

# momentum

THE MAGAZINE FOR  
SELF-PROPELLED  
PEOPLE  
#34

new  
**YORK** +

TRAVEL  
BIKE RACE  
BILENKY  
YOGA

JULY/AUGUST 08  
momentumplanet.com





*Kevin Dishmon* | 25

Grad student, loves soul music and running fast. College registrar and veterans affairs official—empowering others to improve their minds and lives through the pursuit of higher education.

Teaching today to shape a new tomorrow...

AMSTERDAM™ AND WAY TO ROLL™ ARE TRADEMARKS OF ELECTRA BICYCLE COMPANY, LLC. ©2008



*Amsterdam* | BALLOON 8

Soulful style with refined riding rhythm. Forging a new path in modern bicycle design with a sophisticated combination of components and fatter but faster tires—Schwalbe balloons have natural suspension and greater roll.

Today's icon of old-world elegance and new-world design...

way to roll™

[electrabike.com](http://electrabike.com)

For a Canadian Dealer List please log on to [revolutionss.com](http://revolutionss.com) or phone 877 809 2453



# new york<sup>18</sup>

## 23 tokyo

## 21 taliah lempert

<b>editorial</b>	3
<b>letters</b>	4
<b>up to speed</b>	7
<b>mitey miss</b>	9
<b>arts+culture</b>	13
<b>books</b>	14
<b>food</b>	32
<b>gear</b>	38
<b>ecstatic mechanic</b>	41

10 **breakfast ride**

16 **yoga for urban cyclists**

24 **la route verte**

28 **magdalen islands**

30 **bike rage**

35 **eastern europe**

37 **unconventional pilgrimage**

44 **bilenky cycle works**

# 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.

Jessica Findley, Brooklyn-based biker, artist and creator of the Aeolian Ride.  
[www.aeolian-ride.info](http://www.aeolian-ride.info)  
Photo by Harry Zernike.



EIGHTH ANNUAL

# BICYCLE FILMFESTIVAL 2008

New York | Los Angeles | Toronto | Chicago | San Francisco | Portland | Minneapolis  
Milano | Boston | Austin | Paris | Vienna | London | Zürich | Sydney | Melbourne | Tokyo

Presented by Brendt Barbur and Friends.

[www.bicyclefilmfestival.com](http://www.bicyclefilmfestival.com)

**PUBLISHER** Amy Walker  
amy@momentumplanet.com

**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER** Tania Lo  
tania@momentumplanet.com

**MARKETING, AD SALES + PARTNERSHIPS** Mia Kohout  
ads@momentumplanet.com

**EDITOR/BOOKS EDITOR** Terry Lowe  
editor@momentumplanet.com

**NEWS EDITOR** Paul Halychuk  
momnews@gmail.com

**COPY EDITOR** Paloma Vita

**BICYCALENDAR/FOOD EDITOR** Nicole Vanderwyst  
bicycalendar@momentumplanet.com

**WEBMASTER** Wendell Challenger  
wendell@momentumplanet.com

**DESIGNER** Chris Bentzen  
thisisplanb.net

**COVER PHOTO** Jason Goodman

**WRITERS**

Omar Bhimji, Matthew Card, Keltie Craig,  
Shawn Granton, Ian Gregson, David Hay,  
Paul Halychuk, Tara Irwin, Jay Istvanffy,  
Steve Johnson, Brendan Leonard, Terry Lowe,  
John Luton, Margo MacTaggart,  
Charles Montgomery, Martin Neale,  
Dave Olsen, Jodi Peters, Lindsey Reddin,  
Ulrike Rodrigues, Leanne Ross, Craig Sinclair,  
Nicole Vanderwyst, Amy Walker, Reuben Walker,  
Dorothy Woodend, Denise Wrathall

**PHOTOGRAPHERS & ILLUSTRATORS**

Chris Bentzen, Cynthia Dunsford, Jessica Findley,  
Jason Goodman, Shawn Granton, Ian Hoffman,  
Ben Johnson, Brendan Leonard, John Luton,  
Masa, Josue Menjivar, David Niddrie, Chris Oram,  
Toshihiro Oshima, Lindsey Reddin, Russ Roca,  
Ulrike Rodrigues, Leanne Ross, Jesse Savath,  
Craig Sinclair, Ron van der Eerden, Nicole Vanderwyst,  
Amy Walker, Harry Zernike

**PROOFREADERS**

Jeff Chan, Talia Fanning, Terry Lowe,  
Kathy Sinclair, Chris Smith, Nicole Vanderwyst

*Send correspondence to:*

**MOMENTUM MAGAZINE**

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

**BULK SUBSCRIPTIONS**

\$150/year (\$25 for 25 copies)  
Delivered 6 times/year in North America  
www.momentumplanet.com/subscribe

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Six issues per year:  
\$20 in Canada/\$30 US/\$40 International  
www.momentumplanet.com/subscribe

*Opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the publishers, sponsors, or anyone else for that matter.*



# FUTURE-FOCUSED RIDING

I GOT AN email from someone I used to work with, whom I last saw 15 years ago. He'd seen my name on the masthead and wanted to know if I was the same guy. Yes. He'd recently sold his car, relocated from the suburbs, and was looking for a bike to use around town. We'll probably see more of this, as the price of gas continues to rise, and operating cars grows more unfeasible.

And why not? You can buy a very good quality bike for less than the cost of one month of car use. You'll rediscover your city, recover the use of your legs, have a lot of fun, and save wads of cash. Paradoxically, your food bill may go up even as the extra pounds drop off. (Cyclists eat a lot, and then burn it all up with their after-dinner ride.) You'll never again pay for parking, and the rush-hour traffic reports on the radio will become a source of entertainment, since they will no longer apply to you.

Over time, you'll become "the expert," and people will begin contacting you for bike advice. And you'll probably meet a lot of interesting people.

The sun has finally reappeared, and summer is here; there's no better time to get outside and ride. Whether that's just a quick ride to the corner store, or a crosstown jaunt for a beach barbecue with friends, you'll find that riding is habit-forming, and you may start to wonder about even longer distances.

MOMENTUM will be here for you. This issue, we have some stories about bike touring and travel, and how it's getting easier all the time. We'll tell you how to prevent those annoying flats, recommend some books for quiet time off the bike, and generally amuse and delight you with our usual eclectic mashup of bike culture.

Bikes were here before cars, and they'll be here after they've gone. And while the future may be unwritten, we know how we'll be getting there. Come along for the ride; it's fun!

In upcoming issues, we'll be looking at style and fashion (the two are not the same), and following that with a look at architecture: how and why buildings and the built environment interact with bikes, and with us. If you have any ideas on those themes, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.



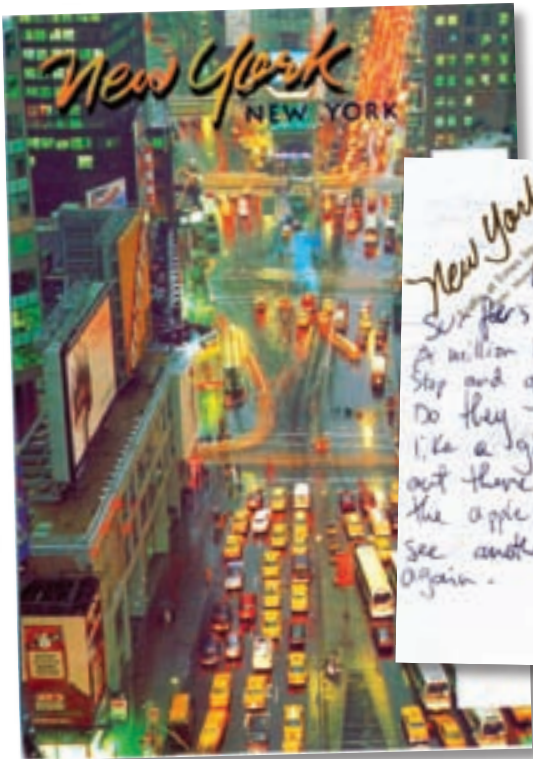
**CONGRATS TO OUR  
SUBSCRIPTION  
CONTEST WINNER  
JOAQUIN  
ECHAVARRI  
OF SAN MATEO, CA  
YOU WIN THE XTRACYCLE  
CONVERSION KIT!**

WHO IS THE MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER KNOWN AS "B?"

Saturday Night in the City by the Bay and the fixies are out. They ride in packs down steep San Francisco hills, across trolley tracks and through stop signs. They navigate the sparse 1:00 am traffic with their heads on swivels, bay fog moistening their faces as it whips by and makes them feel alive.

It's a freeway culture out here in Cali. I had an epic road rage incident with the Vice President of Behr Sterns, the result of a missed freeway exit and a tight schedule. People who think they're important expect instant miracles. Those who know they're important create miracles. On bikes.

B.



Here I crave my bike. It's a traffic surfer's DREAM with a million lanes of wall-to-wall stop and go, honking away. BOY! Do they ever honk. It's like a giant fleet of geese. After a week in the Apple, I never want to see another cab or sidewalk again. Give me STEEL. I want to feel that hot rubber grabbing the pavement. Whipping uptown with my head on a swivel and the suckers stuck in cages wondering "why?"

B.



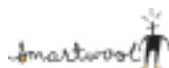
[www.tripsforkids.org](http://www.tripsforkids.org)

(415)458-2986  
national@tripsforkids.org

You can change the lives of children. Start or fund a Trips For Kids program.

Many kids never leave their own neighborhood to enjoy the beauty of nature. That's why we started Trips for Kids, a national non-profit organization that provides mountain bike rides and environmental education for disadvantaged youth. You can start a Trips for Kids chapter in your area. We'll assist you, at no charge, by supplying bikes and helmets, and support based on 20 years of experience.

Or make a difference by donating money, bikes or equipment (new or used). All donations are tax-deductible.





### MATT CLINE WITH HIS BIKE FRIDAY IN THAILAND

"It was quite literally in the middle of nowhere. It just popped up in front of us in the middle of a very off-the-beaten-path route and I insisted on my partner snapping my pic in front of it. It was on our rather circuitous route to Ao Nang from Phang Nga – not some huge Thailand tourist attraction.

### ON THE ROAD AGAIN (AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN...)

I have read two issues of your delightful and informative magazine now, and want to let you know how much I have enjoyed it. I have picked them up free at bicycle shops here in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

I would subscribe, but I no longer have a home for the magazines to go to. I am just travelling (mostly by bike) and volunteering. So I made a donation, because I so want to see you succeed.

Tonight I cut out two recipes which I will scan so I can take them with me, and made a note to buy Power Grip Toe clips as they are more compact than the cages I am using now, and I am considering the purchase of the helmet camera to add video clips to my blog: [www.diane-emerson.blogspot.com](http://www.diane-emerson.blogspot.com)

Yours is the first cycling magazine I have found which isn't focused on racing or mountain biking. Thank you so much for being there for those of us who have happily given up our cars.

Diane Emerson  
Minneapolis, MN

### IT'S EVERY TWO MONTHS, ACTUALLY

I recently picked up your publication at Café Presse in Seattle – a great magazine with lots of good content. There is no shortage of free magazines, but most are heavy on the ads without putting much time into the articles. I really enjoyed this month's edition and I'll be on the lookout for the next.

Mimy Bailey  
Seattle, WA

### THAT'S "ROADIE" AS IN "ROAD MANAGER"

I recently moved to Seattle and have really enjoyed your magazine. Ulrike's "Dirty Little Secret" story was especially enjoyable.

I worked for a long time as a roadie and always traveled with a Brompton folding bike. I took it around the world and it was always interesting to see how each metropolis has integrated cycling. Have you considered a story about folders? You see quite a few of them in cities like Tokyo where people like to carry them up to their apartments.

I moved here from Burlington, Vermont which is a great city for bicycling. They have some great bike paths. The best shop there is called the Old Spoke's Home ([www.oldspokeshome.com](http://www.oldspokeshome.com)), and is run by a great guy named Glenn Eames. I know they'd love your magazine there if you haven't already sent them a copy. Glenn organizes some great rides, including my favorite, the Decade, a seasonal ride where riders are encouraged to ride only old bikes (three speeds or less). It's a meandering ride with lots of stops to swim and have a picnic, and the leisurely pace makes it more inviting for occasional riders. Finding that shop was the catalyst for me really getting involved in the cycling community there. They also have a bicycle museum there, with vintage bikes from every era hanging on the walls.

I always enjoy your stories about individuals who make cycling clothing and custom bikes, too.

Joe Slaby  
Seattle, WA

### SHAME ON US!

Imagine my displeasure upon my manager pointing out to me your review of Power Grips, and the last sentence saying that mail order is CHEAPER!

With the exception of item-specific companies (Swrve, Ahearne Cycles, Paul, etc) I did not see any mail order ads in your mag, but plenty of bike shop ads. I hope Momentum keeps its commitment to local bike shops and does not succumb to the mail order blast common in other bike magazines.

If you do succumb, you can count on me to circular file it. Mail order does have limited value for folks who live in the middle of nowhere, but with rising oil prices and people's increasing awareness of localism, there will be less and less room for mail order.

Aaron Goss  
Aaron's Bicycle Repair  
Seattle, WA

*With due respect to Aaron, and to Justin who wrote that article, we apologize. That line was not in Justin's original text, and was added after the fact. We support local bike shops, because they support us, and they support all of our local cycling friends. That won't happen again. – Ed.*

### YOU'RE WELCOME

The Gary Fisher is great. I ride it mostly every day, and I tell all and sundry how much I enjoy your magazine, which is the truth even if I hadn't won a bike. Thanks a ton!

Enjoyed the last issue, particularly the article on frame architecture. Wouldn't mind seeing a short piece on adjusting disk brakes.

Richard  
Ottawa, ON

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

[editor@momentumplanet.com](mailto:editor@momentumplanet.com)

#214 - 425 Carrall Street  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6B 6E3

Interbike &  
Expo Cycle Issue  
Extra Print Run  
Get in it!



# momentum

THE MAGAZINE FOR SELF-PROPELLED PEOPLE

# STYLE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER  
#35 **Issue**

**“just because  
you are a cyclist,  
it doesn’t mean  
you like to look  
like one”**

CELEBRATING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY, CYCLING CULTURE, STYLE.  
TO ADVERTISE CALL MIA @ 604-669-9850  
OR EMAIL ADS@MOMENTUPLANET.COM  
momentumplanet.com

## OLD & NEW CYCLING SING-A-LONGS

- > Pedal power, yes!  
Horsepower, no!
- > More ass, less gas
- > We aren't blocking traffic,  
we are traffic
- > Let's be fair, share the air
- > Whose streets? Our streets
- > Burn fat, not fuel
- > Re-write the traffic code,  
cars aren't the only mode

**LEAVE  
PREPARED**



horns | bells | safety vests | reflective tape | mec.ca





PHOTO BY JESSICA FINDLEY



JESSICA FINDLEY IN THE ER AFTER TAKING A SPILL ON A NEW BIKE WITH UNFAMILIAR BRAKES. PHOTO BY JOHN FISCHER.

## BICYCLISTS' INJURIES & THE CYCLING ENVIRONMENT

A TEAM OF researchers has just launched a study to examine the association between urban bicyclists' injuries and the different environments that they are riding in. Led by Dr. Kay Teschke at the University of British Columbia, the "Bicyclists' Injuries and the Cycling Environment" (BICE) study will involve four hospitals, two each in Vancouver and Toronto. Cyclists who come through the emergency departments at those hospitals will be invited to participate in the study. The injuries considered for the study can arise from any kind of crash, not just from a collision with a motor vehicle.

There is a debate over what types of cycling infrastructure are safest for cyclists. In Canada and the US, where there are fewer riders and a higher rate of cycling injuries than in northern Europe, riders generally share the roads with vehicles; often between lanes of moving and parked cars. In much of northern Europe, where there are more riders and a lower rate of injuries overall, cyclists are often physically separated from motor vehicles. There would seem to be a clear relationship between the separation of cyclists from vehicles and a lower rate of injuries. However, some argue that cycling infrastructure separated from motor vehicles is not practical in North America, and that in fact it makes cycling more dangerous (see Letters Sections of *MOMENTUM* #31 and #32).

Previous studies have been done that look at the

frequency of crashes on different types of routes, such as roads, shared paths, and sidewalks. The BICE study will be the first to take into account many infrastructure features and other factors in addition to the type of route, adding evidence to the debate over what type of infrastructure makes cycling safer. The features to be examined were arrived at by a team that includes professors, students, city planners, and cycling advocacy organizations.

Cyclists who agree to participate will be interviewed by a research assistant and will provide information about their route, conditions at the time of injury, the type of bicycle used, clothing worn, and some other personal information. All the information provided will be confidential. Assistants will then attend the location where the injury occurred to gather more information, including the type of road or path, separation of the cyclist from traffic, the type of

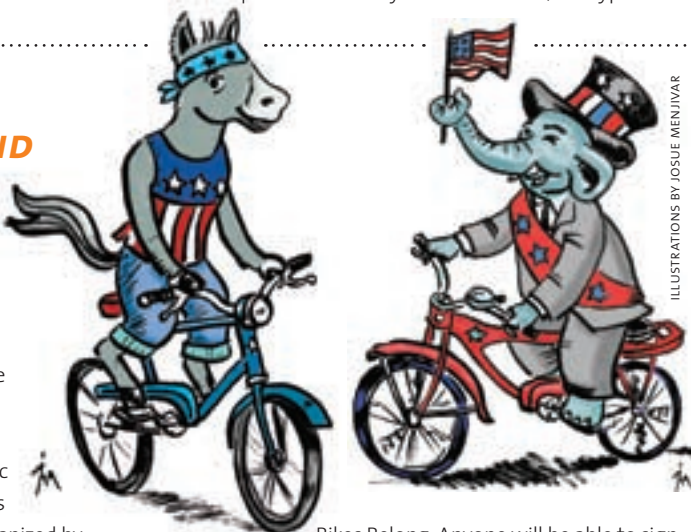
intersection, situation of car parking, proximity of junctions, amount of vehicle traffic, route grade, route surface, lighting, width of road and number of lanes, speed of traffic, frequency of pedestrians and bikes passing by, road surface type, and more. Two other random locations on each rider's route will be examined for the same features to act as controls for the study.

The goal of the researchers is to interview 600 injured cyclists. It is expected that the study will take four years to complete, and the researchers hope that the results will provide evidence and guidelines that will enable transportation planners to select cycling infrastructure that will improve the safety of cycling.

