

# MOMENTUM

*the magazine for  
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*the  
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story of  
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*free*



**JACK THURSTON  
BURNING BIKES  
WILD FERMENTATION**

FIG. 1



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FIG. 2A



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FIG. 2B



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FIG. 2C



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FIG. 3



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# 35

trips for  
kids



# 20

learning  
to ride



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MOMENTUM MAGAZINE cultivates biking culture by publishing words and images that reflect the lives of people who ride bikes. MOMENTUM provides urban cyclists the inspiration information and resources to help them fully enjoy their riding experience and connect with their local and global cycling communities.



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## BRING ON THE BAKFIETSEN

BY AMY WALKER

**THE OTHER DAY** as I was riding up and over the hill towards my home, a man and a boy came riding along on the street beside me. The boy was about eight years old, riding on a bike of his own, and the man was riding a *Bakfiel*, a brand of Dutch cargo bike filled with what looked like brewing equipment: an assortment of buckets, bottles, funnels and tubes were packed neatly into the cargo box on the front of the bike. My curiosity was piqued by the site of his 'Self-propelled Utility Vehicle' and its picturesque contents. I needed to say hello.

"Are you going to the u-brew shop?" I enquired.

"No. Just moving some things to my friend's garage," was the man's reply.

"Is this your *Bakfiel*? Did you buy this from Rain City Bikes?" I asked. I had just attended the opening of Vancouver's newest Dutch Bike dealer on 1st Avenue, but I had yet to see a live *Bakfiel* in use out on the road.

"Yes," said the man, gracefully steering the large load, "I sold my van and I got this."

I kicked myself for having no camera with me.

Crossing paths with this man, his appearance that of a handsome, hip and newly-self-propelled father, made my day. On my return to our Headquarters, I excitedly told the **MOMENTUM** crew of my first *Bakfiel* sighting. They kicked me for having no camera with me.

For the last few months I have been observing my favourite sign of spring: the return of the cyclists. Though many of us visibly ride year-round, this spring I have witnessed an unprecedented blossoming of bikers. Cycling is the fastest-growing mode of transportation in the city of Vancouver, having grown by 180 per cent over ten years (City of Vancouver Transportation Plan Update). My hometown of Vancouver is experiencing a love affair with the bicycle, as are other cities throughout North America.

I believe that if people must be gear-headed, acquisitive or consumerist about something, it's very good for them to get geeky about bicycles. I love the UK magazine *Velovision* for this reason and I look forward to the day I own a short wheelbase recumbent... and a folding bike. I've cheered on the proliferation of bike trailers on our streets, and the appearance of these new *Bakfiels* has a curiously gladdening effect. It now feels realistic to visualize Vancouver's downtown peninsula populated by work

A mother and son take a spin at the Rain City Bikes opening on May 17, 2007.

Rain City Bikes is located at  
108 West 1st Avenue, Vancouver, BC.

Bakfietsen may be viewed online at:  
[www.raincitybikes.com](http://www.raincitybikes.com)

Henry Workcycles in Amsterdam:  
[www.workcycles.com](http://www.workcycles.com)

The Dutchbikes distributor in the US:  
[www.dutchbikes.us](http://www.dutchbikes.us)

And another cool new store in Portland, Oregon:  
[www.clevercycles.com](http://www.clevercycles.com)

bikes and bike taxis (a nice green one was spotted on the Adanac Bikeway not a week ago).

I can imagine cargo bikes becoming this summer's hot new item and a familiar sight around town. Just as many businesses bought the PT Cruiser a few years ago and wrapped it in their company colours, this could be the year of the *Bakfiel* as status symbol. If your choice of vehicle sends a message, this one says, "I am one serious biker. So serious in fact, that I bought myself the 'truck' of bikes. I see the future of urban transportation and it is bicycles. And I am embracing the future with both my legs!"



Brian Park (left), Victor Cuevas (sitting, with his son), and Paul pose at the RCB opening party.





