEA – USB & SOLAR CHARGING

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Front & Rear Combo \$68.99 CAD

LIGHT QUALITY: Not great for actual sight but fantastic for visibility.

ATTACHMENT SYSTEM: Mounts very simply with Velcro strap.

POWER SOURCE: Solar panel or USB recharging while at work or on any computer. Magnetic charging connections, simple attachments. Three hours runtime at highest light setting.

PLUSES AND MINUSES: so small it could be easy to lose the charger and light.



PLANET BIKE – BLAZE 2 WATT

MSRP: \$60 CAD, \$55 USD

LIGHT QUALITY: Like having a car headlight on your bike! I have actually had cars flash me to turn down the unit. Great for riding at night where you can't use ambient light to navigate.

ATTACHMENT SYSTEM: Screw and cam lever for mount separate from light. Easiest to leave mount on the bike.

POWER SOURCE: Two AA batteries. Four hours runtime at highest light setting.

PLUSES AND MINUSES: Very bright, I would prefer another power system that is reusable. Mount can be finicky to attach.

'BENT IN THE CITY

Why An Urban Rider Might Be Inclined To Recline

BY VINCENT DE TOURDONNET

TO TRY A recumbent bicycle is to take your first ride all over again, but in the lap of luxury.

With your body weight gently suspended and spread over several square feet of the back and buttocks, rather than the few square inches of the sit bones and hands – as on an upright bike – the ergonomics are clear: riding a recumbent means less stress on the body.

For some of us, riding a regular bike can be a pain in the butt at the end of the day. Not even the chubbiest gel saddle kept my rear end happy for much more than an hour or two on my trusty upright steed. My lifelong dream of touring began to feel like an invitation to a hazing.

Comfort is one issue, but is it possible that less stress also equals better sex?

Some studies show a link between distance cycling on a standard bike seat and genital numbness in men and women, as well as male erectile dysfunction.

Okay, I will admit that my first foray into 'bents was driven by stark terror. But I haven't looked back: I'll now tour a leisurely 120 kilometers (74 miles) a day in peaceful comfort.

Although many cyclists suffer no problems at all riding upright bikes, others do, and the recumbent position – face naturally forward, hands resting gently on the grips, feet up – can feel fun and liberating. But might a 'bent be practical for every-day commuting around the city? For more and more laid-back lads and lasses, the answer is an unstressed yes!

Recumbent design has evolved slowly, with some substantial leaps in recent years. I spoke with three recumbent specialists: Toronto's Urbane Cyclist, Calhoun Cycle in Minneapolis and Vancouver's Cambie cycles, asking: "What kinds of machines do you suggest for those who may want to try going 'bent in the city?'"

John McConaghay of Calhoun Cycle in Minneapolis is inclined to have first-time urban 'bent riders try what's known as a "Short Wheel base" model with a 26" rear and 20" front wheel, such as the Rans Vrex (\$1500 US/\$1800 CAN) or Bacchetta Giro 20 (\$1500 US/\$1800 CAN). "These machines have a relatively low crank, so it's easier to set your feet down when stopping frequently in city

traffic," said John. "Although we do have more experienced recumbent riders who prefer a swifter commute on a "high-racer" with two full-sized wheels, such as the Giro 26 (\$1700 US/ \$2150 CAN)." (see photo)

Toronto's Carey Chen tends to steer urban commuters toward a style of recumbent known as a "compact long wheelbase," such as the HP Velotechnik Spirit. Although that particular model is a bit pricey at (\$1800 US/\$2200 CAN), there are other options. "The old bikeE actually was a really good city recumbent; you're fairly upright, and you can get your feet down quite easily," Carey said. "Although the BikeE is out of production, you can find a used one for a few hundred dollars. The compact style makes it easier to watch your front wheel when navigating on-street obstacles like street car tracks (which we have in Toronto). The only disadvantage is that the smaller wheels make it a bit slower, especially on rough roads."

Brock Davis of Vancouver's Cambie Cycles offered a laid-back West-coast take:



RENI KRÁTKÁ ON A CUSTOM BACCHETTA GIRO 26 BUILT FROM A FRAME KIT BY CAREY CHEN OF THE URBANE CYCLIST. PHOTO BY JOSEPHANDJAIME.COM

"I just let people go toward the recumbent they are attracted to. The fact is that every design has its advantages and disadvantages for city riding, so people will come to embrace those."