For more information:  
[www.cher.ubc.ca/cyclingincities/injury.html](http://www.cher.ubc.ca/cyclingincities/injury.html)

## BIKE SHARING FOR DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS

BICYCLES WILL BE unusually present at both upcoming US national conventions; the Republican Party's in Minneapolis and the Democratic Party's in Denver. One thousand bikes are going to be made available for public use at each convention thanks to a bike sharing program organized by a partnership between the health insurance company Humana and the cycling advocacy group



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSUE MENVIVAR

Bikes Belong. Anyone will be able to sign out the bikes from automated kiosks set up around each host city and use them for free.

Humana is renowned for starting a bike-sharing program for their employees on their large corporate campus in Kentucky. The program turned out to be very popular with employees, with over 2500 registering to use the program within a short time after launch.

Seventy bikes and a number of kiosks will remain in each city after the conventions, with the hope that they will be used by local organizations to start their own bike-sharing programs. Whether such programs succeed remains to be seen. Some analysts believe that a larger number of bikes is required for a program to be sustainable, as evidenced by the success of large programs with many thousands of bikes versus the struggles of smaller programs with fewer than a hundred bikes.

# momentum

# READER RESPONSE SURVEY

HOW ARE WE DOING?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE?

WHO ARE YOU?

PLEASE GO ONLINE AND FOLLOW THE LINK TO THE SURVEY

**momentumplanet.com**

*Your comments provide us with valuable feedback.*

*Thank-you for supporting our work.*

ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A FOLDING TIKIT FROM BIKE FRIDAY



*Biking for transportation just got easier  
Handbuilt in Oregon, USA.*

**SURVEY CLOSING FRIDAY, JULY 25, 2008**



**MATTHEW CARD** (Stephen Bilenky Profile) is a *Cook's Illustrated* Contributing Editor, *Oregonian* columnist, and freelance writer. Before joining *Cook's Illustrated* six-odd years ago, Matthew cooked in a handful of east coast restaurants, worked as a bicycle messenger, muddled his way through graduate school, and dropped out of cooking school. Outside of cooking, minding a busy toddler, and trying to catch up with his even busier wife, he spends as much time as he can on a bicycle, preferably handmade and expensive, climbing up into Portland, Oregon's myriad hills or exploring Mt. Hood's forest roads and trails.



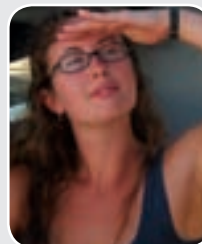
**HARRY ZERNIKE** photographed some of the New Yorkers featured in this issue. Harry works with a trunk full of camera and lighting gear often enough, but he likes photographing cyclists so that he can spend more time working on a bicycle. Over the summer he's climbing Mont Ventoux, in France, riding from Budapest to Krakow, and turning over the cranks closer to home – New York City – in search of the perfect confluence of smooth pavement and swimming holes. He knows they are out there.



**DOROTHY WOODEND** (Contested Streets Review) is the film critic for the *Tyee, This Magazine*, and contributes to a number of different magazines and newspapers across North America. She is still trying to work up enough nerve to ride her bike in traffic.



**CHARLES MONTGOMERY** (Bike Rage) is the Vancouver-based author of the award-winning book, *The Last Heathen*. His writing on cities and happiness appears in *The Walrus*, *Enroute*, *Utne*, *Canadian Geographic* and *Dwell Magazine*. Read more at [www.thelastheathen.com](http://www.thelastheathen.com)



**LINDSEY REDDIN** (An Unconventional Pilgrimage) is a Registered Massage Therapist in Charlottetown, PEI, where she rides year-round, and makes sure to have at least two adventures every week.

# momentum

**bulk subscriptions are now available anywhere in North America.**

[www.momentumplanet.com/subscribe](http://www.momentumplanet.com/subscribe)



Ask me about bulk subscriptions!



# Guilt, Sin and Men! Men! Men!

## AT WHISTLER'S CRANKWORX

**BELINDA AND I** are with Colin in his Subaru, heading south into the village. It's a bike village: every time we stop for a light, a stop sign, or a pedestrian crossing, bikes swirl around and in front of us. They hang off the front of public buses, the backs of overwhelmed hatchbacks, and from the rafters of bars. Just about everyone in this car-free village rides, owns, sells, or services bikes, and I am high on the energy of this.

Some of the energy comes from the pure sinfulness of it. For the last few days we've driven the five or so kilometres from Bel's home into the village proper when it would have taken about ten minutes to ride on the paved bike trails. I allow the mixture of guilt and titillation to wash over me.

Add to that that these people are not metrosexual hipsters with skinny jeans and single speeds but mountain bikers seeking the excess and artifice of Whistler's Kokanee Crankworx Mountain Bike Festival and I feel like I'm in dreamy evil Las Vegas again.

At Vegas' yearly Interbike industry trade show, mostly male retailers and manufacturers populate booths and tents and "work the golf course" – Colin's phrase for networking amidst the knobies. Interbike divides the on-site conventioning from the off-site dirt demos, but at Crankworx it's all mashed up. Here, the industry pros move a step backwards to make room for the reason they're there in the first place: people who ride bikes. Men who ride bikes. Men. Lots of them.

There's testosterone in the air, and I feel it. Before leaving Bel's house, I tart myself up for the "sausage-fest" – as my male colleagues call it – of bikers cruising the expo tents, the slope-side bars, and the slopes themselves. Warriors are everywhere – big, burly, dual-suspension-riding men in full-face helmets and body armour.

We arrive, and Colin takes off to stake out photo platforms along the dual slalom course. Bel and I giddily stroll among the booths of disk brakes, hydration packs, and bike frames. We gather up bouquets of promo brochures, temporary tattoos, and party invitations then settle in at the Garibaldi Lift Company for a drink before the event.

We decide to join a couple of barely-legal lads on a viewing platform next to the "Boneyard" – Whistler's amped mountain bike park. Tomorrow, riders will complete its freestyle course by delivering "air packaged goods" off the top of its five-storey Jumbotron TV. Today, all eyes are on the Kokanee Girls who work their way through the tables and offer free bottles of blue-labelled beer for acts of bravery.



SAUSAGE FEST.



BEN AND THE KOKANEE GIRLS

One of our table-mates, Ben, takes the bait and allows one of the gals to paste a Sasquatch tattoo on his forehead. She wets the paper and holds her hand to his forehead while it sets. She's wearing roller-girl white terry shorts, and I can see a V of white panty underneath. When I ask for a photograph, both she and the other marketeer lean in close to Ben's face.

Ben is nonplussed. He's got a new, cold bottle in his hand but his eyes are scanning the jumps, berms, and drop-offs of the Boneyard. "Do you ride?" he asks, his eyes flickering briefly in my direction.

I think about my bike. It's a plain model that I ride to and from work every day. It's a bike I've packed and ridden in Cuba, Belize, Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, the U.S., and four solo months



BEL AND ULRIKE. THAT'S NOT COFFEE IN THAT CUP.

in Thailand. It's the bike I've loaded with books, groceries, camping equipment, and people. And it's a bike that has sat – unridden – in Bel's hallway for four days.

"Nope," I tell him, "I don't ride."

Bel heads off for a quick stint of guiding tourists the 200 metres from their tour bus doors to the Gondola. I aim for the dual slalom course. Spectators are lining up along the side of its parallel motocross-style tracks. I tuck in behind a junket of magazine photographers and wait for the "head-to-head high-speed action".

Girlishly, I await the warriors.

This year's Whistler, B.C. Crankworx Bike Festival is scheduled for August 9 - 17, 2008. For information and photos visit the Crankworx site at [www.crankworx.com](http://www.crankworx.com), or Whistler Mountain Bike Park at [www.whistlerbike.com](http://www.whistlerbike.com). Visit [www.miteymiss.com](http://www.miteymiss.com) for a photo gallery.

*Ulrike Rodrigues is a Vancouver-based writer and rider with a weakness for manly men.*



# the breakfast ride

BY BRENDAN LEONARD  
PHOTO BY ERIC J. LUBBERS

**THE BREAKFAST RIDE** meets in the alley behind the Salvagetti Bicycle Workshop in downtown Denver, Colorado, at 8 am every Sunday morning. It's a mixed bag of bike commuters, roadies, former roadies, hipsters, retirees, writers, and mountain bikers aged 6 to 80, and there are more Levi's than Lycra to be seen. They'll be lucky to get in seven miles of riding by noon.

"The phrase we use is that 'It's way more breakfast than ride,'" says shop owner Scott Taylor, 31, who founded the business four years ago with a rebuilt Trek and the invented Salvagetti name on the downtube.

The group – nearly always composed of at least a dozen riders, even on the coldest winter days – starts the ride around 8:30 and sets a pace of about 9 mph on its way to one of four or five regular breakfast restaurants. Taylor says he always lets the group pick the restaurant, because he can never decide. The usual choices include WaterCourse Foods, the vegetarian restaurant; Snooze, the gourmet pancake specialist; Gaia, the tiny bistro where the group always has to sit on the patio to have enough room; Lucile's, the Creole restaurant; and lately, Mona's, the breakfast-and-lunch place that just opened a new location a little closer to the shop.

In two and a half years, Taylor has only missed three rides. Recent winter rides have drawn 25 cyclists, carefully navigating the snow and ice, and Taylor says even the worst conditions only trim the ride down to six or eight. A snowy Easter Sunday in 2007 drew three: Taylor, one regular shop customer, and longtime cycling writer Maynard Hershon, one of the ride's biggest fans.

Hershon says he first discovered Salvagetti through an Internet ad. At the first Breakfast Ride he attended, he and his girlfriend Tamar Miller figured the weather was too nasty for anyone to ride a bike.

"We took a light rail train to the nearest station and walked to the store,"

Hershon says. "Scott loaned us bikes – silly bikes, nothing like our fussed-over 18-speed road racers. Tamar couldn't pedal sitting down on hers. We laughed as we rode them, had a wonderful breakfast at WaterCourse and met a half a dozen people we still hang out with. That was 16 months ago. We seldom miss a ride."

After breakfast, the group rides to Metropolis, a coffee shop across the street from Salvagetti's former cramped digs. Some riders stick around until Taylor opens the shop at noon, but most don't.

Taylor said he shared the secret of the Breakfast Ride at a recent bicycle business conference, and it shocked most of the other shop owners there. "It was really funny to see people's reaction because a lot of them sat there and asked, 'How do you make money off that?'" he says. "Because with most shop rides, you open up the store and you sell tubes and tires and stuff. And the Breakfast Ride's not for the shop. It's for me, you know? It's for my brain and for kind of a reset button. Bikes can become not fun when you're selling them."

Nick Nunns, a 24-year-old electrical engineer and year-round bike commuter, rode on his first Breakfast Ride shortly after moving to Denver from Boston in July 2006. Since then, he says, he's missed no more than five rides, and it's helped him build a social network.

"If I didn't go to that ride in the first place, I wouldn't have any friends at all," Nunns says. "It's better than church."

Although the 8 am Sunday start time conflicts with both those who attend Sunday morning religious services and those who like late Saturday night parties, Taylor says the Breakfast Ride is a community of its own.

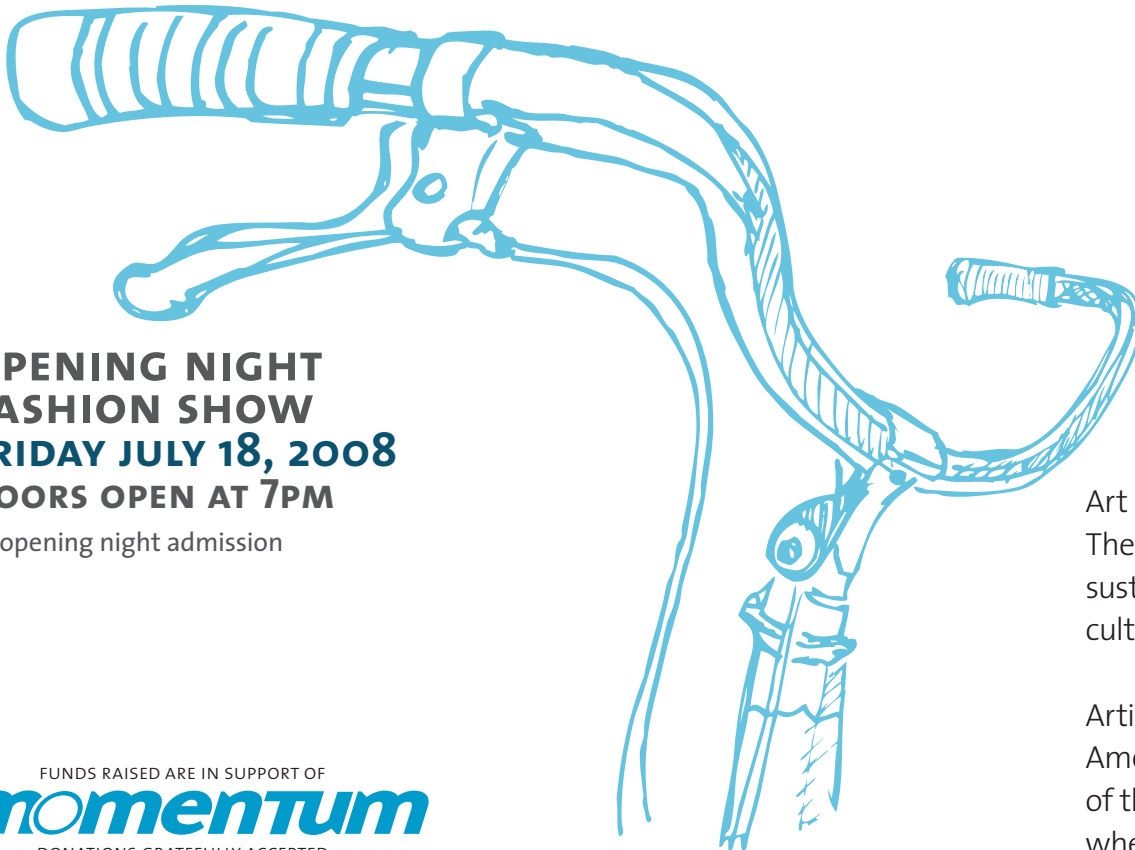
"A lot of people have asked me why I'm not going to church," Taylor says. "But I am in church. I'm just schmoozing with my like-minded people."

*"A lot of people have asked me why I'm not going to church... But I am in church. I'm just schmoozing with my like-minded people."*

The world looks different when you ride a bike

# BIKEOSPHERE

## JULY 18 – 24, 2008



**OPENING NIGHT  
FASHION SHOW  
FRIDAY JULY 18, 2008  
DOORS OPEN AT 7PM**

\$5 opening night admission

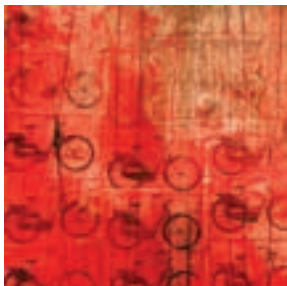
Art & Fashion Show  
The symbiosis of urban  
sustainability, cycling  
culture, and style.

Artists across North  
America share visions  
of the world we inhabit  
when we ride.

FUNDS RAISED ARE IN SUPPORT OF

### momentum

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED



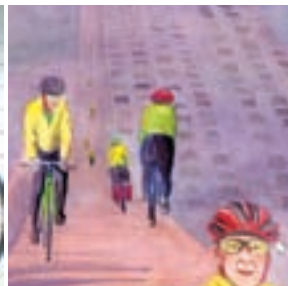
RUSSEL LENG



TALIAH LEMPERT



JORDY BUCKLES ◀ ▶ BILL THOMPSON



MIMI TORCHIA BOOTHBY



LEIA HERRERA



**Ayden**  
gallery

[www.aydengallery.com](http://www.aydengallery.com)  
778.891.4310

REVIEW:  
**CONTESTED  
STREETS:  
BREAKING NEW YORK  
CITY GRIDLOCK**

BY DOROTHY WOODEND

**PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS** alike often risk life and limb when they take to New York's choked and exhausted streets. Stefan Schaefer's documentary *Contested Streets* tackles the unequal power struggle between people and cars and says, quite simply, that there is another way.

New York's traffic problems began at the turn of the century, when horse-drawn wagons predominated and horse droppings (two and a half million pounds deposited every day) littered the streets. At the time, the automobile was seen as an infinitely better solution – better, cleaner, faster. But as soon as cars claimed the streets, people, usually young children, began to die. The “automobilization of New York” reached a frenzy under the direction of Robert Moses, whose solution to gridlock was simply to build more and more roads. Moses' philosophy of keeping the “lifeblood of the city pumping” became a form of madness, as established neighbourhoods were demolished to make way for endless freeways. His legacy is traffic congestion on an epic scale and a city centre that is unpleasant, and often downright dangerous.

Cities such as Paris, London, and most notably Copenhagen saw the writing on the wall and have been building alternative transportation solutions for the last few decades. Congestion charges, improvements in mass transit, cyclist routes, and pedestrian bridges have resulted in significant changes to many European centres. But the lessons learned in these other cities are only beginning to have an impact on New York. In the city's post-9-11 era, there is increased emphasis on the need to slow down, to interact with other people, and to enjoy the public realm. The various



**a  
girl's  
bike**

BY AMY WALKER

In 2002 Jason Goodman hurt his ankle and switched from skateboarding to riding a bike to get around. As he started riding with friends and girlfriends, he noticed that the women bikers were riding old beater bikes and they looked really stylish. He also noticed that most bike culture was male oriented and didn't reflect this street level style he was seeing everyday on his journeys around town. He invested money in a camera and started shooting images every day of New York women cyclists. “I would ride up next to the person and ask them if they wanted to shoot and most of them were really into it.”

Goodman tried to get as much of New York into the images as he could. By 2004 he had a collection of photographs that showed the style he was looking for. He tried to get the photographs published as a book, but got no bites. “I'm not really a photographer, I do animation. But I went to art school and I like to do projects.”

*A Girl's Bike* sat on the back burner for several years. Recently it was picked up by Partners & Spade, a creative studio in New York run by Anthony Sperduti and Andy Spade (co-founder of the Kate Spade/Jack Spade handbag and apparel labels).

Goodman's photographs reflect the everyday street style, spirit, elegance and sex appeal of urban cyclists. He is just glad to see the project materialize after sitting on the shelf for four years.

In September 2008, Partners & Spade will open a gallery and retail store on Great Jones Street in the East village. *A Girl's Bike* will be available for sale there and online soon. Meanwhile, copies may be ordered via email at [info@partnersandspade.com](mailto:info@partnersandspade.com)



experts interviewed in the film (including CUNY historian Mike Wallace, Fred Kent of Project for Public Spaces, and Paul Steely White of Transportation Alternatives) agree that this moment in history may well be a

tipping point, since the automobile/oil complex is in big trouble.