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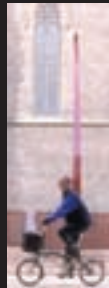


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**BICYCLES A LIFE-SAVER FOR  
AFRICAN HIV/AIDS WORKERS**

Dear MOMENTUM readers,

I spent this winter working with HIV/AIDS educators in Malawi, and those folks put us to shame.

I ran a three-day workshop where a young peer educator biked in every day from his rural village, three hours each way. He left his village before dawn, on a beat up bike that could have been 20 years old, and returned after dark. On another occasion, I drove two hours into the mountains, to reach a rural community which had been impacted by HIV. As I took in the crowd that had gathered to talk with us, I realized there was something strange about the demographic: there were virtually no middle aged women. Women are being hit the hardest by HIV/AIDS, leaving girls, and grandmothers, to take care of their communities. There were two outreach workers from the nearest city, who were sometimes able to borrow bikes to reach the village. If bikes weren't available, they walked for five hours each way to run awareness workshops and distribute condoms. There was no one else to do the work, and no other way to get there.

Transportation is a major barrier to HIV/AIDS education in Africa. Cars and petrol are too expensive, and often public transit doesn't exist. Bicycles are a sustainable and affordable mode of transportation. By using bicycles to get around, outreach workers can help five times as many people. Biking is sometimes called a lifestyle choice in North America, but in African countries where HIV/AIDS is endemic, they can be a life-saver. The Canada Africa Partnership on AIDS (CAPAIDS), has distributed over 150 bikes in Africa so far, and is fund-raising to buy more. How can you get involved? Join the 2007 Bike to CAPAIDS Bike-A-Thon, which takes place on June 9, starting and ending at Trout Lake in Vancouver. Register online at [www.capaids.org](http://www.capaids.org). If you can't ride, you can sponsor folks online, or just make a donation. For every \$200 raised, we can put a sturdy, good-quality bike in the hands of an HIV/AIDS worker, and make their life-saving commutes to work shorter, and safer.

Thanks for your support.  
Maeve Chamberlaine  
Coordinator, Bike to CAPAIDS  
[capaidsvancouver@yahoo.ca](mailto:capaidsvancouver@yahoo.ca)  
604-375-1609

**PUT YOUR MONEY  
WHERE YOUR MILES ARE**

Dear MOMENTUM,

Your article "Employer provides Travel Allowance for Cycling" (MOMENTUM#26, February/March 2007), inspired some creative thinking in my line of work, for which I owe much thanks.

A customer recently commissioned LifeCycle for consultation services on an exciting new bicycle safety project. Our fee acceptance made allowance for travel expenses, which, coming from the Sunshine Coast, can be considerable.

As some of your readers will know, I try to practice what I preach, and so often ride from Roberts Creek into the city, and home again at night. A long ride with a high calorie intake needed!

My client would have willingly paid for driving expenses at 46 ¢/km, so jumped at the chance to pay 26 ¢/km for bike travel, AND saves on the ferry too. This is a first for LifeCycle, but now the precedent has been set, it won't be the last!

So, right on Reverend Paul H. Borthistle, and MOMENTUM too, for getting bike travel taken seriously.

Martin Prestage  
[www.lifecycle.ca](http://www.lifecycle.ca)

**HOPE FOR BIKE NATION**

Thanks for the great article *Down From the Mountain* (MOMENTUM #27 April/May 2007) by Ulrike Rodrigues. Between Gary Fisher and Joe Breeze, maybe there is hope for 'bicycle nation.' Your magazine plays a big role in pushing the cause forward. It is a great read. Keep on spinnin'.

Bob Dunn  
Saanich, BC



**HERE, HAVE A HANKY...**

48 pages of bike heaven. I'm glad I was sitting down when flicking through the pages, though, because when I got to page 24 I think my knees buckled. Oh my god! I haven't read the article yet, but I love what the bicycle has done for women, as I know a bit about the history already. I also love what it's done for me. Even though I've ridden all my life among other things (you know, like, driving cars), it's MOMENTUM Magazine that got me into the bike scene as I know it now, because of an ad for the Critical Mass which I attended, and I've never looked back. My bike friends that I've met since ARE my best friends AND my family. I think I'm about to cry.