The one thing that all three specialists agree on: while recumbents aren't the only solution to the comfort question, once most people experience the 'bent smile – relaxed and ready to go after a full day of roaring around town – they seldom want to go back to an upright bike. Why ride in pain? Unless, of course, that's your thing. 🚲

Vincent de Tourdonnet is a musical theater writer/director. He is active in his Danforth local of the Toronto Cyclists Union www.29bikes.ca www.vincentdetourdonnet.com

Reviews & forums: bentrideronline.com
FAQ & buyer's guide: recumbents.com



HELMET HAIRDOS

in 10 minutes



I THINK THIS all goes back to my mother. I was nine, it was the height of the hair-metal 1980s and I really, really wanted a Mohawk. Of course my mom wouldn't let me! The compromise was I got to give my cat a Mohawk. Well, I think I just did it and then we compromised that I wouldn't ever do that again.

A few months ago I ran into my friend (and master of DIY) Julia Hasty. Julia was sporting a well-loved DIY helmet which drew my attention. Julia said, "I strapped some plastic aquarium plants to my helmet." All I could think was, "That. Is. So. Hot."

Later, in an unrelated fit of ornithological wonderment, I was reading up on the Australian magpie. The notable thing about this bird is that in mating season it becomes highly aggressive to unsuspecting humans (Australians, at least). It will dive-bomb and gouge the head and neck Hitchcock style! I read this on Wikipedia so it must be true. I happened upon this: "Wearing a broad-brimmed hat or using an umbrella will deter attacking birds... *the use of cable ties on helmets has become common and appears to be effective.*"

I guess it was no surprise when I woke up that night thinking, "I'm gonna have a Mohawk like I always wanted! But on my helmet! And with cable ties! And it's gonna be totally hot and it's gonna take only 10 minutes and it won't need any conditioner!"

So you can see it really makes a lot of sense to give your helmet a great hairstyle, and it's totally hot. And seriously, it only takes 10 minutes in DIY-time (which any DIY'er knows means half an hour).

Additional photos and construction notes are available on my Instructables page: www.instructables.com/member/dan

HOW TO DO IT

METHOD 1: CABLE TIES. All you need is a pack of 100 cable ties (also known as zip-ties) and a helmet with air slots in it. Cable ties are available in a variety of colors at your local home improvement store in the electrical section. Standard cable ties are 8" long (200 mm). Depending on the size of the slots in your helmet the ends may stick out 2" to 4" (50 to 100 mm). If you want something longer you can put two cable ties together in-line to make an extra-long tie, or you can buy longer ones to start. You

can go to mcmaster.com to get every possible length, width and color you want. My helmet in the photo uses 11" (250 mm) fluorescent orange cable ties (mcmaster.com part number 71295K66).



Then just start looping and cinching them one-by-one around your helmet slots. That's it! I used the various slots in my helmet to get the ties pointing in various directions. If the lengths come out uneven give the long ones a trim. Instead of a Mohawk you can also make a "pinhead" hairstyle by making them point all over the place.



METHOD 2: FUZZY CLOTH: Julia also wanted a new helmet style, and she made her own 10-minute Mohawk helmet using a strip of fuzzy pink cloth from the fabric store.

- ▶ Cut the fabric strip to length.
- ▶ Glue down only the middle of the strip from end to end.
- ▶ Cut a few notches along the edge of the strip to help conform to the curve of the helmet.
- ▶ Glue the edges down

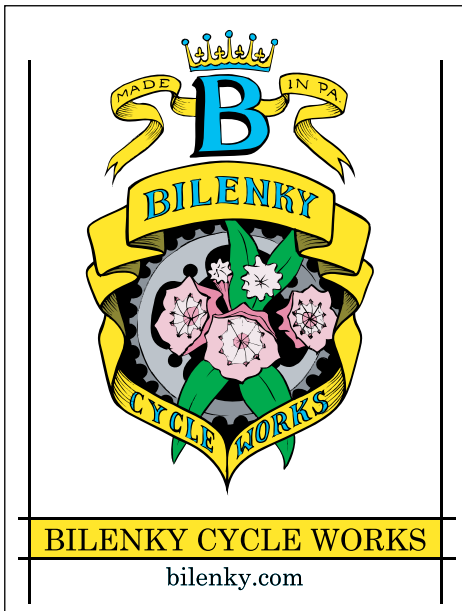
Julia used a skateboarding helmet with fewer slots, so it's easier to glue onto. She attached the fuzzy cloth with a hot-melt glue gun which is super fast and easy. These guns are about \$20 at your home improvement or hobby store. You can also use a variety of general purpose rubbery glues for this.