*Contested Streets* offers up some good ideas and, more importantly, hope for the future. When the soundtrack shifts into lyrical tinkles while depicting Dutch folk riding their bikes alongside sunny canals, you know a touch of polemicism is happening. But, no matter; the film does what it sets out to do, which is to demonstrate a more humanistic approach to transportation systems and urban development. The transformation of London's Trafalgar Square into an urban piazza is a case in point. Under London's new Mayor Boris Johnson, however, there is the possibility that the cars will return.

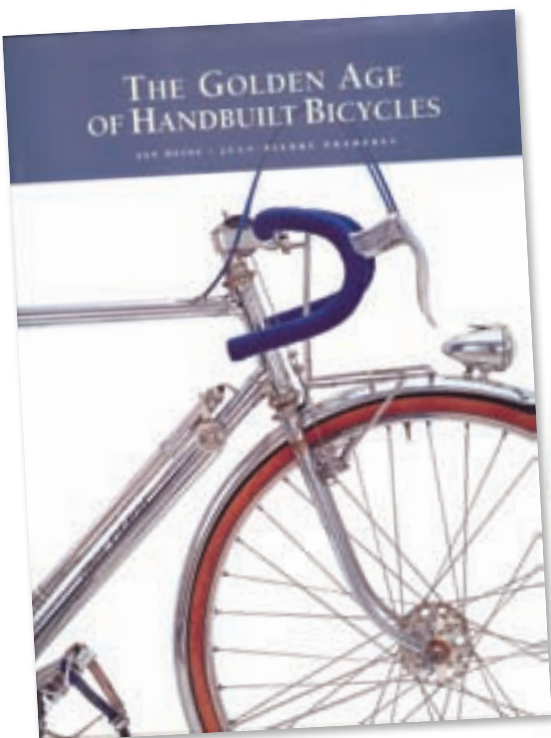
Such is the history of human progress; you take two steps forward, and you get run over by a truck. But still, people keep on keeping on, whether by bike, by bus, or on foot.

*Dorothy Woodend is the film critic for the Tyee, and This Magazine, and she contributes to magazines and newspapers across North America. She is still trying to work up enough nerve to ride her bike in traffic.*



**momentumplanet.com**

CHECK OUT OUR BLOGS  
READ AND BUY BACK ISSUES  
FIND OUT WHERE TO PICK UP **momentum**  
BUY SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR YOURSELF, YOUR FRIENDS, OR YOUR SHOP



## THE GOLDEN AGE OF HANDBUILT BICYCLES

By Jan Heine & Jean-Pierre Pradères  
Vintage Bicycle Press, 2005, 168 pages, \$60

REVIEWED BY MARTIN (HOOPDRIVER) NEALE

THE BICYCLE INDUSTRY is finally beginning to respond to the needs of non-racing cyclists after many decades of selling us the same impractical equipment that professional racers use. Formerly, most bike shop fare was modelled after designs and technology derived from racing machines unsuited to city riding, hauling goods, or touring.

A similar observation might have been made in Europe during the first decades of the 20th century. Fixed-gear racing bikes did not work for the practitioners of the burgeoning randonneur and cyclo-touring movements, who wanted to ride up mountains rather than walk, expected their machines to be durable, and needed a certain degree of comfort.

In France a cottage industry of fine craftsmen – known as *constructeurs* – emerged, devoted to developing lightweight, reliable, and integrated bicycles with derailleur gears, reliable brakes, aluminum components, and often custom made.

Jean-Pierre Pradères has captured 50 examples of this craft with a *constructeur's* skill. His photos, even though the colours are understated (partly due to the nature of the bikes themselves), are sumptuous and rich. There are many close-ups of components and frame details as well as the full bikes, all perfectly lit against clear white backgrounds.

Jan Heine, a stickler for historical and technical accuracy, provides the economical text. After a preface and introductory page, each bike gets two



Two René Herse bikes.  
◀ Camping, 1948  
Porteur, 1950 ▶  
Photos by  
Jean-Pierre Pradères

to four pages, each with two to five paragraphs of description. Those who crave more information on history, design considerations, ride quality, or equipment tests should read his excellent magazine, *Bicycle Quarterly*, which he has produced since 2002 (available from VBP).

The bikes were chosen for their original condition: well-maintained or restored but generally not re-painted or re-plated. The beauty of age is evident in the lovely patina and well-worn but never abused surfaces. There are also bikes from the 1970s, 1980s, and as late as 2003, built in the same tradition.

It is revealing to see all the examples of “what’s old is new again,” in cartridge bottom brackets, linear-pull brakes, and clamp-on stems, to name a few. Interspersed with the new portraits are historical shots of the bikes in action, and the virtually unchanged workshop of Cycles Alex Singer, still in operation after over 60 years.

This integration of frame, components, and custom bicycle design is experiencing a resurgence in North America (witness the success of the North American Handmade Bicycle Show). A new “Golden Age” is upon us and credit is due to Seattle’s Jan Heine, among others, for inspiring the movement.

This gorgeous book will appeal to bike connoisseurs and enthusiastic newcomers alike, especially those with an interest in appropriate technology and industrial art and design.

[www.bikequarterly.com](http://www.bikequarterly.com)

## BICYCLING BLISS

By Portia H. Masterson  
Self-Propulsion Publishing, 2008, 459 pages, \$29.95

REVIEWED BY DENISE WRATHALL

SIMPLY PUT: This is a lovely book. The subtitle is *Riding to Improve Your Wellness*, and the book does cover that theme from every angle. Do you want to improve your fitness through cycling? Make sure the time

you spend on your bike is comfortable? Prevent injury through good technique? This book has the information that you need, including sections on almost everything you can think of that relates to non-competitive cycling and wellness: stretches; fitting and adjusting your bike; how to align your feet when you ride; how to keep your shoulders relaxed; what clothing to wear; food and hydration to increase stamina; riding in urban areas, and even recipes... It is that complete.

If you recognize yourself in the description of what happens to cyclists who don’t stretch – don’t worry – this book will help you figure out what to do about it.



Yoga poses, massage, acupressure, and the Alexander Technique are some of the options discussed.

I found the section on introducing cycling to someone special particularly relevant: how many of us have tried to introduce a favourite activity to someone we love, only to inadvertently turn them off?

Although Masterson encourages people to read the book cover to cover, this might prove a bit intimidating for beginners, or for people who are not technical-minded. The explanation of gear ratios, for example, could scare them off. Indeed, one friend who is an occasional cyclist found that the language and in-depth explanations made the book inaccessible.

That said, the level of detail makes it possible for anyone to understand the stuff that bike geeks discuss; and most of the more complex sections are supported by diagrams and photos. There is even a whole appendix of human anatomy diagrams. All this information is easy to find, thanks to a general index, as well as sub indexes for exercises, reference illustrations, and recipes.

For the enthusiast, this book is a riveting read that will fill many gaps in knowledge. For the rest of us, it is an excellent reference book that we can dip into whenever we have a question. Don't be scared off by words like "prime mover" and "glycemic index" – this book is great! Well worth the \$29.95 price tag.

## URBAN BIKER'S TIPS & TRICKS

By Dave (Mr. Bike) Glowacz

Wordspace Press, 2004, 250 pages, \$14.95 US

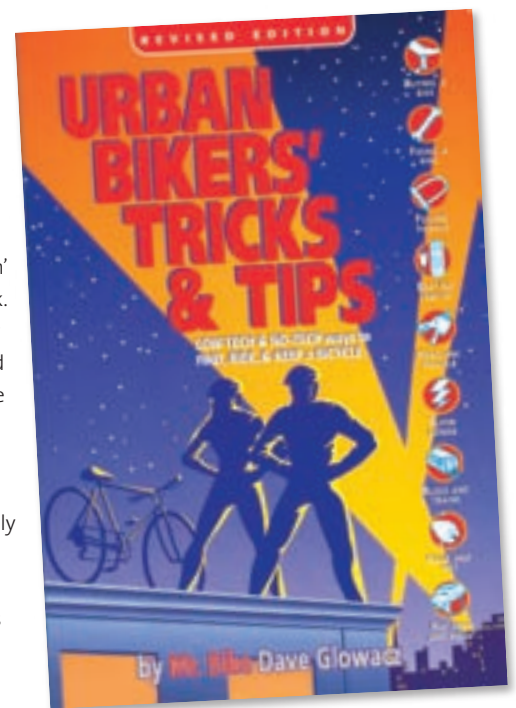
### REVIEWED BY FLICK HARRISON

**THE BEST THAT** can be said about a book of tips 'n' tricks is that the tips are great, and the tricks work. That's certainly true of much in *Urban Biker's Tips & Tricks*, but, I dare say, it also includes some good advice on how to do stupid things, and even some really stupid advice on how to do stupider things.

Within 24 hours of opening this book, I used the maintenance advice to get my own bike into the best shape it's ever been. There's stuff as specifically useful as a chart about all the places to oil your machine. I recovered a few long-defunct gears, simply by lubricating not only the derailleurs, gears and chains, but even the reluctant gearshift levers on my handlebars. Score one for the book and its visual, intuitive structure and design.

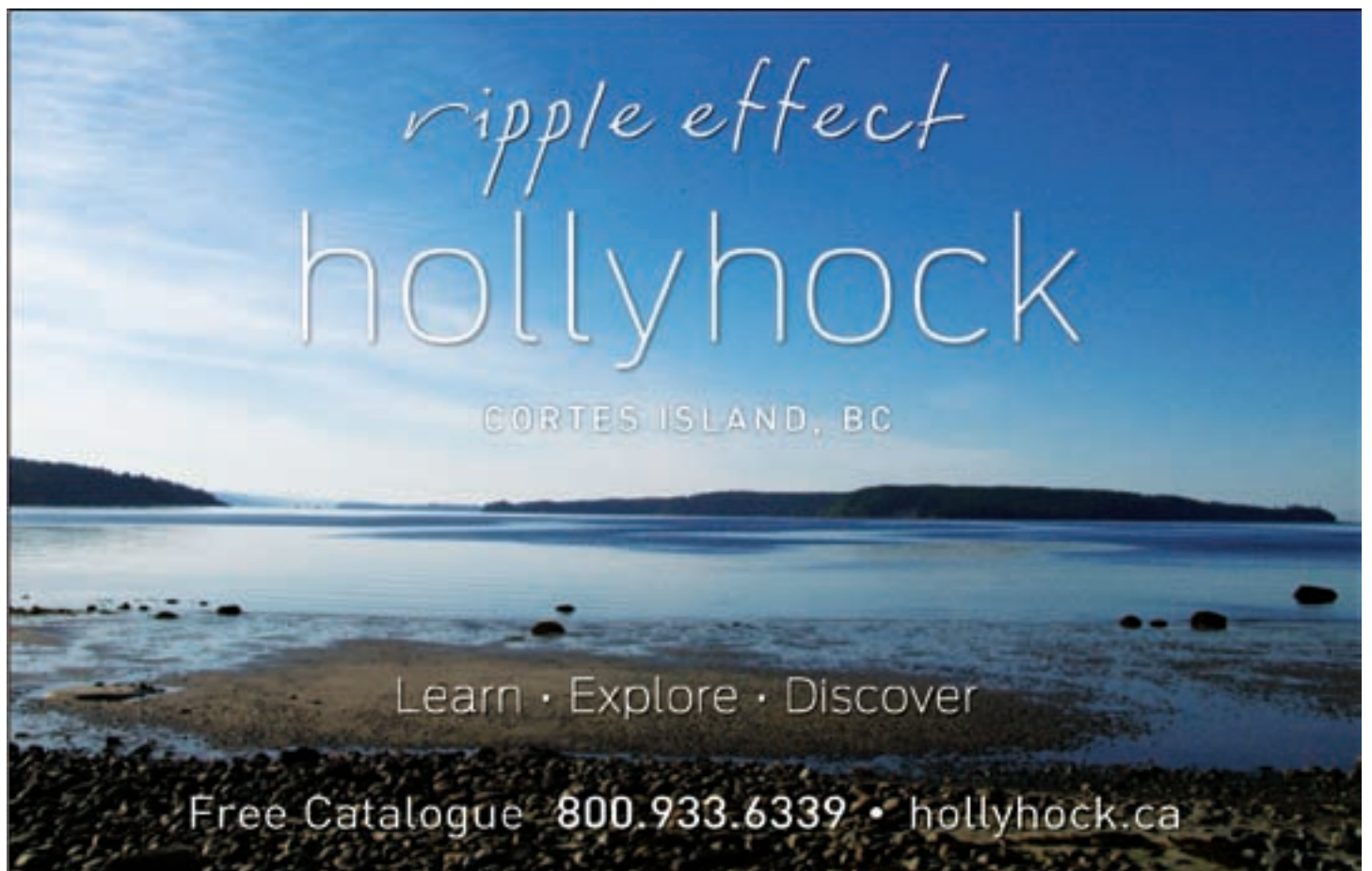
There's plenty of great stuff for a dedicated cyclist/dilettante mechanic: choosing and using a lock, changing a flat, popping curbs, adjusting your bike for best fit. There's a section on taking your bike on transit – with or without permission – that includes how not to annoy other passengers.

The traffic section is great food for thought.



I've found myself re-checking the book after any weird traffic situation – i.e., playing leapfrog with a bus for a few blocks. Glowacz' simple logic helps you think through quick decisions in dangerous situations where hesitation might prove fatal.

It's here, though, that the book strays into grey areas, both morally and practically. For instance,





would you consider it wise or foolish to give advice on how to run red lights in traffic?

The grey gets darker in the section on conflict. It's one thing to advise bikers what to do when attacked. It's an urban book, after all, and crime is, theoretically, rampant in the big city. But for instance, is charging straight at a pedestrian attacker, then swerving at the last minute really the best way to escape? Wouldn't the slightest tap or shove send the cyclist tumbling into a painful tangle, ripe for the picking?

From these dubious counsels, Glowacz goes off the deep end, offering hints for the revenge-mad cyclist: pounding fists on a car, splashing water in a driver's face, cracking their windshield with "the heel of your gloved hand." Is this the bike-advice book to give your kids? Glowacz' weasel-sidebars ("Warning! Hitting someone's car or provoking a driver can be very dangerous!") seem to be more for his legal benefit than for the reader's well-being, a sort of cycle-punk nudge-wink waffle.

Overall, I'd much rather have this book on my shelf than not. You'll be wiser and safer for having read it, as long as you take it with a grain of salt and use your own judgment. That's something of a damper on an advice book, but it's not a fatal flaw.

## CYCLING FOR PROFIT HOW TO MAKE A LIVING WITH YOUR BICYCLE

by Jim Gregory

Van der Plas Publications, 2000, 144 pages, \$14.95 US

REVIEWED BY TERRY LOWE

**THIS SLIM BOOK** provides a thorough outline of how to start and run a business using only you and your bike. The author owns and operates a bicycle-powered delivery service in Ames, Iowa, which employs two people full-time and seven people part-time.

He lists the types of work available; whether that work will be full-time or part-time; the equipment required and costs thereof; which sort of bike works best for which types of work; and the type of accessories you may need to have.

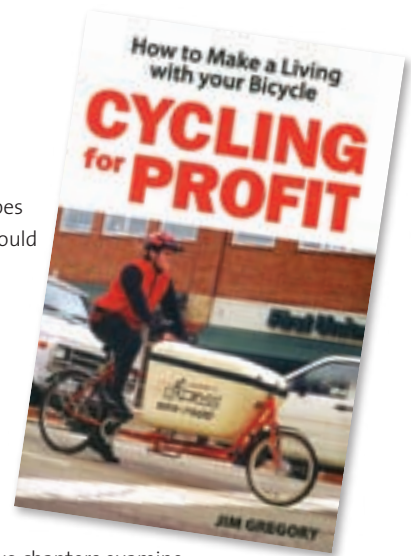
There are also chapters on insurance; the best forms of marketing that do not cost much money; how to find and retain customers; and best practices for accounting and management, including how to hire employees if needed (his advice: check the person's bike to see if it looks well-ridden).

His advice on licences, permits, and taxes are written for American readers, but most of it also applies in Canada. His best advice is on how to determine what to charge for your services, best billing periods for different types of customers,

and what types of job you should decline as unprofitable. This is all written from his own hard-earned experience and is invaluable.

The last two chapters examine in detail 16 different jobs that can be done with a bike, or with a bike and trailer. The author has done all of these jobs, and lists each one's specific requirements: what you have to do to find customers, what sort of equipment you will need, and what it takes to do the job on a daily basis.

This book focuses on delivery jobs. There are other jobs you can do with a bike (bike policy consultant, for example) that are not covered here. Nevertheless, this book does give a very good overview on how to set up and run a small business. For anyone considering self-employment, it's worth a look!



Subscribe to  
**momentum**  
before August 15, 2008  
and be entered to win a set of  
**ORTLIEB  
PANNIERS**

Use the subscription reply card or subscribe online at [momentumplanet.com](http://momentumplanet.com)  
All paid subscriptions (online or mail-in) received by August 15 will be eligible for the draw.

Thanks to [www.ortliebusa.com](http://www.ortliebusa.com)

Includes:  
2 x Backroller Plus rear panniers  
2 x Frontroller Plus front panniers  
and Ultimate 5 Plus handlebar bag  
MSRP (for the set) is US\$473

win  
me!



Subscribe today and never miss an issue.  
Your subscription supports our work. – Thank-you!

# for the urban cyclist

BY TARA IRWIN  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSUE MENJIVAR



PIGEON

## PLEASURE AND PAIN

CYCLING, A SOURCE OF pleasure for so many people, can also be a source of pain. While low impact and strengthening, cycling is a one-dimensional and repetitive activity, which means certain muscles are being overused and potentially strained. The urban cyclist often also carries a bag, frequently twists to shoulder check, and is possibly tense from cycling in traffic. All of these variables compound the likelihood of muscle strain and pain.

Ellee Thalheimer, cycling enthusiast, travel writer, and self-identified “yogini,” says she realized as a young athlete and cyclist the value of a complementary and balancing stretching routine. Ellee has found creative ways to incorporate and blend these two passions into her everyday



COBRA



FORWARD BEND

## DOGMA FOR CYCLING

Beyond stretching, bringing mindfulness into the daily commute can help prevent potential pain before it begins. This need not be esoteric, nor involve meditation.

**BIKE FIT** – Like a shoe, if your bike doesn't fit properly it will eventually cause pain. Guides to basic bike-fitting can be found all over the Internet, and can also be done in person in most bike shops. According to part-time bike-fitter Peg Labiuk, the most common bike fit issues are pedal alignment and seat height. Even slightly off, these can lead to all kinds of body aches.