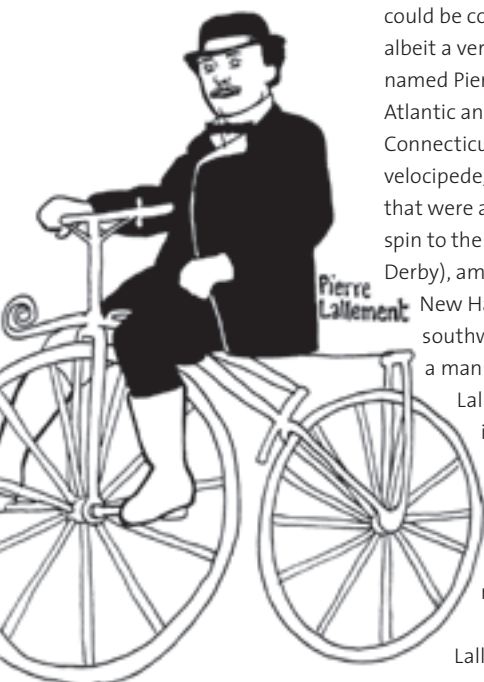
Love, Robert

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 your love, as well as your constructive criticism (also a form of love).

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TEXT & ILLUSTRATION BY SHAWN GRANTON



**THERE WAS ONCE** a time when New Haven, Connecticut could be considered the centre of the bicycle world, albeit a very long time ago. In 1865, a young Frenchman named Pierre Lallement made his way across the Atlantic and settled in the industrial borough of Ansonia, Connecticut. He went on to build what he called a velocipede, a two-wheeled contraption driven by cranks that were attached to its wheels. Lallement took it for a spin to the neighbouring borough of Birmingham (now Derby), amazing passersby. In 1866 Lallement rode to New Haven, approximately ten miles (16 kilometres) southwest of Ansonia. With the aid of James Carroll, a manufacturer who witnessed the velocipede ride, Lallement filed for and received a patent on his invention – the first such patent on a bicycle in the world. For the rest of the 1860s, New Haven, along with other Northeastern cities, like Boston and New York, became the centre of American bicycle culture as “velocipede mania” stole the hearts of young men. But velocipede mania was short lived. Lallement returned to France, unable to

successfully make money from his invention. Velocipedes, or “bone-shakers” as they were sometimes called, lost favour to penny-farthings, and then to the safety bicycle. And New Haven became noted for other things; some good things, like pizza, and some not-so-good ones, such as being the home of Michael Bolton and the birthplace of George W. Bush.

But times are a-changing. And New Haven, like many other North American cities, is taking part in a bicycle renaissance. Now the Elm City (New Haven’s nickname) takes on the audacious challenge of hosting BikeSummer. Started in 1999 by a group of bicycle activists in San Francisco, BikeSummer is a month-long celebration of bicycle fun with everything from rides, races, talks, repair clinics, and much more. BikeSummer has moved to a different city every year and, in doing so, has acted as a catalyst for thriving scenes in such places as Vancouver, Portland, and Los Angeles. With a population of 125,000, New Haven is the smallest host city yet. So far, a Century (a 100-mile bike race), an art show, a kick-off concert/party, and a series of bicycle tours are planned, with more events in the works.



New Haven's new face as a kinder, more bicycle friendly place is a surprise to most, including myself. I grew up in Ansonia, and when I left the area in 2000, it seemed to me no one rode bicycles. To find out about this latest trend, I returned to New Haven in April to find out about its progress.

"The time is right," says Bill Kurtz. A native of the area, Kurtz is heavily involved in the city's bike scene. "New Haven is a compact, old city, so it's easy to get around. We have a large youth population due to Yale University and the other schools in the area. And we have a city government receptive to bicycles."