PHOTOS BY DAN GOLDWATER AND JULIA HASTY

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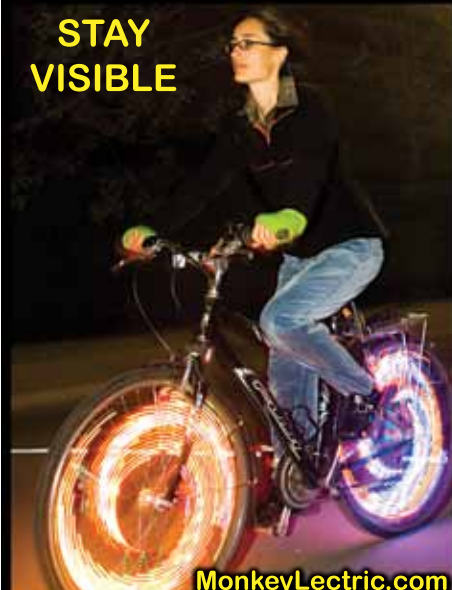


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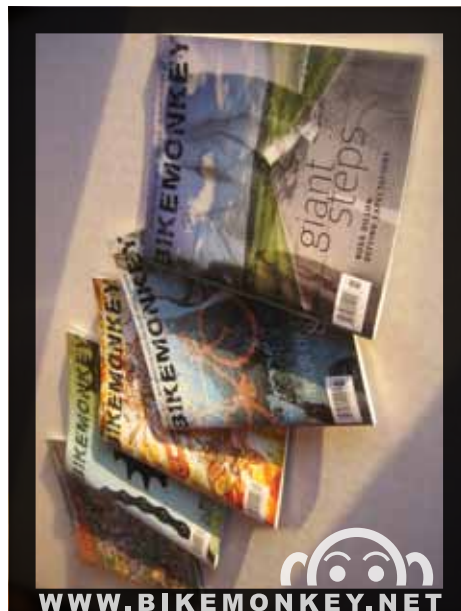
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HOPWORKFIETS ▶ A BICYCLE WAY OF BEER

BIKES AND BEER – a magical combination for many cyclists. Bringing that magic to Portland, OR is Hopworkfiets, a cargo bike built by Metrofiets for Hopworks Urban Brewing.

This inspired bit of engineering incorporates two kegs of beer, a modest sound system, serving taps, a pizza rack and a custom inlaid wooden table into one harmonious whole. Ideal for a few friends to gather around to quaff a bit of brew.



PHOTO BY ELLY BLUE, BIKEPORTLAND.ORG
MORE ON HOPWORKFIETS AT TINYURL.COM/OTXZHN



PHOTO BY AMARINS HARRISON

PEDOUINS ▲ TAKING FAMILY CYCLING TO EXTREMES

THE HARRISON FAMILY believes in cycling together. To make this possible for the five of them a special bike was called for: a “Quint.” Like a tandem, only much more extreme. Add their Burley cargo trailer and you have one large rig to handle.

The five Harrisons recently departed on a 7,000-mile tour from Kentucky, via Florida and San Diego, to Alaska. A ride that should be challenging, fascinating and more intense than the lives that most families lead.

You can follow their adventure at pedouins.org



PHOTO BY SAN FRANCISCO BICYCLE COALITION
(FROM 2007), SFBIKE.ORG
YOUTUBE: TINYURL.COM/YCKTBNX



PHOTOS BY RON RICHINGS

PEDAL POWERED PARK ▲

ACTIONS TO RECLAIM street space from cars and for people are becoming widespread. Called “PARKing Day” in the US and “Roadwitching” in the UK, these events involve taking over a ‘car’ space and making it a people place.

Some creative folk in San Francisco made this tiny-perfect park, which occupies one car-parking space for just such occasions.

Pedal it to your site of choice and voila, an instantly usable bit of greenspace and a valuable statement. When the event is over you just pedal it away.

If you can imagine something pedal-powered, someone has probably made it. If you can’t imagine it, well, it probably exists anyway. 🚲

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