**BIKE BAGGAGE** – What are you carrying with you? Literally. Backpacks are bad news for most cyclists, especially the type that goes over only one shoulder. Unless designed to be used on a bike, the standard backpack tends to put unnecessary stress on neck and shoulder muscles. Consider using panniers, or invest in a bag designed for cycling.

**ZEN MIND** – When we are agitated, nervous, or stressed, our body's reaction is to hunch our shoulders, grip our handlebars tighter, scrunch our

faces, and generally project our emotions onto our physical body. Ellee suggests "Quieting your mind and getting in touch with what's really important, makes cycling and your relationship to the physical self clearer and more meaningful." Allied with this is remembering to breathe. Not the deep breathing variety, but rather making a focused effort to breathe evenly and consistently, which causes the body to naturally relax in times of stress or when focused on traffic or obstacles.

**POSTURE** – Registered massage therapist Sherri Leigh Iwaschuk says body awareness is the key to efficiency and pain-free cycling. "It's important to remember that you are 3-D. You have a front, a back, and two sides. In relation to your rib cage, a collapsed back or shortened chest will both decrease your breathing capacity and put extra strain on your upper back and neck. Keep your rib cage open, from front to back, and from side to side. When you need extra air, consider expanding your ribs laterally with each breath to increase your lung capacity instead of using your neck muscles."

## SPONTANEOUS ACTS OF URBAN STRETCHING?

Ellee stresses that yoga or stretching does not require a dedicated space or time of day, and says, "Don't be afraid to stretch out in public spaces when you're waiting around." Sherri suggests watching your dog or cat for this kind of inspiration; they provide insight into "when and how to stretch, and they aren't shy about stretching in public."

For more on what Ellee is doing in Portland, and around the world, go to [www.elleesyoga.com](http://www.elleesyoga.com)

*Peg Labiuk is a certified NCCP level 3 coach with a career in international road and track racing. She can be reached for bike-fitting at [peglabiuk@look.ca](mailto:peglabiuk@look.ca)*

*Sherri Leigh Iwaschuk is a registered massage therapist and structural integration practitioner. She is a member of the Chicks Cycling Club, a former bike courier, and an avid cycling commuter. She can be reached at [sherrileighrmt@shaw.ca](mailto:sherrileighrmt@shaw.ca)*



CAMEL POSE

life. For the last two years she has taught a yoga class to a group of cyclists at River City Bicycles in her hometown Portland, Oregon. Mobile yoga is, perhaps, her karmic path. In fall 2007, Ellee travelled a 2,000-mile circuit through Oregon, Washington, and Idaho on her bike. Along the way she offered "Cog-nizant Yoga Classes" at local yoga studios and community centres, and the money raised all went back into local community causes.

Ellee says cyclists often come to yoga seeking relief from chronic aches and pains. When asked if she could choose a top five list of stretches for active cyclists, she responded that the "best remedy is a complete yoga practice." However, she provided the following typical problem areas in the cyclist's body and suggested related stretches to start with:

**CHEST OPENERS:** the camel, wheel, cobra, upward facing dog, and bow pose.

**HIP OPENERS:** the pigeon as well as warrior 1 and warrior 2, which are also great for the quads.

**HAMSTRING STRETCHES:** forward bend or the wide leg forward bend. Ellee stresses taking at least a minute on each pose "focusing on relaxing into the posture."

**ABDOMINALS:** straight leg double leg lifts work well for increasing abdominal strength and are essential for cycling. Ellee suggests that doing at least three minutes of abdominal work a day can improve your riding and has overall stabilizing impacts.



# Better Than the Subway

B I K I N G I N  
N E W Y O R K

BY AMY WALKER

IN APRIL OF 2007 New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced his administration's PlaNYC 2030 environmental initiatives, and appointed Janette Sadik-Khan as Commissioner of the Department of Transportation. Over the past year, Sadik-Khan, a cyclist who often commutes to work by bike, has swiftly reformed the DOT and enacted PlaNYC's cycling and pedestrian-friendly street improvements. Sadik-Khan hired former staff from the transportation advocacy group Transportation Alternatives including the deputy director, chief consultant, and a former executive director. She took her operation staff to Copenhagen and Amsterdam to see how bike facilities work there.

Since 2000, bike use in New York has increased by 75 percent to nearly 130,000 commuters every day. The city's bicycle plan calls for 1,800 miles of bike lanes (compared to the city's 6,000 miles of city streets) of which only 500 miles have been completed to date. Among the 85 miles designated and installed between spring 2007 and 2008 was a 7-block stretch of Ninth Avenue with New York's first 'European-style' fully separated bike lane. What's most remarkable about this lane is that it was planned, approved and implemented in the space of two months. This is relatively unheard of in the bicycle advocacy world, where persistent advocates often spend years shepherding cycling infrastructure plans through glacial bureaucratic processes. According to the city's PlaNYC progress reports, 80 more miles of bike lanes will be striped by the end of 2008. Also in the plan: 1,200 new bike racks by 2009, of which 800 have already been installed, exceeding expected targets.

Bloomberg's proposal to introduce congestion pricing for New York City, (which would also have qualified the city for \$354 million in Federal transit funds) was killed in April in a private meeting of the State Assembly in Albany, before the bill could reach the floor for a public vote. The plan would have charged drivers \$8 to enter parts of Manhattan during peak hours. It had the support of more than 170 environmental, labour, public health and business organizations but was opposed by representatives from the suburbs. Congestion pricing was just one of 127 proposals in the Mayor's PlaNYC which aims to reduce the city's carbon footprint through measures focused on land, air, water, energy and transportation. Details of PlaNYC and progress reports published in April 2008 may be downloaded from the city's website: [www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030](http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030)

New York City comprises five boroughs: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island, which have a combined resident population of 8 million. Add to that approximately 40 million domestic and international visitors per year, and you have North America's most populous urban area and a massive transportation planning nightmare. New York's subway system, dramatically repaired and revived over the past 30 years by the NYPIRG's 'Straphangers' campaign ([www.straphangers.org](http://www.straphangers.org)) is fast and relatively cheap, offering impressive connectivity throughout Manhattan, the Bronx



and Brooklyn. But many New Yorkers Momentum asked said that biking was "better than the subway," and that they enjoy the sights of the city, the exercise, and the speed at which they can travel under their own power. Luckily cyclists can enjoy the best of both worlds here: bikes are allowed on all subway cars at all times for flexibility and combined commuting power.

Manhattan's bike routes are more complete on the West Side, with the continuous car-free West Side Greenway running the length of the Island along the Hudson River. The East Side also has greenway along its shore, but not as a continuous stretch, making it less than ideal for commuters. A major problem with Manhattan's bikeways is a lack of cross-town connectivity. For 2008 the city produced one million free maps showing all designated bike routes. While it's cover proclaims New York to be a "Bicycle Friendly Community", it also depicts cyclists superimposed over an image of Coney Island's Cyclone roller coaster. We detect a subliminal warning alerting riders to the adrenaline-inducing plunges that await in an alarming number of potholes and the spine-tingling thrills of dodging aggressive taxis and other drivers.

New York city cyclists seem to regard red lights and one-way streets as optional. As far as bike style, the most ubiquitous distinct look is that of the pizza delivery men on cruisers with giant Wald baskets on the front. These guys are particularly cavalier about the rules of the road. However, the worst offenders as far as traffic etiquette are the slick helmetless young men on racing bikes zipping between cars in an aggressive, even suicidal display of bravado. Otherwise a diverse population can be found riding in the city – from stylish hipsters to bookish grandmas, bikes abound and the general attitude is wide awake and fearless.

# the communicators

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (TA)** is a non-profit organization which has worked since 1973 to reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile. Their policy is to favour modes of travel based on their benefits and costs to society. TA has broad-based campaigns which include comment and involvement in the political and engineering realm, neighbourhood consultation programs, legal testimony, and fun community events including Bike Month and group bike rides including the Tour de Bronx, Tour de Brooklyn, Tour de Queens and the NYC Century bike Tour.

Based in a bright, open tenth-floor office in Chelsea, TA has doubled its staff to 22 in the past two years. A young staff, plus a more receptive city has ushered in a new era at TA. Communications Director Wiley Norvell describes their working culture: "Everybody goes to the mat for whatever they're working on. The 9 to 5 workday is not observed, everybody works nights, works weekends, but we're happy to be here. We all derive joy from being on New York City streets on our bicycles."

More holistic working methods have also emerged. Wiley explains: "We used to have a very firm division of labour. We had two or three people who worked full time on bicycles, one or two who worked on pedestrians, we had some people who worked on seniors, children and traffic safety. Our campaigns are getting more holistic. We're developing an overlay of parking reforms, bicycle improvements, pedestrian safety measures and new bus routes for a complete streets package."

TA now enjoys a better working relationship with the city, though that is also among its major challenges. "We have about 18 months left with a pretty progressive regime, the most progressive we've had and we're still navigating how to work that. We have this saying that we're a watchdog, not a lapdog. The challenge is figuring out how to get the maximum possible return without spoiling our relationship or being seen as somehow ungrateful for the positive change that's happening."

Executive Director Paul Steely White describes TA's success at reaching the public: "We inherited an organizational culture that is about using the media to affect our goals. It's largely based on Gene Russianoff's approach to public interest advocacy. Gene Russianoff is a legend here in NY who brought the subways back from the brink through his role with the Straphanger's campaign. Gene likes to say that in public interest advocacy media coverage is the 'coin of the realm.'"

"With the media here in NY, that's arguably more important than anywhere else because it's such a saturated media environment. We've gotten very savvy about how we issue reports, cultivating relationships at key newspapers and media outlets, understanding what motivates reporters and media... and being creative about how we organize events. [www.transalt.org](http://www.transalt.org)



HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY ON MANHATTAN'S WEST SIDE



PAINTING THE TOWN GREEN: BLEEKER STREET BIKE LANE.



WILEY NORVELL ON NINTH AVENUE BIKEWAY. PHOTO BY HARRY ZERNIKE.



PAUL STEELY WHITE AT TA OFFICE. PHOTO BY HARRY ZERNIKE.



## NEW YORK KIDS LEARN AND EARN A BIKE

Recycle a Bicycle is a program which teaches bike mechanics to children and youth through three New York City public schools as well as after-school programs. Recycle a Bicycle removes bikes from the waste stream, provides skill and camaraderie for young people, and encourages biking as an everyday form of transportation. Children generally volunteer 18 hours of service with the program, which earns them their own bike. Often kids put in more than the minimum required hours, finding a supportive and lively learning environment in the program. [www.recycleabicycle.org](http://www.recycleabicycle.org)

IN THE PHOTO: RECYCLE A BICYCLE INSTRUCTOR XAVIER (GOLD CHAIN) WITH SOME OF HIS STUDENTS AND A BOOM BOX TRIKE HE BUILT AT RECYCLE-A-BICYCLE



## CYCLING SKILLS EDUCATION AND THE BIG BIKE RIDE

Bike New York organizes the Annual 42-mile Five Borough Bike Tour which, this May, sold out one month in advance and saw 30,000 participants. Bike New York also offers bike skills classes for about 3,000 adults and children annually and has begun offering their riding courses including Savvy Cyclist, Bike Drivers Ed, and Teach your Child to Ride, through the Parks Department. Bike New York has six full time employees as well as a number of seasonal part-timers. [www.bikenewyork.org](http://www.bikenewyork.org)

IN THE PHOTO: AMELIA, HANNA AND RICH OF BIKE NEW YORK

### donna lieberman

ED, New York Civil Liberties Union  
 Bike commuting in New York for seven years.  
 Commutes from the upper Westside down to Battery Park: about 50 minutes.  
 "The best thing about commuting by bike is not having to deal with the subway and getting to ride along the Hudson every day. Someday one would hope that they will get the bike paths all together all around Manhattan and on some of the Avenues."



### peter brackenbury

Graphics/Communications  
 Commutes about 20 minutes along the East River Park to Wall Street.  
 "It's a great little ride without facing full on New York traffic all the time."



### osamu nishihira

Art Handler  
 Bike commuting in NYC for more than ten years.  
 It's less crowded, you get there fast. It's sometimes faster than the subway. I don't ride in the winter when it is raining and cold.



### phoebe

"My bike is my best accessory."

PHOTO BY HARRY ZERNIKE.



PHOTO BY HARRY ZERNIKE.



CLARENCE ECKERSON.  
PHOTO BY HARRY ZERNIKE.

## Ready for Prime Time

One of the easiest ways to tap into New York's transportation culture is to sample the prolific and entertaining output of StreetFilms. Clarence Eckerson Jr (formerly of Bike TV) along with Elizabeth Press, have evolved StreetFilms into a short, sharp, and sassy series of videos documenting the progress, mourning the losses, and celebrating the victories of New York transportation. StreetFilms is also traveling a lot and broadening its scope to include stories from more cities around the US and internationally. The films are a great resource and a who's who for New York's vibrant transportation scene.

Since positive change is taking place at the city level, StreetFilms works less to cajole and enlighten New Yorkers with examples of good planning and programs from other places, and more to educate the public and get them onside for the improvements the city is now making. According to Clarence, "Even the DOT will give us a little heads up before anybody else that they're going to change these streets and we go out and get a little 'before' video. The most powerful thing is what it looked like before and after." [www.streetfilms.org](http://www.streetfilms.org)



THE UBIQUITOUS BASKET DELIVERY GUY.

MORE "NEW YORK" ON THE NEXT PAGE



# taliah lempert

## BICYCLE PAINTER

BY AMY WALKER  
PHOTOS BY HARRY ZERNIKE

TALIAH LEMPERT'S STUDIO is a shared third-floor loft at the foot of Brooklyn's Williamsburg Bridge. The dimly lit space is filled with bicycles, furniture, a pinball machine, cats, and a kitchen with a wide and welcoming wooden table and chairs. It feels like a place where one could happily hole up and muse, contemplate, and create for days and weeks at a time. Drawings, paintings, and prints line the walls, light streams in through dusty windows, and cardboard portfolios brimming with artwork are piled haphazardly on wooden shelves. Under the lights in her studio is the bike which Andy Hampsten rode to victory on the 20th stage of the Giro d'Italia in 1988.

But historic racers are not the only subjects for the bicycle painter. She has painted hundreds of bikes of all shapes and sizes – BMX, cruisers, ten-speeds – making many sketches and paintings of each. Taliah Lempert emerges smiling from her inner sanctum; she is receptive, patient, and thoughtful in her answers to questions about her life and work.

### When did you start painting bicycles?

"I started painting bikes about 12 years ago when I started riding a bike and commuting. To get a bike after riding the subway for years – being able to see the whole city and go everywhere – it was astonishing. My bike was so awesome. It was all I talked about for a long time.

"I like to paint something that's important to somebody. I've painted a lot of bikes that people are retiring after 20 years of being a commuter, which is pretty cool. When I'm painting a bike I examine it very closely. I'm paying it respect. I've had Andy's bike in there and I've spent a ridiculous amount of time looking at it."

### Are you involved in the art world in terms of galleries and what do you think of the "bike art scene"?

"I'm a professional painter; I studied it in school and I've been doing it for over 20 years. But I'm not represented by a gallery. Art is like writing. You're using a different language to tell a story. I'm probably more of a paint snob than I am a bike

snob. I like bike art and all the shows that have sprung up. I've been in a lot of shows of bike art, and I'm part of it."

### What do you hope to offer people with your work?

"A good painting. I don't really feel that art has to change the world. Art can sometimes take a moment and say, 'This is beautiful.'"

### I saw the Greg Curnoe poster. Is he an influence?

"I don't know when I first saw his work and I don't even know if it was before I was painting bicycles, but I think his work is awesome and I wish he was still alive. I got that print when I painted a Mariposa for Michael Barry (junior, son of the now-retired bike builder Michael Barry). It was the cutest little thing ever."

*Taliah begins a search through her studio for the paintings, and after pulling open several portfolios, finally uncovers the ones she is looking for.* "This bike was really special because of the whole father/son thing. This was a bike that he built for Michael when he was six years old, and it was a replica of the shop team that they sponsored and it was just adorable. Michael said that he used to follow the racers around and copy their moves. I love these! Nobody else does. It's very sad. But, whatever. Yeah, I love these!"

Asked about her influences, Taliah cites Lucien Freud, Polly Applebaum, Andy Warhol, Willem deKooning, Jackson Pollack, and Robert Motherwell. "I've been thinking about my painting a lot and I think the way that I paint is really affected by abstract expressionism. I'm interested in the mark and the thought, and I like the drips and the accidents, like these drips. And that red spot [points to tiny red dot on lower left corner] makes me extremely happy. I think that's the best part of the painting."

*Taliah Lempert documents the progress of her paintings on a daily basis. To see her work visit [www.bicyclepaintings.com](http://www.bicyclepaintings.com)*



**tamoi**

Student & works at Lovely Day Café  
 "It's awesome! It's exercise plus you're outside and you get a totally different view of the city. You have to watch your ass and pay attention or taxi drivers will knock you over. Sometimes you have to get a little aggressive."



**ruth phaneuf**

Gallery Director at Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery.  
 Commutes four miles / 20 minutes.  
 "I ride because its easier and I have the leisure of using this bicycle path. It is glorious along the river. The question in New York is storage. We have four bikes, my two children, my husband and I. There is no room but we decided we just need to have our bikes because of the weather, the fun, the beauty of it."

**emily**

Art Gallery employee  
 Commutes 45 minutes from 147th Street to 25th Street.  
 "It helps me get exercise and out into the fresh air. Otherwise I'm just stuck in the subway or stuck inside all the time."



**Ciclovia in Manhattan**

Following the example of Bogota Columbia's Ciclovia or Car-free Sundays, Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Sadik-Khan have announced three consecutive Car-free Saturdays (August 9, 16 and 23) running the length of Park Avenue below 72nd Street. The street will be closed to motorized traffic from 7am to 1pm.

TIMES UP BIKE LANE PHOTO FROM FLICKR

**The Activists**

**TIMES UP! IS** a non-profit environmental group run entirely by volunteers who use direct action, events and educational programs to inspire, educate and make New York streets "less toxic." Founded in 1987, the group holds regular bike repair workshops (though they have recently lost their shop space and are seeking a new home), and has created some of the city's more provocative and entertaining grassroots events, such as the Bicycle Lane Liberation Clown Brigade who use humour and drama to educate car drivers about the bicycle lanes in New York City, as well as a recent doggie pedal parade. [times-up.org](http://times-up.org)



TIMES UP! BIKE LANE LIBERATION CLOWN BRIGADE CRASHES INTO THE BACK OF A TOW TRUCK DOUBLE-PARKED ON THE BIKE LANE. PHOTO FROM FLICKR.