In my cruises around town, I saw that people were indeed riding. A bicycling scene is thriving without significant improvements in infrastructure. The city boasts only a few kilometres of bicycle lanes, the first of which were striped in only 2003. The recommended bicycle routes depicted on the New Haven Green Map are haphazard and disconnected, while disadvantaged (largely minority) neighbourhoods are almost entirely ignored. Still, the city promises to stripe more bicycle lanes when they resurface certain streets, and there is talk of a cohesive Bicycle Master Plan.

"We've been busy all winter," says Matt Feiner, "so yes, there is a definite increase in the number of bicyclists!" Feiner recalls that in the 1980s he was one of the few people who rode his bike everywhere, and it was his identifying characteristic – "the guy with the bike." Racing since his teens, Feiner grew up outside of New Haven but moved to Austin in the 90s to pursue art. He was taken by the bicycling scene there, but

was disappointed with the state of things in New Haven when he returned in 1999. In response to the poor quality of the only bike shop in town, Feiner opened The Devil's Gear in 2001, a bicycle shop catering to a wide demographic of cyclists sans condescension. Since then, the shop has become the unofficial hub of bicycle culture in New Haven.

Feiner has been a staunch supporter of Critical Mass. Promoted through The Devil's Gear, attendance has grown from a pittance in the late 90s to almost 200 riders in the summer months nowadays. Even on a rainy, grey April day the Mass had about 40 people. Bill Kurtz

helped explain why New Haven's Critical Mass has been successful. "We look on it as less a protest about cars but more a celebration of bicycles. We don't try to be antagonistic. If we don't have the numbers we'll only take up one lane, and we try to keep aggressive elements on the ride in check. We still cork, but we'll hand out flyers to drivers. We want it to be a festive experience."

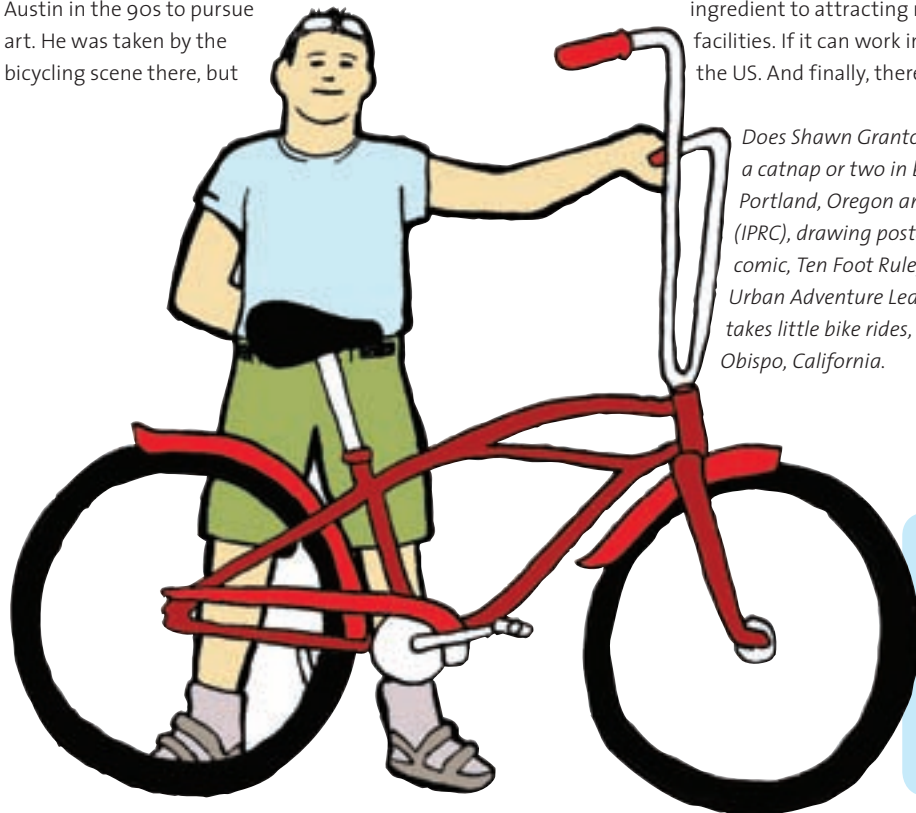
Helping bring it all together is Elm City Cycling. A coalition of like-minded