# THE TOKYO GREAT CYCLING TOUR

BY IAN GREGSON  
PHOTO BY CHRIS JONGKIND  
TOKYOFORM.COM



TOKYO PRESENTS INNUMERABLE challenges for foreign cyclists; especially those like us who were on one hand intimidated by the sheer size of the city and who also did not have a clue where to go.

Before leaving Vancouver, I Googled “bike rental Tokyo” and “bike tour Tokyo” and found the good folks at The Tokyo Great Cycling Tour. The tour runs only on Saturdays from 9:30 am until approximately 3:30 pm. Getting to the meeting point outside the Maranouchi Hotel was simple enough, as the main railway runs north to south and the hotel is situated at the north entrance to the Tokyo subway system.

The bikes used are eight-speed lightweight city bikes, more advanced than the standard issue *mamachari* bikes that dominate Japan. Size-wise the bikes start as low as 150 centimetres. Make sure you request your correct size when confirming your tour. Helmets are supplied, although most native commuters do not use them.

Our two guides, Masa and Yukiko, proved to be a fountain of information regarding all aspects of Tokyo, including the necessary bike riding etiquette. It is customary to ride on the sidewalk and to the left of slower and oncoming traffic, as the Japanese drive on the opposite side of the road to North Americans. The sidewalks are much wider than in a North American city, and on a Saturday morning the streets were far less busy than one would expect in a city of over 12 million.

Our first stop was the Imperial Palace at Kokyo where Yukiko explained the purpose of the wide road we had stopped on; it was to allow the Royal Family access to the main Tokyo railway station. No other vehicles are allowed to use it, although bikes are generally accepted.

From there, it was off through the back streets to Nihonbashi, where we received a history lesson on how Tokyo became the capital of Japan after the country’s power elite moved from Kyoto.

We were then off to Tsukuda-jima, a small fishing village surrounded by the concrete of the big city. History tells us that 33 fishermen from Kobe came to this location at the request of the Shogun family. The fishermen provided for the family and were justly rewarded. The island was one of the few places in Tokyo not to be firebombed in World War II. One of its secrets is a small alley barely wide enough for one person in which a tree is completely surrounded by the house built around it; next to the tree is a small shrine.

A visit to the world’s largest fish market at Tsukiji came next. We caught the hustle and bustle of the market and did our best not to get run down by the battery-operated vehicles that rush about the market.

We went on to cross the various bridges (which provided the only elevation on the tour) through to Harumi, a reclaimed land that has provided much needed living space for Tokyo residents. We saw massive high-rises with waterfront views.

The longest stretch out to Tokyo Big Site was the most challenging, not by distance but by a prevailing headwind that grew with intensity as we got closer to the waterfront at Odaiba; this site struck me as being designed by someone who played with Lego as a child. The buildings are oddly designed; I could just imagine Godzilla smashing into them as he exited Tokyo Bay, and my mention of this entertained our guides to no end. We managed to find a spot out of the wind to eat lunch – which was served from a great selection of bento boxes.

As we took the ferry in full view of the impressive structure of the Rainbow Bridge, we were saddened to learn the bridge does not offer bike access. Once off the ferry it was over to Shibakoen and Tokyo Tower, the scene of many a Japanese monster movie. In the same area is the Royal Family’s Zojoyo-ji temple. Luckily for us the plum blossoms were starting to bloom, though the wind gusts increased at this point, picking up dust along the way and whipping our faces with fine powder.

After cycling around the small hill on which Tokyo Tower is located, we headed back into the city for one more temple visit. The 79 steps leading up to the famous Atago Jinja temple were not for the faint-hearted, either up or down. This temple had the most amazing koi, which turned out to be very social and persistently hungry.

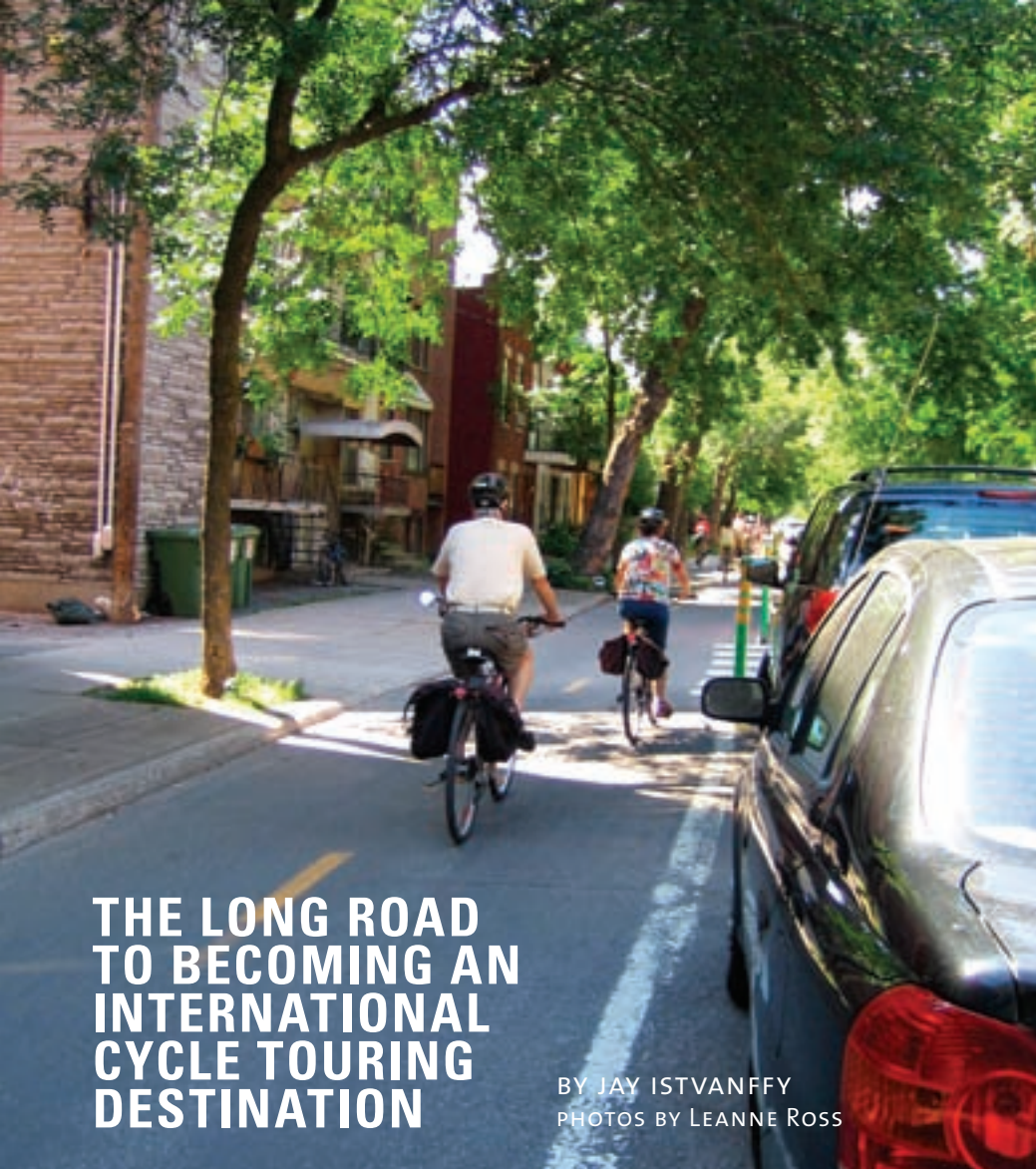
Then it was back to our hotel – the Dai Ichi Annex – which was along the route back to the starting point at the Imperial Palace.

While I had some trepidation at spending \$100 for this tour, by the time it was over, I had no doubts of its value. The personal accounts of our guides and the sheer enjoyment of seeing places even Tokyo residents may never see was worth the cost. My wife and I strongly recommend this tour. Regardless of your riding experience, it is a must for any green ecotourist bike rider.



HEATHER AND IAN WITH TOUR GUIDE. PHOTO BY MASA.

\$100 per person; approximately six hours and 20 kilometres around Tokyo  
[www.tokyocycling.jp](http://www.tokyocycling.jp)



## THE LONG ROAD TO BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL CYCLE TOURING DESTINATION

BY JAY ISTVANFFY  
PHOTOS BY LEANNE ROSS

# LA ROUTE VERTE

FOLLOWING IN THE footsteps (or, rather, the tire tracks) of Denmark's national cycle routes, Britain's National Cycle Network, and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in the United States, Québec's Route Verte is the longest bicycle network in North America, covering over 4,000 kilometres and traveling through more than 320 municipalities. This vast cycle network is a combination of roadway routes and bike paths, and is now ranked among the world's leading bikeways.

Members of Vélo Québec initially conceived of the Route Verte in the 1980s when discussing their long-term vision for cycling in Québec. Vélo Québec presented its idea for cycling corridors

in the province at the *Conférence Vélo Mondiale* in 1992. The government partnered with Vélo Québec to collaborate in the development and construction of the route. The Route Verte was officially launched in 1995

Transports Québec provided \$88.5 million in funding for the route, covering 25 percent of the costs; local and regional agencies covered the remainder. Going forward, maintenance costs will be shared equally by the province and its regional partners, with Transports Québec matching every dollar invested by regional municipalities.

The development of the Route Verte involved almost a thousand different organizations

and was more than 12 years in the making. It celebrated its official inauguration and ribbon cutting ceremony on August 10, 2007.

The route covers a vast range of terrain and provides cyclists with their choice of an expansive network of trails. From national parks with shaded forests to farmland, or from the gentle floodplains of the St. Lawrence River to the sheer cliff faces outside of Québec City, the route offers something for every age and fitness level. The route also provides cyclists with ample opportunities to fully experience Québec's rich culture in both its quaint villages and bustling cities.

The Route is comprised of main roads, designated roadways, and off-road bike paths. Main roads have a paved shoulder that is at least one metre wide, making it comfortable and safe for group rides. Designated roadways are secondary or rural roadways with lighter traffic (under 2,000 vehicles per day) that are officially recognized for bicycle use. Off-road bike paths – usually paved over old railway tracks – are shared with other users, often hikers.

All trails are clearly marked by standardized signs that adhere to Transports Québec's strict guidelines. These signs are easy to identify and are often accompanied by tourist information regarding local attractions. Vélo Québec's La Route



Verte Guide is comprehensive and up-to-date, providing detailed maps, accommodation listings, information regarding rest stops, available food and drinking water; it even notes climbs steeper than a 5 per cent grade.

Perhaps the route's most pleasant surprises are to be found on its secondary roadways, which amble through the quiet villages of rural Québec and give cyclists the opportunity to experience a side of this province not readily available to the average tourist. Taking the road less traveled gives cyclists an opportunity to immerse themselves in Québec's culture; from indulging in poutine and drinking songs in local pubs to sampling the specialty cheeses and wines of the region.

The route also runs through the busy streets of Montréal and Québec City, but cyclists can relax in clearly marked bike lanes or by taking their bikes on designated transit lines. If visiting Montréal, be sure to check out the Maison des cyclistes, Vélo Québec's headquarters and cyclists' haven, which boasts a boutique with gifts, tools, maps and guides, as well as a café with fresh coffee and daily specials.

Cyclists on the route have the option of choosing accommodations that are certified by

Vélo Québec's "Bienvenue cyclistes!" program. In order to be certified, establishments must meet specific criteria that were created with cyclists' needs in mind. Certification is available to hotels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, and campgrounds, offering a wide range of price points. Whether you want to spend the night in a deluxe bed and breakfast with sweeping views of the St. Lawrence or prefer to spend a quiet night tenting on the banks of the river instead, you'll have plenty of options to choose from.

At certified hotels, bed and breakfasts and hostels, you can expect to have secure bicycle storage, a pump and other tools for making minor repairs, and information about local bicycle repair and rental centres. If meals are provided, cyclists are loaded with carbs and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Certified campgrounds offer cyclists a camping space regardless of whether they've made a reservation, a sheltered location for eating, as well as a pump and tools and the same information about local bicycle rental and repairs shops.

[www.routeverte.com](http://www.routeverte.com)



## la route verte

BY LEANNE ROSS

I MUST ADMIT that I am a recent convert to cycling in the city and even so, I only do it on certain days, in certain weather, to certain nearby places when I've had a certain amount of sleep the night before. It was my colleague, now partner, who inspired me to get my butt on a bike and ride to work about two years ago. Things went so well from cycling to work to cycling on the weekends that we decided our first vacation together would be a cycling trip. We were mulling over different BC routes when my partner's brother, a seasoned cyclist who works for the Ministry of Transportation, suggested Québec. Québec? He knew through his work that the Ministry of Transport in Québec had spent millions of dollars developing a province-wide bikeway. I was scared of the BC mountain ranges anyway – perhaps Québec would be a kinder, gentler place for a first time cycle tourist?

Information gathering was a breeze. A phone call to Vélo Québec got us the Québec Cycling Guide and once we narrowed the region down (visualize the beautiful, historic, and, yes, flat farmlands southeast of Montréal), we were

inundated with brochures and maps from the regional tourist office offering us many custom made circle routes and all the information necessary to plan our own adventure.

We chose to box up our own bikes rather than rent. We were warned by the hostel in Montréal that getting from the airport to the city was really not a good idea on a bike, so we took a van taxi. And of course, La Route Verte is more than bikeways. When we arrived at the hostel, we, our bikes, and our baggage were welcomed. We stored our bikes in our spacious room and were shown the bike pump. There are hundreds of B&Bs, campsites, and hostels along La Route Verte ready to accept cyclists and provide secure storage, a bicycle pump, and tools – a requirement to receive the "Bienvenue Cyclistes" designation.

Our first destination was Chambly, the brewing home of my favourite French Canadian beer, La Fin du Monde. Oh, and yes, it's also the location of Fort Chambly, built in 1709 to protect Montréal and secure trade routes to the US. We did get lost; not after our tour of the Unibroue brewery but on our way out of Montréal. Since I can be described as naively optimistic when it comes to

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

fun and adventure, I had thought that because I was leaving rainy Vancouver, my Gore-Tex jacket wouldn't be necessary. Well, it rained that first day leaving the city. After losing "La Route Verte" trail, which, by and large, was very well-signed along our entire route, we saw a beacon in the distance and arrived at a Tim Hortons to dry ourselves off, look at our maps, and find our way. Surmising we were lost, a man at the table next to us began looking at our maps – asking us questions in French – and tried to help us out. With our passable high school French, we managed to get a good idea of where we had gone wrong. Thanks to the washroom dryer, our friendly Québécois acquaintance, and a Tim Hortons' lunch, we were on our way. When we arrived near the place we had gone astray, a man stepped out of his car on the roadway and motioned to indicate where the trail was. It was the same man from Tim Hortons who had driven back to the spot, waited for us to arrive, and sent us on our way. He even blew us kisses goodbye. *Merci Monsieur!*

We carried this feeling of warmth throughout our trip, tasting ice cider for the first time at a family run ciderie and talking to Quebecers over breakfast at our B&Bs (who were shocked we would be visiting all the way from Vancouver – had we flown or cycled here?). We felt it too when we met two men in their 70s who come every summer from Vermont and Massachusetts to cycle in Québec, and again when I gave my spare inner tube to a cycling vagabond who had a flat on his Bionix (Québec manufactured) electric bike. From town to town, we travelled on off-road bikeways along canals, through the forest, and along farmers' fields.

For our ten-day trip, we covered 50 to 70 kilometres per day, but spent only about two hours on a shared roadway. I have a hard time imagining the commitment and effort it took for the hundreds of organizations involved to make this bicycle route happen. Graffiti along part of the route showed one community's opposition. But it did happen, and it's wonderful. Let it serve as inspiration to the rest of the country. Next time, I'll try something a little more challenging like the Gaspé Peninsula. By the time we hit our second day of rain on the way back to Montréal, we had already bought three-dollar raincoats from the tourist shop at Fort Chambly. Who needs Gore-Tex?

*Leanne Ross works in adult education and is saving her vacation time for a cycling trip to Western Australia next summer.*



# GATHERING SPEED FOR 40 YEARS

# vélo québec

BY JAY ISTVANFFY

**IN JUST OVER** 40 years, Vélo Québec has evolved from a cycle touring course for boys to a thriving and influential non-profit membership organization that advocates for cyclists' rights and, among its numerous accomplishments, oversees the internationally recognized Route Verte.

Vélo Québec's roots can be traced back to one man: Gabriel Lupien, a Redemptorist priest with a contagious love for cycling that he imparted to his students, family and, ultimately, the people of Québec. (Mr. Lupien's passion was so infectious he even convinced blind people to try cycling!)

After completing his studies at the seminary in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Mr. Lupien studied physical education at the University of Ottawa. When the young priest returned to the seminary, he discovered that it was easier to reach out to youth through cycling excursions than through religious doctrine. In 1956, Mr. Lupien founded the School of Cycle Touring, with the aim of providing boys with opportunities to go on cycle tours in a safe, structured environment. With classes offered in towns across Québec, the School gained momentum and popularity until it eventually reached Montréal. In 1967, Mr. Lupien founded the Montréal-based Provincial Federation of Cycle Tourists (which changed its name to Vélo Québec in 1975).

In its early days, Vélo Québec focused on promoting cycling through the organization of cycle tours. The energy crisis of the 1970s challenged the perception of cycling as strictly a leisure activity, and Vélo Québec began its work to have cycling recognized as an alternative form of transportation. In 1985, to

demonstrate the need for bike paths, Vélo Québec gathered 3,500 cyclists for Montréal's first Tour de L'Île. The next year, when 15,000 cyclists turned out for the second Tour de L'Île, Vélo Québec realized that Montrealers were getting excited about cycling.

Today, Vélo Québec boasts a permanent staff of 60 and a membership of 4,500 and counting. The Tour de L'Île has become the largest event of its kind in the world and, in addition to its research projects, Vélo Québec publishes two magazines and continues to organize cycle tours. And, of course, it's impossible to ignore Vélo Québec's crowning achievement: the Route Verte. The Route Verte is significant not just because of its enormity or its resounding international success, but because it represents a collaborative effort between government and a cycling organization – a partnership that is unprecedented in Canada.

Despite all this advocacy work, Vélo Québec's General Director, Suzanne Lareau, rejects the notion that Vélo Québec is a lobby group. Throughout its history, Vélo Québec's philosophy has been that people will ride their bikes so long as they have enjoyable spaces to ride in. To that end, the organization has focused on making cycling safe and accessible, primarily through the creation of bike paths. In a recent interview, Ms. Lareau emphasized that Vélo Québec's main goal is to ignite in people a love of cycling. It would seem, then, that Gabriel Lupien's infectious passion for cycling is still the beating heart of Vélo Québec.