cyclists, this group has been active in promoting bike fun through their website and through their listserv. News and events are posted regularly, and the coalition acts as a lobbying force in City Hall, meeting regularly with Mayor John DeStefano and the New Haven Police Department. Education is the key, says Kurtz, not only for drivers but also for the police, in order for them to understand the cyclists' issues.

Kurtz hopes the excitement of BikeSummer will encourage more people, young and old, to ride bicycles. And excitement is a key ingredient to attracting more riders in any city, regardless of bicycle facilities. If it can work in New Haven, then there's hope for the rest of the US. And finally, there's a reason I can be proud of my hometown!

*"BikeSummer has moved to a different city every year and, in doing so, has acted as a catalyst for thriving scenes in such places as Vancouver, Portland, and Los Angeles. With a population of 125,000, New Haven is the smallest host city yet."*

*Does Shawn Granton ever sleep? It's hard to tell, but he may take a catnap or two in between working at the Hawthorne Hostel in Portland, Oregon and the Independent Publishing Resource Center (IPRC), drawing posters for various peeps (not to mention his own comic, Ten Foot Rule), leading bicycle rides under the auspices of the Urban Adventure League, and eating burritos. To unwind, Shawn takes little bike rides, such as from Portland, Oregon, to San Luis Obispo, California.*



BikeSummer will take place all summer in New Haven. For more details, go to [www.bikesummer.org](http://www.bikesummer.org) or [www.elmcitycycling.org](http://www.elmcitycycling.org). The Devils Gear is located at 433 Chapel St, New Haven CT 06511. 203-773-9288 [www.thedevilsgear.com](http://www.thedevilsgear.com)



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# BICITEKAS

**MY SPANISH IS RUSTY** but I can follow the conversation bouncing between the on-line chatterboxes at *Bicitekas*, a listserv for the cycling subculture in Mexico City.

Recently the discussions turned political with the storm of controversy surrounding the elevation of Felipe Calderon to the presidency, leaving Manuel Lopez Obrador to stir up opposition to both the suspect results of last winter's election and the policies now being implemented by a neo-conservative government.

Mostly, however, *Bicitekas* continues the struggle on behalf of a growing cadre of advocates and commuter cyclists who brave the chaotic streets of Mexico City, a challenger for the title of biggest city in the world, and a wildly fascinating ride just the same.

My last visit to Mexico City started the day after Bike to Work Day in 1993. I saw the poster in one of several bike shops I checked out on the free day I had before my group of bicycle tourists arrived. I was encouraged to see a commitment to cycling in what I assumed would be the most challenging of riding environments. Years later, the struggle continues.

My trips to the big city included some rides in downtown traffic that proved Third World cycling to be surprisingly relaxed.

While the human population of Mexico City is well over 20 million, the car population is probably closer to three million – not much more than what you would find in a city the size of Vancouver. Better still, drivers were polite enough to cut me some slack on the roads – everything runs on Mexican time and the delay caused by giving some space to a gringo on the road was seemingly little enough to pay for my safety.

I've managed a couple of times, in my fractured Spanish, to engage in elements of the *Bicitekas* conversation, sending notes about helmets and bike parking back to Mexico City, and ironically, to Ottawa where cyclists in that city's Latino community are also plugged into *Bicitekas*. The website goes full circle with some pirated graphics and a link to Bike Sense, a British Columbia cycling manual.