[www.veloqc.ca](http://www.veloqc.ca)

# la route verte

a cycling adventure through Québec



crossing the border



to Montréal!



across the St-Laurent



On street parking at Maison des Cyclistes

October 2007. After biking northward from New Haven, Conn. through New England on a route mostly cobbled together from personal experience and blind faith that Federal (U.S.) routes (i.e. U.S.5) would have the gentlest grades, I approached the Canadian border with trepidation. The remaining 60 mi (100 km) to Montréal would be through Francophone territory (and my two years of high school French have been mostly forgotten) on a route I was unsure of. → But I had nothing to worry! I was riding on LA ROUTE VERTE, a network of bicycle routes traversing the entire province of Québec! All I needed to do was follow the signs and I'd get all the way to Montréal! The route used rural roads for a bit, then switched to an off-road bike path for most of the remaining miles. Some of it along a scenic historic canal. And the final bit—bridges over the mighty St-Laurent between parkland isles and views of the expanse of the Old Port. → To get to my friend's flat on the Plateau I used separated contra-flow bike lanes—bi-directional bike paths on the side of the street. How Amsterdamian! (Or, for Carl Larson, Copenhagenian!) This added to the Euro ambience of Montréal, though the big American cars definitely took away from it. (And North American style driving—it was obvious that many drivers were not properly acquainted with these *new* bike lanes, causing me a couple close calls!) → Later on I stopped by the "Maison des Cyclistes", the headquarters of Vélo Québec, the province-wide advocacy agency instrumental in the implementation of La Route Verte. The Maison also doubled as a café, so I utilized the ample on-street bike parking and sipped on coffee while scores of cyclists rolled by. → There was plenty more biking fun to be had. I rode alongside the historic Lachine Canal on yet another bike path. The ride up to the top of Mont Royal was great and the view from the summit can't be beat! Eventually it was time to move on and I boarded a Via Rail train to Québec City. (If I had the time and if the weather was better I would've rode the distance.) → While in Québec City I took some "recreational" rides, most notably to Montmorency Falls, a spectacular cascade 272 ft (83 m) high. And I got almost the entire way there by bike paths! → The rest of North America has a lot to learn from Québec's bicycle experience. I can hope and dream of the day that crossing Oregon by bike is as easy as following a sign. And I'll be back to Québec someday to ride more of La Route Verte!

To pick up a copy of my comic TRAINS, BIKES, AUTOMOBILES which details my 500 mi (800 km) bike tour through N. England (among other adventures), please send \$3 cash (U.S. or Canadian) to TFR INDUSTRIES, P.O. BOX 14185, PORTLAND OR 97293-0185

shawn granton \* june 2008



separated bike path on a Montréal street



Québec City



getting touristy at Montmorency Falls

# *cycling the magdalen islands*

BY STEVE JOHNSON  
PHOTOS BY CYNTHIA DUNSFORD



THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS form an archipelago of twelve islands that are located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The islands are predominantly French-speaking though it is not difficult to find someone who can speak English.

We started our cycling adventure with sand dunes on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. Two things that are inescapable on the islands are the ocean and the sand.

After two hours of riding, we arrived on the tiny island of Havre-Aubert. The island is very tourist-oriented without descending into gift shop hell. The first place that caught our attention was the Sand Economuseum. The centre features local sculptors who create artwork entirely made out of sand from the island. We met sculptor Claude Bourque. "We began in 1981. A natural fit was to do something with sand since it is a large part of the islands. Something like this had never been done before so we had to make our own tools and develop the techniques to create our sand sculptures."

It was Saint-Jean-Baptiste day in Quebec and the local pub was packed with all the locals, from families to seniors. The pub featured a glass bar with live lobsters swimming in it.

Leaving the pub, we met Michel, who had an electric bike, painted in the blue, white and red colours of the Acadian flag. The Acadians were originally deported from their lands in 1755 and many ended up on the Magdalen Islands. It is very common to see the Acadian flag as many of the local residents are proud of their Acadian roots.

One of the great pleasures of a trip to the Magdalen Islands is to sample the local seafood. Lobster is available from various roadside stands and food markets. We decided to try the restaurant located inside the inn where we were staying. The ambiance was considerably more sophisticated than the afternoon pub. The menu choices were almost entirely seafood. We chose the local specialty, *pot-en-pot*: a casserole featuring lobster, scallops, and an assortment of other fresh seafood.

We finished the evening with a visit to Café de la Grave where the piano was the focal point. Local musicians brought their instruments for impromptu jams, and the café owner joined in with his accordion.

The next day, we vowed to do less celebrating and more cycling. We started on Cap aux Meules Island along Chemin des Caps. The road followed a stretch of red cliffs battered by the ocean. A particular highlight was stopping at La Belle Anse (The Beautiful Bay) and watching the seabirds hunting for their dinner.

We visited Havre aux Maisons Island along a road called Chemin de la Pointe-Basse. The travel guide promised a cheese factory, a fish smokehouse, and a lighthouse; all within a five mile stretch. After about twenty minutes of cycling, we arrived at the Pied-de-Vent Cheese Factory, where we sampled the locally produced cheeses that are sold around the island.

Another interesting feature along the route was the houses, each painted in its own distinctive colour. One house could be deep blue and the neighbour's home would be fire-engine red. It was

*"The next day, we vowed to do less celebrating and more cycling."*

a refreshing change to the monochromatic colour schemes of most North American suburbs.

Once at the Alright Cape lighthouse, we went down to the sand dunes. My wife – being from Mexico – was thrilled to have finally found beaches that could compare to those in Acapulco or Cancun. Even though the temperature was about 20 degrees cooler than Mexico, we did go in for a very brief swim.

Refreshed and freezing, we got back on our bikes to get our blood circulating again. We paid a visit to the Smoked Herring Economuseum. Fishing has always been an economic mainstay on the Magdalen Islands; certain fisheries, like cod, have been devastated by local and foreign over-fishing.

Even though fisheries have suffered, there is still a vibrant and profitable lobster trade flourishing

on the Islands. We finished our cycling journey at a wharf just to the side of the road. Boats were returning with their catch of fresh lobster. Mothers and wives were waiting for sons and husbands to return. This is a part of island life that has not changed for the past three hundred years. A 9-year-old boy returning with his father on a fishing boat unloaded lobster like a seasoned veteran while his toddler brother seemed enthralled with the claws of the lobster. This was the perfect way to end our cycling trip to the Magdalen Islands.

If you go: Air Canada Jazz offers three daily flights to the Magdalen Islands with departure from Montreal. Another option to reach the islands is by ferry departing from Souris, Prince Edward Island. It is also possible to take your bike aboard the ferry so you can leave your car behind.

Even though the islands are geographically isolated, the cycling facilities are world class.

The weather in the Magdalen Islands can be considerably cooler and windier than mainland temperatures. If you want sunshine and warm weather, visit July through September and always bring a warm change of clothes, just in case.

Accommodation: An excellent place to stay is Auberge Chez Denis à François, located on Havre-Aubert Island. The inn is right beside La Route Verte and is a good place for cyclists to start and end their journey. The innkeeper is also bilingual, which makes it easier for English speaking tourists.

Bicycle rental: The largest bike rental place on the islands is Le Pédalier, located on Cap-aux-Meules Island. They rent a variety of hybrids and mountain bikes. They also rent bike racks if you want to pick and choose your destinations. A car is not a bad thing to have as public transit is extremely limited on the islands. You can visit their website at [www.lepedalier.com](http://www.lepedalier.com)

Tourism information: You can find out more information on the history and attractions of the Magdalen Islands at [www.tourismeilesdelamadelaine.com](http://www.tourismeilesdelamadelaine.com)

*Stephen Johnson is a husband and father-to-be who also finds time to ride. He dreams about a cross-Canada system of bike trails like the Green Route in Quebec. Then again, a good bike route to work would be a good start.*



# BIKE RAGE

BY CHARLES MONTGOMERY  
ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS BENTZEN





I COULD SEE their faces through the passenger window. He: leaning over the Pathfinder's steering wheel, barking into a cell phone. She: peering at me through the glass with the startled look of someone surprised by a wild animal. As I punched the car door, I could see my own reflection, too: face pinched and flushed beneath my helmet, lips mouthing: "You almost killed me! You almost killed me!"

If you are a bike commuter, you know there is nothing unique about this moment. It began with a driver's careless migration into the curb lane and my realization that I was about to be squeezed off the road yet again, or sideswiped if cell phone guy decided to turn right. A yell didn't get his attention. The door punch did. We were stuck with each other at the light. The window opened a crack. Obscenities were exchanged. I felt the heat of indignation in my veins. At some point I heard myself yell: "Fat boy!"

And then we were off. I caught the green first, made it half a block before he crossed the line. I burned right on a one-way street. They followed, window down. "My boyfriend's gonna kill you!" she screamed.

"Try and catch me," I yelled, doubling back towards safety. "Fat ass!"

Fat boy? Fat ass? Where the hell did those lines come from? I don't normally yell at strangers, let alone comment on the shape of their bodies. I'm not a fighter, but in that moment I was transformed by a primal rush of fear and anger. I was "bike rage" incarnate.

You've been there, too; admit it. Bike rage is a common occurrence, and quite predictable, according to road rage guru Leon James. The University of Hawaii professor of psychology has spent decades examining how commuting on city roads is so efficient at producing tension, anxiety, and anger – in drivers as well as cyclists. James' theories should be enough to turn the most self-righteous door-smackers among us into pavement pacifists, for our own good.

For starters, the driving experience primes car drivers for meltdowns.

They are conditioned by popular culture to see cars as symbols of freedom, yet city driving is a slow-motion trap that subjects drivers to constant restrictions on their movement. Drivers are thwarted from enjoying the promise of motion by traffic lights, by congestion – and yes, by cyclists – and they suffer the natural but impossible desire to escape and move forward. All this while being strapped to their seats! That's where the frustration begins. But drivers carry with them a load of cultural baggage that gets them even more cranked.

"The symbolic portrayal of the car has tied it to individual freedom and self-esteem, promoting a mental attitude of defensiveness and territoriality," James wrote in his seminal essay, "Why Driving Is Stressful." The car is an extension of self, he goes on to explain, so drivers take threats to the integrity of their vehicles personally. This renders the commute exhausting since the threat of accidents, scratches, or bumps is constant. Drivers may be encased in reinforced metal, but they never lose that sense of danger.

This potent cocktail of physiological stress and negative emotions – from fear and helplessness to resentment – needs only the trigger of confrontation to be transformed into outright rage.

Road rage is nothing new. But it seems rage between cyclists and drivers is increasingly common. Reports pepper nightly newscasts across the continent. One shocking case erupted in Portland last summer. After a cyclist allegedly kicked the side of his car, a 46-year-old driver then pursued him around a corner and ran him down. The cyclist bounced onto the hood and smashed into the windshield. The driver wasn't finished. He struck two cars and then another cyclist before stopping. He later told police that he was frustrated that the cyclist wasn't "sharing the road."

Bike rage can be just as ugly: last November, after being cut off by a driver just after morning rush hour in Toronto, a cyclist caught up to the car, reached inside the window, and stabbed the driver in the face and neck with a screwdriver.

These scenes may be horrific but they feel strangely familiar. James insists that it is common for drivers to imagine scenes of violence and retribution during the course of their commutes. It makes sense for the same to be true of cyclists, whose

sense of vulnerability goes beyond the threat of scratched paint. We risk life and limb at every encounter. Who can blame us for harbouring revenge fantasies?

Our speed and manoeuvrability enables us to lash out and retreat – think of the classic U-lock bash-and-run. Some cyclists consider such attacks acts of driver education. That's how I explained it in an email to James, anyway. He warned me to take a chill pill.

He pointed out that road confrontations usually don't produce anything but heightened anger – coupled with escalating retribution – in both parties. I suppose my Pathfinder showdown proved as much. I spent the morning quivering with adrenaline, unable to get work done, imagining what could have been.

This kind of road rage is a symptom of the corrosive effect that modern commuting has on urban culture. Aggressive streets are not just dangerous, they change the way we feel and the way we treat each other, even when we're not commuting.

The emerging science of happiness may offer solutions to the malaise of confrontational commuting. Studies suggest that feelings of safety, equity, and trust are key ingredients of everyday well-being. Trust is the most powerful of them all, according to John Helliwell, professor emeritus at the University of British Columbia and expert on the science of happiness. Every time we have a positive encounter with a stranger, it builds that sense of trust – not just in that person, but in other people we happen to meet as well. Feelings of trust make us more likely to be courteous and kind to strangers, more likely to give people the benefit of the doubt. (Trust even makes us more likely to volunteer and to vote; it actually makes us better citizens.) This trust alchemy happens in eye contact between cyclists, nods between merging drivers, or just regular folks offering passing smiles on sidewalks.

The problem is that city planners have mixed bikes and cars together in ways that offer little certainty about how each should operate, and lots of chances for conflict. Cyclists feel threatened in traffic, just like drivers. Many of us feel hard done by and under attack. I sure do. The average arterial road is an engine of conflict.

But what if this happiness theory was applied to our streets? The experiment has already been conducted in Bogota, Colombia. When he was first elected in 1998, former Mayor Enrique Peñalosa devised a plan to make the streets of this famously violent city feel safer and fairer. A key part of the plan was building a vast network of protected bike lanes so cyclists could travel without feeling threatened by cars. On my visit to Bogota last year, citizens told me that these measures were part of the reason the city feels less confrontational and more convivial. Drivers are better off, too: the rate of traffic accidents plummeted.

Some cyclists – myself included – bemoan the fact that so many fools, asses, and daydreamers are operating cars in North American cities. We personalize the problem. James, however, reminded me to blame the road, not the drivers. On another day, that jerk driver is a timid cyclist, and vice-versa. It's the experience of driving that turned my Pathfinder foe into a monster – and yes, it was the experience of cycling surrounded by thousands of pounds of metal that did the same to me.

What drivers need, James says, is a lifelong program of education that would start in grade one; educating kids about human rights and community spirit. And what about us cyclists? We need to keep in mind that drivers are vulnerable people who happen to have a deadly weapon at their disposal. Then we need to change the streets. "Use political methods to gain what you want," he counselled.

James may be an incurable driver, but I know he's right. If I want real change, I've got to ease up on the outrage and channel my frustration into urban design activism. Call the city's traffic department, paint a bike lane, write a letter, vote, keep riding, breathe, feel the sheer joy of movement in every commute. And let that joy flow out through an open smile.

If you're out there, Pathfinder guy, I really don't think you are fat. I feel your pain. And I'm sorry.

To read more of Dr. Leon James' ideas, visit [www.drdriving.org](http://www.drdriving.org)

# it's easy eating greens

TEXT & PHOTOS BY  
NICOLE VANDERWYST



COLLARDS

**EATING THESE GREEN** gems is no chore!

They're some of the easiest and most flavourful ingredients to prepare, and they're brimming with vitamins that will make you feel energized.

## KALE

### How to buy it:

Look for kale with leaves and stems that are firm and crisp, not limp. Smaller leaves will have a milder flavour and tender stems. Watch out for leaves with brown or yellow spots. Trim off larger stems before cooking, as they may be fibrous and tough.

### What's the big deal?

Loaded with calcium, kale is also rich in fibre, antioxidants, iron, potassium, vitamin K, and vitamin C, making it one of the most nutritious vegetables you can include in your diet.

### What to do with it:

- Briefly sauté torn kale leaves with slices of garlic, extra virgin olive oil, sea salt, and pepper for a tasty side dish.
- Include chopped fresh kale in coleslaws and salads and steamed or sautéed kale in bean, lentil and pilaf dishes.

## COLLARDS

### How to buy it:

Like other greens, collards should have deep green leaves and stems that are firm, crisp, and free of brown and yellow spots. Avoid wilted leaves. Also look for smaller leaves for a milder taste.



## WARM KALE SALAD WITH A CREAMY SESAME SAUCE

Here's a delicious take on the Japanese salad Goma-ae using kale instead of spinach:

- 2 cups steamed kale, well-drained (about two small or one large bunch fresh kale)
- 1/3 cup tahini
- 2 tbsp soy sauce or tamari
- 2 tbsp agave nectar, or liquid sweetener of your choice
- 1/3 cup water, or less

In a small food processor or blender combine the tahini, soy sauce, agave nectar, and half of the water. Blend on high for 30 seconds until the ingredients are fully combined. Add more water a tablespoon at a time if the sauce is too thick or to reach a desired consistency. In a bowl, combine the kale and sesame sauce, tossing until the kale is thoroughly combined. Serve warm.

Makes 2-3 servings.

### What's the big deal?

Just as nutritious as its close cousin kale, collards contain higher amounts of vitamins and minerals such as folic acid, B vitamins, calcium, zinc, iron, and vitamin A when cooked.

### What to do with it:

- Use fresh or steamed leaves for wraps, salad, and noodle rolls.
- Add blanched collards to casseroles, quiches, and risottos in place of spinach.

## SWISS CHARD

### How to buy it:

When buying chard, make sure the leaves have a vibrant green colour and shine to them. Avoid leaves that have a faded colour or any discoloured spots. Also look for stems that are crisp – not spongy – and free of splits or holes.

### What's the big deal?

Swiss chard is known for its excellent nutritional value and brain-boosting potential; chard was favoured by Aristotle and was often included on the dinner tables of ancient Rome and Greece.

### What to do with it:

- Try adding sautéed chard to a creamy sauce for an outstanding linguini dish, or use the sauce as a topping for potatoes and other vegetables.
- Instead of lettuce, try chopped Swiss chard in tacos and wraps.

## BROCCOLI

### How to buy it:

Make sure the broccoli you choose is firm with tightly packed florets. Watch out for brown or yellow spots on the florets and split or dried stems, as they usually mean the broccoli is past its prime.

### What's the big deal?

One cup of whole cooked broccoli has just as much calcium as a half-cup of cow's milk. And don't toss the stalk or the leaves: cook both of them the same way as the rest of your broccoli.

### What to do with it:

- Purée steamed broccoli florets and stalks in a blender with some miso, lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and pepper for a delicious pasta sauce or savoury topper for rice, potatoes, or other vegetables.
- Try a warm broccoli salad with a peanut satay sauce and chili flakes for a delicious protein-packed dish.