While "listening in" to the conversations I've seen a number of encouraging trends. The "feminization" of the bicycle movement caught my eye. There's a women's ride every Saturday leaving from the *Angel del la Independencia*, one of the fantastic monuments punctuating the *Paseo de la Reforma*, the main drag in the heart of the city. "Rides for women, made by women" are promoted alongside the local Critical Mass, which meets three times a week, and the night ride that spills who knows how many cyclists out onto the *Paseo* every Wednesday from 9 pm until after midnight. "Join the bicycle revolution while observing Mexico's night life," says the announcement. "And make sure your bike is in good working order, is equipped with good lights, and bring your helmet! Join the struggle against the tyranny of the automobile."

A friend in Mexico City took me to a shop near the university neighbourhood that was as well-to-do as many in North America. It was easy to spot the wealth. A \$3,000 titanium mountain bike was locked outside the shop windows. Another was hanging in the window with a price tag of millions of pesos dangling in plain sight. Several other expensive bikes were on sale inside.

We chatted with one of the shop wrenches, who happened also to be a top-ranked mountain biker. He invited me out for a group ride with him and his buddies the next morning, but my responsibilities to my tour group forced me to decline. Too bad, he said, since they were going to head up to a mountain pass south of the city and then spend the next several hours descending a few thousand feet down into Cuernavaca.

Cuernavaca lies in the next valley, 70 kilometre from Mexico City, and it beckons but is still beyond my reach. With my maddening scheduling mishaps, I missed what is rumoured to be an outstanding ride. I'm trying to keep my miles up to make sure I'm ready when the opportunity presents itself.

Still, I can live the ride vicariously through *Bicitekas*, scanning the photo galleries and reading, wistfully, the ride stories bouncing back and forth. I'm all for free trade in ideas. I took a look one night at a women's ride, 15 or 20 strong, smiling out towards the camera in the dark from the base of the "Angel" and riding off into the night. Good luck, I thought; changing Mexico City is a monumental project.

Sometimes the list is an obituary and a protest. In a city of more than 20 million, death by traffic is seemingly commonplace, and the circumstances and the protest against injustice and the seemingly callous disregard of motorists is disturbingly familiar.

Bike parking, an all too familiar topic here at home, frequently pops up on the list. *Bicitekas* has been working to encourage the city to set up bike lock-ups at subway stations for commuters using the trains. Lately, someone asked for strategies for dealing with prohibitions against residents bringing bikes into their condos.

Then there's the usual back and forth about product – bikes, lights, helmets etc. Not much different than what you will find anywhere on a bike site or chat list.

Someday I hope to get back with my bike to Mexico, and find the rides and familiar names whose postings I've seen on the listserv. They feel like old friends already and certainly share a common and familiar commitment to cycling that will always make me feel at home.

*John Luton is Executive Director of the Capital Bike and Walk Society and Coordinator of the Vancouver Island Cycle Tourism Alliance. Email johnluton@shaw.ca*

*"There's a women's ride every Saturday leaving from the "Angel del la Independencia," one of the fantastic monuments punctuating the Paseo de la Reforma"*



### LONDON SUCCEEDS IN GROWING CYCLING

The number of people cycling in London has increased by 83 per cent over seven years. The number of cyclists killed or seriously injured each year has fallen by 28 per cent over the same period.

The mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, credits increased investment in cycling infrastructure and education, as well as growing confidence among riders. "London is experiencing a cycling renaissance. We can now justifiably call ourselves a cycling city, a proposal that would have seemed ridiculous just six years ago. Record investment in cycling through Transport for London, an expanding network of cycle and bus lanes, and the confidence

given to cyclists through tackling congestion in central London, has transformed levels of cycling in the capital. And, critically, while numbers of people cycling are up, levels of those being killed or seriously injured on bikes are down."

Transport for London, or TFL, is the region's transportation authority. Among the investments are: the completion of 500 kilometres of cycling routes, with a further 400 kilometres to be completed by 2010; a campaign to increase safety for all road users; and the installation of 10,000 parking spaces for bikes in the past two years.