SWISS CHARD



# NRG BARS

BY KELTIE CRAIG

This recipe was gifted to me by my good friend Nelson Rocha. As a lover of word games and puns, it is no wonder that the name he gave the recipe works in two ways: NRG (energy) Bars but also Nelson Rocha's Great Bars. These little nuggets of energy have saved me many times, during long backcountry trips as well as the ride home from school when I am close to bonking. Nelson says, "Packed with protein, carbs, and caffeine, these bars have just the kick in the ass I need to keep me going!"

- 4 1/2 cups granola
- 3 cups sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup finely chopped banana chips
- 1/2 cup raisins or raisins
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips
- 1 tbsp finely ground coffee beans
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 cans (600 ml) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 tbsp honey

Mix all dry ingredients in a large bowl. Mix wet ingredients in a separate bowl, or just add them to the dry and mix. Butter up an 11" X 17" pan and spread contents into the pan. Make sure the mix is pressed well into the pan. Cook

at 300° F for 20 minutes. When mix is totally cooled, cut it into bars. You can wrap them individually in wax paper or put in a container and store them in the freezer and they'll make great snacks for future trips.

**DAHON**  
personal mobility



Ultimate convenience.  
Maximum mobility.  
Minimum hassle.

Dahon folding bikes are the perfect sustainable transport solution, no matter where your travels take you. Your Dahon folds quickly and easily for boarding, transport, or storing someplace you never thought a bike would fit.

Simple.

[www.dahon.com](http://www.dahon.com)



# Mr. Whirly™

- Complete cranks in single speed, mtn triple, and mtn. triple for Pugsleys
- Armsets available in 5 lengths and 2 colors
- Interchangeable spiders in 3 common sizes
- Interchangeable spindles for 68/73 & 100mm BBs



In Canada contact NRG Enterprises, (800) 669-4562

**SURLY** [surlybikes.com](http://surlybikes.com) 1.877.743.3191

Following  
 stalking the b:c:clettes  
 july 24-30 on their  
 wheely fun bike tour

bcclettes.ca for more info



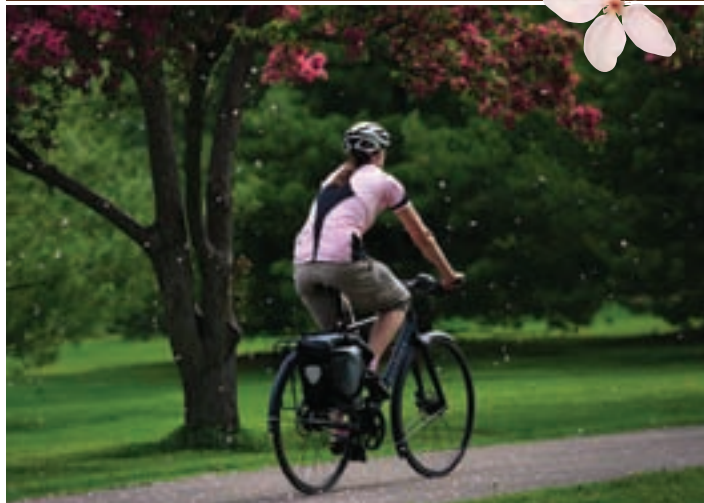
[thisisplanb.net](http://thisisplanb.net)

[info@thisisplanb.net](mailto:info@thisisplanb.net)

604.764.2266

graphic design for print  
 1 and 1.25 inch buttons  
 random fun stuff

## Aromatherapy



The new Civia Hyland makes it easy to stop and smell the roses—and the crabapples, too. Devoted to transportation, Civia bikes are American designed and engineered for the nation's widely varied roadways and terrain. Whether it's raining flowers or hail, Civia delivers high-performance, low maintenance operation all year long. Bring a breath of fresh air to your riding experience.

Log into [Civiacycles.com](http://Civiacycles.com)  
 to find a dealer near you.

CIVIA

*Finesse*

The ride of your life — every day.

transportation for a healthy planet

**BREEZER**

See our fully equipped, high-performance bikes at  
[www.breezerbikes.com](http://www.breezerbikes.com)  
 San Anselmo, California 415.456.6633

CASCADE BICYCLE CLUB'S  
 Summer  
**BIKE LEAGUE**

Track your bike riding through the summer.  
 Join Cascade Bicycle Club's Summer Bike League!  
[www.summerbikeleague.org](http://www.summerbikeleague.org)

IT WAS OUR first full day in Romania and we were sitting beside the road eating apples, bananas, and small pastries. We'd bought our food in the market that morning, having arrived in Romania the previous evening from Bulgaria by ferry across the Danube. Hooves clotted rhythmically on pavement as another sturdy wooden cart passed our picnic spot. The cart stopped a short distance beyond us, and one of the occupants hopped out to approach us. "Măncare!" the Gypsy woman said, pointing at our food.

I understood what she was asking, so I offered some apples. She accepted these, but made it clear she expected more. My mind raced. I asked myself whether her demands were based on immediate hunger, or whether this was routine begging. Then I

the Black Sea coast, the local food specialities changed. There were cream cakes in Austria; poppy-seed strudel in Croatia; paprika fish soup along the Danube in Serbia; and sliced beef liver for breakfast in Romania. Food and culture go hand-in-hand, so experiencing culinary differences are a part of any traveller's encounters. But when progress is achieved by turning pedals, the changes in local food become like another odometer.

As cuisines changed, so did crops grown in fields we passed. If the crop itself didn't change, the method of cultivation did. Cornfields were a constant part of the landscape as we cycled across Hungary toward Romania. It was harvest time, and in Hungary the crop rows were cut and winnowed with gleaming tractor

During our passage through Croatia, the effects of a recent war assaulted our senses and psyches; we were careful to heed the ubiquitous land mine warning signs. Since we didn't leave the roads, we found places like a park bench in a village for a midday picnic. But in the midst of our travels through this country, the warmth of welcome was special when we stopped to fill our panniers. Women in grocery stores were thrilled to meet Western travellers. Being received like this made me feel like a new spring had sprung after a winter that had lasted far too long.

In Serbia, a beer and snack stop at a tiny shop led to an interaction with a grandfatherly local. As I showed him a photo of my great-niece, he chatted with me in rapid-fire Serbian. I didn't understand his words, yet I understood what he said. He told

# food for thought

## BIKE TRAVELS IN EASTERN EUROPE

BY MARGO MACTAGGART  
PHOTOS BY CHRIS ORAM



PAPRIKA FISH SOUP IN SERBIA, A DANUBE SPECIALTY



HORSE DRAWN TRAFFIC SHARES THE ROAD WITH CYCLIST IN ROMANIA.

started to think about when my husband and I would find our next meal and some food to keep us going. We were cycling from Vienna to the Black Sea, and experience had taught us that finding food wasn't always easy; pedalling on an empty stomach is no fun. In an attempt to set limits I pointedly counted the cart's occupants – three in total – and offered her three small pastries. She took these, and then pointed at our bananas. I shook my head and she seemed to accept that she had reached the limits of my generosity. She hopped back into the cart and the rhythmic clapping resumed. Food is essential to the bike traveller as it is the fuel that propels the journey. But food also weaves itself into a cyclist's travel experience in other important ways. We're planning more bike tours in developing and post-Communist countries, so this encounter is unlikely to be the last of its kind.

As we wheeled our way to Constanta on

equipment. In the former Yugoslavia we saw small rusty tractors. But the corn stalks were still artfully bundled into traditional ricks that stood in rows in the fields where crop stubble was being burned. In Romania, we saw corn being harvested with scythes and the horse-drawn carts were piled high with stalks.

When rolling into towns, we watched carefully for locals eating as they walked. In one Serbian town, we saw a person with sausage on a bun and knew the source must be close by. We also knew cafes may be tucked up side streets and signs guiding us to them would probably use another language. In finding food to keep our energy up, we've acquired a few strategies. We try to keep a reserve in our panniers, since finding a cafe or shop is never a certainty. If we see fruit stands in the countryside, we stop and fill our panniers since we may not see another stand for some time.

me of the universal importance of family and then denounced war. I sensed he spoke from experience. As we departed, he chivalrously asked my husband whether he might kiss me. My husband nodded, and the man kissed me on both cheeks. If our bodies hadn't needed sustenance as we passed through his village, we'd never have met him.

It's the simple act of finding food that fosters interactions with locals, especially in less touristy areas. This is why I love independent cycle touring!

*Margo and her husband are so addicted to travelling by bike that they're hitting the road in Bangkok in January 2009. They hope to get as far as Europe by the end of the year. See their Eastern Europe blog at [www.candmwanderings.blogspot.com](http://www.candmwanderings.blogspot.com) and their cycle-touring web pages at [www.triumf.ca/people/oram/cycling/](http://www.triumf.ca/people/oram/cycling/)*



# AN UNCONVENTIONAL pilgrimage



TEXT & PHOTOS  
BY LINDSEY REDDIN

**THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO** is a 770 kilometre medieval Catholic pilgrimage across northern Spain to the cathedral in Santiago de Compostella, where the tomb of St. James the Apostle can be found. In this day and age, many people travel it for secular reasons, and there are cheap hostels called *albergues* set up along the way for the pilgrims. Most have bunks with mattresses, pillows, and blankets, but you carry your own sheet and pillowcase. When you start you get a credencial, which gets stamped at the *albergues* you stay in along the way.

In April 2006, my dear friend Emily and I decided to take a break from Edinburgh and head south to Spain. We hadn't done any training, didn't have the proper equipment or shoes, and went on faith that we'd be able to find an English guidebook in Pamplona (we did). We sent our big backpacks to Madrid and took only little daypacks, with the bare minimum of supplies and clothes. It never ceased to amaze us what we could do with the basics and a healthy dose of resourcefulness. A pair of socks makes a good substitute for gloves during the chilly pre-dawn walks (the early start is essential for avoiding the scorching midday heat). On a cold night in one

hostel without blankets, we gathered up all the extra pillows to build a fort around us, then slept under our towel, my long skirt, and our raincoats.

The Camino Frances, the main route through Spain, starts in the Pyrenees mountains, on the border with France, makes its way west and downward through the Rioja region, crosses the plains of Castilla y Leon (referred to as the *meseta*) and then climbs up and over the mountains of Galicia, on the Atlantic Coast. They say the mountains will break you physically, and the *meseta* will break you mentally. It's flat, there's no shade, not a lot of water, and you can see your destination for days as you walk towards it with painful slowness. Some people skip it altogether by taking a bus from Burgos to Leon. We decided we'd do it on bikes.

This wasn't an original idea; there are plenty of people who do the Camino by bicycle, but most choose one mode of transportation and stick to it. It takes about 11 days with proper gear, and you can easily cover 150 kilometres per day on the *meseta*.

We gave ourselves one day in Burgos to find something to ride, and at the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

## Sport Power on Demand



Climb hills faster and easier with OHM Sport Power-assist bicycles. Featuring BionX power-assist drive system and Molicel® Li-ion battery pack for more power and range. Ask for OHM Sport at your local OHM dealer or visit [ohmcycles.com](http://ohmcycles.com)

**OHM**  
Ride like this™

# HOKEY SPOKES

BY REUBEN WALKER

**HAVE YOU EVER** wanted to mount a spinning light show right on your bike, without any difficult installation or tinkering? Hokey Spokes let you do exactly that.

Hokey Spokes are blade-shaped light-emitting devices that attach to your bicycle spokes. They display sequences of flashing LED lights that blur into cool patterns once your bike is moving. They attract a lot of positive attention and are loads of fun to use! On just one night ride, I got quite a few positive comments on my lights. Plus, they are perfect safety lights for night riding.

Each Hokey Spoke has two buttons and an arrangement of LED lights. Each blade requires three AA batteries to run. The blades attach easily and securely onto your wheels with a screwdriver. I found that the best image appears when you attach multiple blades to one wheel; the image produced from only one blade is actually kind of lame. However, when I attached two more blades on my wheel, I was ready to really rock the streets!

Hokey Spokes work by exploiting a human visual process called "Persistence of Vision." Persistence of Vision causes images seen by the eye to remain for a short period of time. When you watch the Hokey Spokes spin around, rather than seeing a series of images, you see the light patterns blend into one persisting picture.

One thing that made this product stand out for me was the infrared communication feature. When you turn on one blade, the others will also

turn on and sync themselves with the other blades.

You can also program your own text displays for the blades to show. Although the instructions seem complicated at first, programming a text display is actually pretty simple. You just need to press the button a certain number of times for a certain letter. For example, A requires one button press, B requires two, and C require three. It can be frustrating if you mess up, but that aside, it isn't too hard to enter your message.

Hokey Spokes are definitely a fun product, and are perfect for showing off or for using as safety lights. They are extremely easy to use; all you have to do is pop in some batteries, mount the blades, and switch them on. The only pitfall is the number of batteries needed for each blade. Highly recommended for anyone who likes to show off while they ride!

Around \$30 per blade.



PHOTO BY DAVID NIDDRIE

## Uniting Canada

to become a leading cycling nation.

ADVOCATES - RETAILERS - MANUFACTURERS → Join us today and be part of that change

[www.btac.org](http://www.btac.org)





# I-BERT PUTS YOUR CHILD FIRST WITH EASE AND COMFORT

BY DAVE OLSEN

AS A CAR-FREE FATHER, I'm always on the lookout for better ways of cycling with our three-year-old daughter. Anicca has had the "best seat in the house" on both her mother's bike and our Bike Bus for well over two years already. The very capable, Netherlands-made, Bobike seat was the first that I found that both mounted on front and was easy to remove.

But as Anicca's name reminds us, everything changes and her growing body was pushing the limits of the Bobike. When I saw the i-Bert, it looked like a good bet to extend her time at the front of our bike pack.

A model of simplicity, i-Bert installed on my 15-year-old, almost stem-less mountain bike in less than 15 minutes. And with that experience, it took me less than five minutes to remove the Bobike and install i-Bert on the mother's bike.

Anicca simply slides into her seat, and the adjustable harness is even easier to keep over her shoulders, which is important both for safety and a comfy snooze when the ride is long enough.

Front seats in general are much more enjoyable for everyone involved. Your child has a great view of all the cycling action and you can have a conversation. For parents to respond immediately to the needs of their children, this ability to easily communicate is critical.

The biggest concern about a front seat seems to be whether it will knock the knees of the person pushing on the pedals. But if your bike is already well set up for your body, adding the i-Bert will not get in the way. Riding with the mount sans seat also doesn't pose any problems.

Although there is no padding for i-Bert's passenger, it seems very comfortable. Our



PHOTO BY DAVID NIDDRIE

daughter hasn't complained to me once about comfort in many weeks of testing. Consisting of a smooth, moulded piece of plastic, it is easy to clean and dry; perhaps the bright green colour is meant to compensate for this eco-insensitive aspect.

Whether you ride every day or occasionally, i-Bert will make cycling fun for both of you. If you have a car, be careful; that clunky car-seat will get heavier and heavier every time you use i-Bert. Soon, you too may become a car-free parent and transform your toddler's transportation into a joyous occasion every time you leave your home!

For more technical info about i-Bert, you can check it out online at [i-Bertinc.com](http://i-Bertinc.com).

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

end of that day we had it – two single-speed, folding bicycles with apehanger handlebars, one of which was for a very small child. No panniers, minimal braking power, and tires that weren't designed for the cross-country terrain. We loved them. In the morning at the *albergues*, we would prepare for the day at the same time as the other cyclists, who would check their GPSs and adjust their spandex while we topped up the air in our tires and put on our backpacks.

We covered 225 kilometres in three and a half days on those bikes. We would take turns riding the kid's bike, which was set to such an easy gear and had such short crank arms that, even when pedaling as fast as possible, bouncing with the effort, our maximum speed was about 10 kilometres per hour. The seats were not, by any stretch of the imagination, designed for long-distance riding, but we did find that hollering helped relieve the pain.

Our time with the bikes ended just outside of Astorga, when the kid's bike got a crack in the rear rim next to the valve stem. In the next village we came to, we approached an old woman walking along the road carrying an honest-to-goodness sickle. It took some explaining in our minimal Spanish to convince her that yes, we did actually want to give her the bikes, and yes, we had ridden them from Burgos. Once we had that sorted, she got very excited and invited us to her home, where she wrote down our names and wanted to feed us breakfast. I imagine that a gift of two bicycles from two young Canadian women was probably the highlight of her decade.

From her house, we turned left at the door and kept walking. There is such joy in covering long distances by foot, looking at a map of an entire country and seeing yourself getting further away from your origin and closer to your destination, just by putting one foot in front of the other, over and over again. The Camino is an experience of blisters and beautiful countryside, of feeling simultaneously like you want to hurry up and get there, and slow down so it never ends. To reduce life to only the basic responsibilities (keeping yourself fed, clean, and rested, and getting yourself to your destination) is a luxury we should all be so lucky to afford.

**RANSBIKES**

4600 HWY 183 ALT. HAYS KS 67601 785-625-6346 WWW.RANSBIKES.COM

DESIGN IS VITAL WHEN IT SAVES YOUR...



**Buy a Bilenky-  
We flatten one car  
for every bike we build**

Flattened  
in  
PA

Made  
in  
PA

**www.bilenky.com**  
**215-329-4744**

**schlumpf innovations**

The single speed - two speed!  
Swiss made by Schlumpf  
**www.schlumpf.ch**



**bikeschool.com**

More professionals and enthusiasts choose UBI!  
We offer beginning and advanced training in bike repair, shop operation, mechanic certification and frame building in our state-of-the-art facility in beautiful Ashland, Oregon.

UNITED BICYCLE INSTITUTE — 541 488 1121

**secure bike parking**

**BIKE LOCKERS**

for locations and info visit  
[toronto.ca/cycling/locker.htm](http://toronto.ca/cycling/locker.htm)  
or phone 416-392-2577

**TORONTO**

**more  
y  
bike**

We Vision is available from  
Censor Cycles (Vancouver)  
Urban Cycles (Toronto)  
Fairfield Cycles (Victoria, BC)  
Bicycle (Durham, ON)  
or worldwide via  
[www.velovision.com](http://www.velovision.com)

**VELO VISION** magazine  
brings you the world's best innovations in  
transport and touring cycling - in full colour!

everybody's got problems.  
you, for instance.