### BUSES TO CARRY ADDITIONAL BIKE

King County Metro Transit, which provides transit service to the Seattle, Washington area, has started installing bike racks on their buses that will hold three bikes. Metro started equipping buses with bike racks in the 1970s, and today every bus in the fleet has a rack that holds two bikes. By the end of spring 2007, they expect to have the three-bike versions on more than 250 buses.

"Our bus passengers who ride bikes have been asking for more capacity to support their commute and lifestyle for some time," said Metro General Manager Kevin Desmond. "We wanted to accommodate them, but we

also wanted a bike rack that would be sturdy, didn't interfere with the safe operation of the bus, and was easy for customers to use."

Sportworks, a Washington company, designed the new rack. It attaches to the front of the bus with an adjustable plate that allows Metro's Vehicle Maintenance staff to raise or lower it depending on the model of the bus. It has three bike cradles that are made of a very strong composite material. Unlike the older all-metal, two-bike racks, the new ones should stand up much better to different road conditions and washing.

### AIRLINES CAN GOUGE CYCLISTS

Searching for a last minute deal on airfares for a cycling vacation? Be sure to factor in the cost of bringing your bike before buying the cheapest flight. The rates charged by airlines vary enormously, and can negate any savings in the price of a ticket.

For example, WestJet charges \$30 to check your bike on an international flight while Air Canada charges \$50. Air France charges 150 Euros (\$226) in each direction for flights between North America and Europe. American Airlines is one of the few airlines that still allow passengers to include a bike in their free luggage allowance as long as the boxed bike is within certain dimensions.

### BUSES TO ALLOW BIKES AFTER DARK AGAIN

It will take until the end of October before cyclists waiting for a bus at night in the Greater Vancouver area no longer have to worry that their bus will have a sign in the window declaring "No bikes after dark".

In November, 2006, an employee of Coast Mountain Bus Company – the company that provides public bus service to the region – noticed that the headlights of a new model bus was obstructed when the rack at the front of the bus were loaded with bikes. Because this was a hazard, the company stopped carrying bikes after dark on the 90 affected buses.

According to Gavin Davidson of TransLink – the local transportation authority – the front masks of the affected buses are now being replaced, resulting in headlights that are further apart. The projected completion date for diesel and CNG [compressed natural gas] buses is September 1, 2007. The electric trolley buses should be finished by October 31, 2007.

New Flyer, the company which manufactured the buses, did not reply to requests for comment on the problem.

### LARGEST CRITICAL MASS RIDE

This year's Earth Day Critical Mass ride in Budapest, Hungary had an estimated 50,000 participants according to the information web site All Hungary News. Budapest has a history of bicycle rides with large turnouts. The first Critical Mass ride in 2004 had 4000 participants. Other news services reported that the 2006 Earth Day Critical Mass ride had 30,000 riders, and the President of the Republic of Hungary, László Sólyom, was among the participants. Unlike Critical Mass rides in many other cities, the 14 kilometre route in Budapest was planned and publicized in advance, and this year's procession was led by police vehicles.



New racks allow buses to carry three bikes  
photo courtesy of Sportworks

## FEWER BIKE THEFTS DURING CAMPAIGN

Last Spring, MOMENTUM's John Luton reported on the launch of a campaign against bike theft in Victoria, British Columbia. The campaign included a public education component called "Protect Your Bike," and the first known use of "bait bikes" in North America. The results are in, with Victoria Police announcing that reported bike thefts were down 29 per cent for the year ending March 31.

The Protect Your Bike campaign was partly funded by the Downtown Victoria Business Association, and included volunteers providing information to the public about theft prevention and reporting. Bait bikes are bikes fitted with hidden GPS receivers and radio transmitters that inform the police about the location of stolen bikes.

When asked by MOMENTUM for the number of arrests through bait bikes, Sergeant Keith Lewis said that the police department does

not provide arrest statistics. "In our opinion, there were a significant amount of arrests, enough to send a message to bike thieves."