**www.oneononebike.com**

**Promoting the Bicycle for  
Everyday Transportation**

Join now and receive:

- Bicycle-friendly advocacy that represents you
- A San Francisco Cyclist / Pedestrian map
- Discounts at 45 online and Bay Area businesses
- Rides, Events, Parties
- The latest bicycle news delivered to you

**BICYCLE COALITION**  
sfbike.org

**TWIN SIX**  
TRADE MARK

T-SHIRTS  
JERSEYS  
CAPS  
BAGS  
SOCKS  
BOTTLES  
POSTERS

**TWINSIX.COM**



# THE FLATS *i've known*

ILLUSTRATION BY IAN HOFFMAN

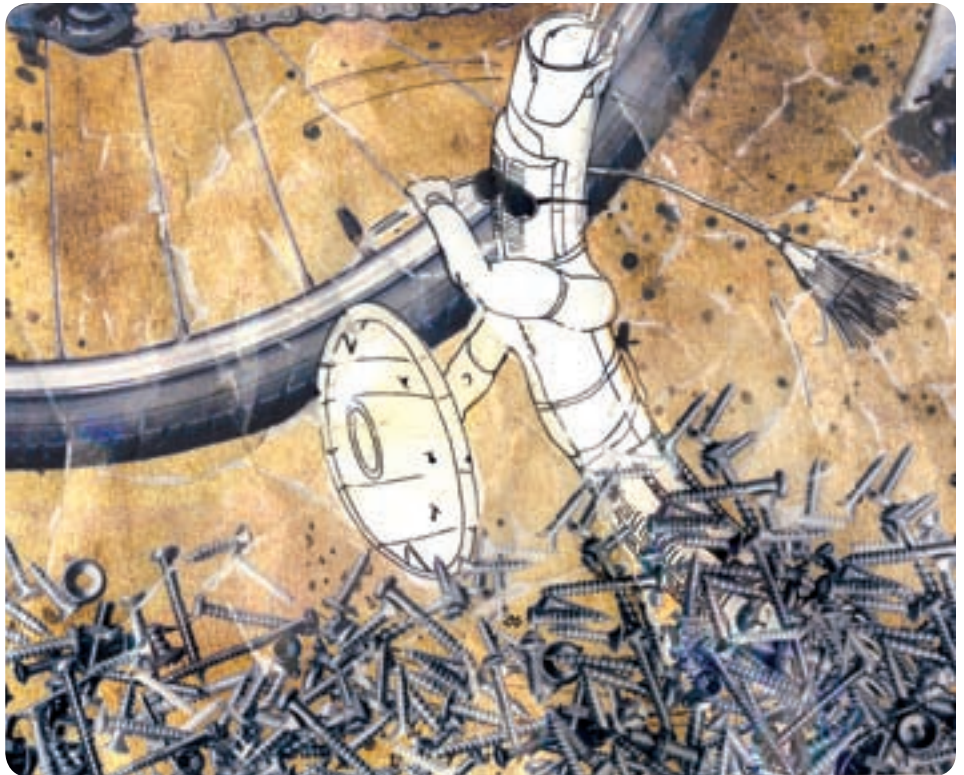
**THE MOST COMMON** type of bicycle tire is known as a clincher, and derives its name from an airtight rubber tube that sits – “clinched” – between the tire and the rim. When a cyclist “gets a flat,” the tube develops a hole, the air escapes, and the tube deflates. Here’s a list and description of all the flats I’ve ever known, and how to avoid and/or repair them.

## THE PUNCTURE

By far the most common type of flat, a puncture occurs when something sharp pierces the tire and the tube. Usually the culprit pierces the outside of your tire, but the hole can also be caused by a spoke poking the tube from the inside (check your rim tape to make sure it’s still covering the spokes). Depending on the size of the hole, a puncture can cause a tube to deflate slowly, say overnight, or in a matter of seconds. You can avoid punctures by replacing your tires when the tread starts to wear out, not riding over anything sharp (duh), and by keeping your tires well inflated. The higher the air pressure in your tire, the harder the surface it presents to sharp objects and the less likely it is to be pierced. You can fix all but the smallest punctures (which are hard to find) and the largest punctures by patching them. You’ll also want to check your tire after a puncture to find the culprit and any of his buddies who might be lurking in the rubber of your tire, just waiting for the chance to ruin your day.

## THE PINCH FLAT

This type of flat occurs when an inflated tire meets a hard object (like a rock or a curb) with enough speed and force that its tube is pinched between that object and the rim of the bike’s wheel. Pinch flats usually cause large tears in the tube, which deflates instantly and can be difficult to patch. Depending on the size of the hole and your patching skills, a new tube might be your only recourse. Again, you can guard against pinch flats by avoiding slamming your wheels into anything hard and by keeping your tires well inflated – the more air pressure your tires contain, the less likely they are to compress under impact to the point of tearing the tube.



## THE BLOWOUT

This is the only type of flat that results in a “Bang!” Every other type of flat causes a hiss. The only way a tube can be inflated to the required level of pressure is by being encased by the tire and rim. Blowouts usually occur when the tube escapes from the tire. If a tear or hole in the tire is large enough for the tube to pass through, it will pinch against itself and explode.

Another cause of blowouts is a poorly seated tire. If the tube is inflated while part of it is between the bead of the tire and the rim, or if the tire’s bead is malformed or loose, the tube can push the tire off the rim and escape, usually exploding in the process. You can avoid blowouts by making sure that there are no holes in your tires, and that they are properly seated on the rim before inflation. The only remedy to a blown tube is replacement – just hope that the blowout didn’t damage your tire, too.

## VALVE FAILURE

Whether from a manufacturing defect or abuse of the valve stem, it is possible for the valve to

separate from the tube, creating a hole. The good news is that valve failure or tearing almost always happens during tire inflation, not while riding. The bad news is that there’s no way to guard against or repair this kind of flat – your only recourse is a new tube. Valves can also become loose and start leaking air. If you try the water trick below and bubbles seem to be coming from the valve itself, you can have it tightened at any bike shop.

## GHOST FLAT

Sometimes, your tire keeps going flat and, in spite of your or a mechanic’s best efforts, no hole can be found. This type of flat is almost certainly the result of a hole (created by a puncture) so small that it can’t be detected – though there’s always a chance that your bike or wheel is haunted by a malevolent spirit. Try holding the tube, inflated, under water and looking for the telltale trail of bubbles. If you still can’t find the hole, replace the tube (again, after checking your tire for the culprit), or call an exorcist.



# market PLACE

FOR ADVERTISING INFO EMAIL  
ADS@MOMENTUMPLANET.COM OR CALL 604-669-9850

*the ride*

**planet bike** is more than a to b

**ARKEL**

Made in Canada

1-888-592-7535  
www.panniers.com

Consume Less!  
Consume Wisely!  
Consume Locally!  
Love Lots More!

**Earth's General Store**  
10832 Whyte Avenue  
Edmonton, AB Canada T6E 2B3  
780-439-8725 www.egs.ca

**safe-T-seat**  
Family biking made simple!

**iBert**

- Places your child in front, so you can see and talk with them better.
- Provides better view for your child and improved protection.

For more information:  
www.ibertinc.com  
(801)440-4024

HANDMADE IN CANADA SINCE 1969

**PAC**

EXTREME EXTREME  
MESSENGER BAGS

WWW.PACDESIGNS.COM

NEW BIKE LANES BEING PAINTED IN NEW YORK CITY.

**GABS**  
Bicycle Saddle

1-250-334-4610

www3.telus.net/gabs

**swrve**

urban cycling apparel

www.swrvecycling.com

recumbents  
folding bikes  
family cycles  
workbikes  
trailers  
handcycles  
pedal boats  
and more...

**more by bike**

with VELOVISION magazine

www.velovision.com

**Forget Everything You Know About Folding Bikes!**

BIKE FRIDAY<sup>®</sup>  
Performance that Packs

Call for a Free Catalog

800-777-0258 www.bikefriday.com

**BIKELOCKS**  
for sale

www.bikeclocks.blogspot.com

we ship anywhere a one of a kind sourced by bike awesome

i ♥ riding in the city

**URBANVELO.ORG**

**PAUL**  
CHICO, CA

Nice parts since 1959...

www.paulcomp.com

530.345.4371

www.retrovelo.de

**Retrovelo**

Urban Bikes Redefined

CLEVER CYCLES Portland, OR (503)334.1560 clevercycles.com  
DUTCHBIKE Seattle, WA (206)789.1678 dutchbikesattle.com

**De Fietsfabriek**  
The Dutch Bicycle Factory

www.defietsfabriek-usa.com

The cure for \$5 gasoline!

**Aaron's Bicycle Repair**  
 The Spot for Technical Advice & Repairs  
 Michael, Blaine, Andrew, SPAN, Barbara, Solange & others.

recumbents & trikes  
 commuting bikes & accessories  
 folding bikes  
 S.S. & fixies

180 John St. 416-979-9733 www.ucycle.com  
**URBANE CYCLIST**

**On the Rivet**  
 purveyors of fine cyclewear  
 ontherivet.ca

8 East Broadway  
 Vancouver BC  
 604.677.0700  
 ontherivet.ca

**Bikes 4 Health**  
 bikes4health.com  
 Recumbents, Tandems, Handcycles.



Seattle  
 t: 206 723 4891

community BICYCLE network  
 fix, learn, recycle, rent  
 761 Queen St. West, T.O. 416-504-2918  
 communitybicyclenet.org

**MIGHTY RIDERS**  
 10 EAST BROADWAY, VANCOUVER  
 PHONE: 604-879-8705  
 WWW.MIGHTYRIDERS.CA

**BikePortland.org**  
 To Inform and Inspire



**advertise HERE**  
 CONTACT MIA AT 604.669.9850 OR  
 ads@momentumplanet.com

**super champion**  
 SPECIALTY BICYCLE SHOP  
 245 Main St., Vancouver, BC  
 Canada V6A 4H6  
 604 689 3610  
 info@superchampionshop.com  
 www.superchampionshop.com

**AHEARNECYCLES.com**



**RECYCLISTS**  
 ART CULTURE  
 REPAIRS, BLENDS, PAINTS, PARTS, USED BIKES, CLASSES, TRUCKS, KITES, MUST, PERMITTED, THIS, SATUR, WOMEN, YANS, ONLY, SURE!

parts/service/damngoodbikes  
 (now open)  
**bicycles**  
 1823 W. 4th Avenue  
 www.bicyclesvancouver.com

**ALTERNATIVE NEEDS TRANSPORTATION**  
 ANT Boston Roadster - \$1995 Complete www.antbike.com



**NO! TO THE HIGHWAY EXPANSION ... OUR COMMUNITY BIKES!**  
 the revolution doesn't end with the wheel  
 fix your bike or come learn how  
 3283 main street. 604.879.2453  
 open seven days a week, 11am-6pm  
 www.pedalpower.org

**JV Bike**  
 www.jvbike.com



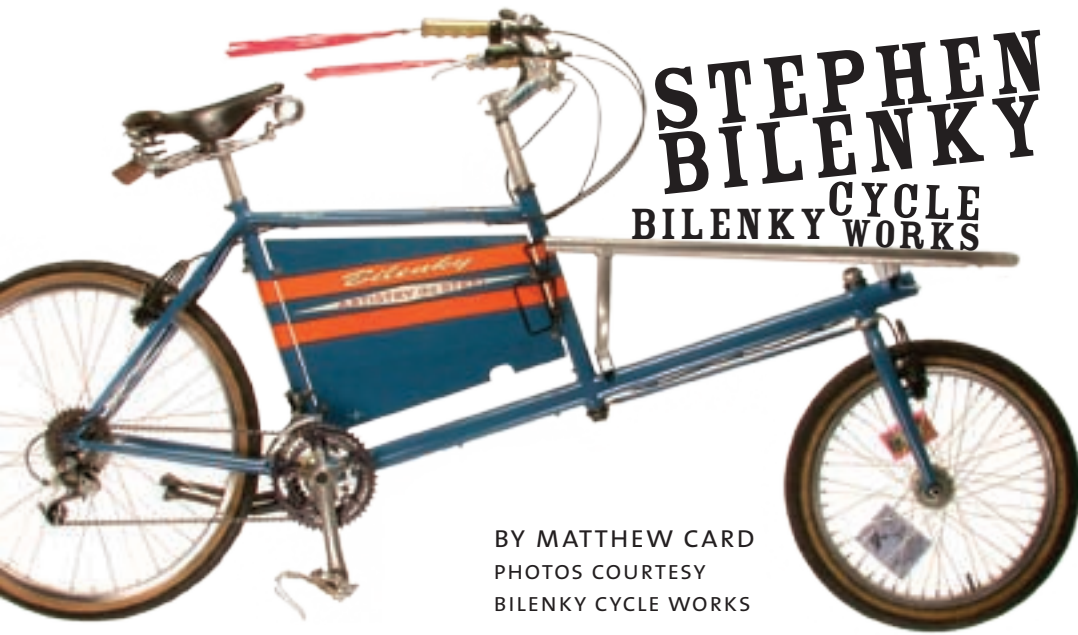
**WWW.CHECKERCOURIER.COM**  
 N.Y.C.  
 Check out Checker Courier!  
 646-246-2821



**geekhouse**  
 www.geekhousebikes.com



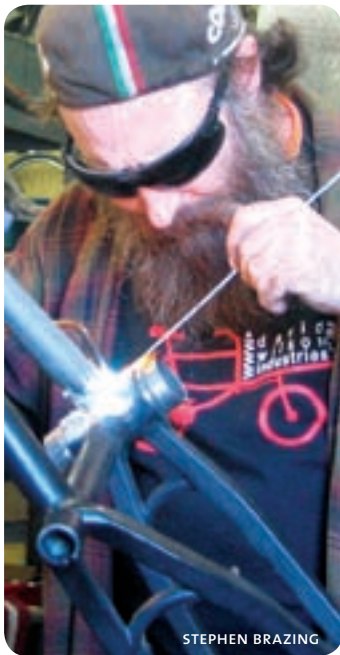
**naturalcycle.ca**  
 Courier / Cycleworks / Distribution / Fabrication  
 Natural Cycle Worker Co-op Limited strives to promote positive transportation choices by making appropriate technology and resources available for individuals to live healthier lives.



# STEPHEN BILENKY

BILENKY CYCLE WORKS

BY MATTHEW CARD  
PHOTOS COURTESY  
BILENKY CYCLE WORKS



STEPHEN BRAZING

I WAS LUCKY enough to have Stephen Bilenky build my first custom bike. I had recently relocated to Philadelphia for graduate school and managed to crack the head tube of my track bike. Spurred on by a profile in the long-dormant, once-great Bicycle Guide (which was accompanied by a Dickensian photo of hoary-bearded Stephen and crew – an eccentric shot considering the typically squeaky clean image of most custom builders back in the early 1990s), I pedaled my broken bike out through the questionable neighbourhoods of North Philadelphia to the low-slung factory space of Bilenky Cycle Works (BCW), which lies hard against a rambling junkyard.

Once Bambi the guard dog was chained up, I spent the better part of two hours being grilled, prodded, and fitted for a lugged frame among the piles of tubing, half-finished bikes, and outmoded machinery that constituted the workshop. My budget was tight at the time and I could only afford a basic tubeset (and they gave me a deal at that), but sixteen years later – and three paint jobs, two forks, and countless worn cogs – that bike is still my daily commuter and all-rounder. I’ve easily put more miles on it than all of my geared bikes together. More recently, BCW built me a fillet-brazed single-speed 29er (finished off with a fork from ANT Bike’s Mike Flanigan) that is as simple, clean, and elegant as a mountain bike can be. I guess you could say that I’ve drunk the BCW Kool-Aid.

The Bilenky crew – which in addition to Stephen includes his daughter, Bina; Simon Firth; John Weller; Sam Davis; Carl Marin; and Bob Kamzelski – produces about 100 framesets a year; retrofits bikes for S & S couplers (a hardware system by which frames can be taken apart for travel); repairs frames; and builds forks, racks, and stems. Stephen himself now typically deals with sales, frame design, and fillet brazing – an art at which he truly excels. My mountain bike has some of the smoothest, most organic brazing I’ve come across.

That skill with a torch comes from a lifetime in “the business.” Bilenky started in the cycling industry in the mid-1960s as a shop rat (after years of childhood tinkering) and progressed to owning a repair-oriented shop in

Philadelphia, the Bike Doctor, where he undertook frame repair with welding skills picked up while pursuing an Agricultural Engineering degree in college. Stephen’s first foray into frame-building was with Sterling Cycles in 1982 (with Brit Jim Gittins), which won critical acclaim for its commuting and touring bikes. Ten years later the name was changed to Bilenky Cycle Works and has since expanded into the multi-person collective it is today, which Stephen describes as “casual chaos with dedicated craftsmanship and integrity, with a princely level of customer service. Gossipy gab with pinpointed work flow instruction.”

BCW’s breadth ranges far beyond that of most frame-builders. In addition to their show-quality beauties and stout tourers, the crew fabricates lightweight racers out of the newest steels, tandems (once the shop’s bread and butter), half recumbent/half upright viewpoint tandems, front-racked porteurs, and freight bikes – “long johns”, “rear johns”, and the prototype “chuckwagon” longtail. The cargo bike messenger



CARGO BIKE PHOTO BY RUSS ROCA



THE BILENKY CYCLE WORKS TEAM:  
L TO R: BINA BILENKY, STEPHEN BILENKY,  
SAM DAVIS, BOB KAMZELSKI,  
JOHN WELLER, SIMON FIRTH.  
TOP OF LOADER: CARL MARIN.



SATIN GREEN "METRO" FRAME

world champion, Hodari Depalm, races and works on a Bilenky. A large number of the bikes BCW produces are kitted out with all manner of lights, racks, and fenders, for utility's sake. There's likely not a single bike they can't or won't build, outside of full-suspension mountain bikes.

The workshop's aesthetic sense is as broad as its range. From the aforementioned fluid fillets to purposeful TIG welds and the fanciest of hand-carved lugs, BCW does it all. The BCW booth at this year's North American Handbuilt Bike Show exhibited an eclecticism that few other builders could touch. Perhaps the only unifying force behind the crew is a love for anything with two wheels, pedals, and a chain.

While Bilenky dabbled in racing in the 1970s, the closest he now comes to it is the urban cyclocross race BCW hosts each year in the abutting junkyard. The race course puts crumbled and crushed cars and buses to good effect and riders are as likely to end up just as greasy as muddy. Needless to say, it's more about the fun than the competition.

Off the bike, Bilenky is the bass player for the Notekillers, a "power punk" instrumental trio defined by Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore as a "weird lost myth for some of us." The group, which has existed in some form since the 1970s, tours sporadically and is considered by some to be a seminal piece of the avant-garde music scene.

*Matthew Card is a Portland, Oregon-based writer, cook, and recipe developer. When not minding his toddler, or keeping up with his busy wife, he spends as much time as possible on a bicycle, preferably handmade, climbing Portland's myriad hills.*



CARGO BOX



# FIND YOUR INNER CHILL

Worry-Free Automatic Shifting | Low Maintenance | Fun and Easy

Find bike and dealer information at [www.coasting.com](http://www.coasting.com)