He emphasized that although bait bikes get the most media attention because they are sexier than public education, informing the public will prevent more thefts. "So many people still use useless locks," he said. He credits the hard work of the team of volunteers working with Project Coordinator John Arnold as the biggest reason for the success.

Interestingly, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia reported that there was an increase in the number of auto thefts in Victoria during the same period.

More Information at [www.victoriapolice.ca/news/Protectyourbike.htm](http://www.victoriapolice.ca/news/Protectyourbike.htm)

## GET SET FOR NATIONWIDE COMMUTER CHALLENGE

The Commuter Challenge is a Canada-wide event encouraging local businesses and organizations to get their employees carpooling, cycling, walking, or taking transit instead of using single occupancy vehicles. Last year, over 38,000 Canadians took part in the Challenge. Their transportation choices resulted in the reduction of 887,115.80 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – the equivalent

of 704 passenger vehicles not driven for a year! In the Greater Vancouver Regional District the challenge is coordinated by Better Environmentally Sound Transportation. Businesses and organizations can sign up now for the Commuter Challenge on Clean Air Day, June 6 at [www.best.bc.ca](http://www.best.bc.ca). More information on the nationwide challenge may be found at [www.commuterchallenge.ca](http://www.commuterchallenge.ca)



### SANTA CRUZ OFFERS \$250 FOLDING BIKE INCENTIVE

BY RON RICHINGS

TO ENCOURAGE BICYCLE USE and bus/bike commuting the county of Santa Cruz, California is offering a rebate of up to \$250 when residents buy a folding bike from a local participating bike shop. With bus bike racks on popular routes often full, this program allows more people to combine bus and bike into their commute. Likewise, with their ease of storage and less likelihood of theft, folding bikes may appeal to apartment dwellers and others for whom a standard bike would not be viable. Participants also get discounted bus passes and a free "folding bike safety" course.

Will other transportation authorities (e.g. Translink in the Vancouver's Lower Mainland) offer similar programs if enough people demand it?

For more info, go to [www.santacruzma.org/folding\\_bike.htm](http://www.santacruzma.org/folding_bike.htm)

## BIKE LOCKERS IN LIMBO

BY MARK GEORGE

IN THE SUMMER of 2002, the City of Vancouver awarded a twenty-year contract to a partnership of Viacom and JCDecaux (now called CBS/Decaux) to provide and maintain a suite of new street furniture, including 235 bike lockers. Not a single locker has been installed to date, and there is not yet a plan on how they will be managed once installed.

The furniture was intended to make the city friendlier to public activity, particularly in terms of public and human-powered transportation. Litter bins, pay phones, benches, pedestrian-oriented street maps, information kiosks, bike storage, public toilets, and sheltered bus stops were all intended to contribute to the city's identity and accessibility.

Viacom/Decaux offered the city \$47.3 million to win the contract, which required the firm to be responsible for all installation and maintenance, a service with an estimated value to the city of \$135 million over 20 years. In return, Viacom/Decaux gained exclusive advertising rights on all city bus shelters. Free community oriented advertising is available on ten per cent of the shelters for local non-profit organizations.

CBS/Decaux informed MOMENTUM that questions regarding the lockers should be directed to the City.

Grant Woff of the City of Vancouver's Engineering Services said that the bike lockers are expected to be installed at some point in the future. He said that the City is looking at the overall strategy of where to provide the bike parking, but his department has not yet received direction from Planning about the specific locations.

The suite of furniture was also to include, among other things: 900 bus shelters, 175 bike racks, 210 maps and eight public toilets.

The bus shelters have all been installed, with 225 of them having integrated solar-powered lighting fixtures. There has been mild controversy over the shelter's design. Some users have complained that the benches can become too wet to sit on, that the roofs leak, or that the advertisements block views of arriving buses, and likewise the bus drivers' ability to see people waiting.

According to Grant Woff, 110 bike racks will have been installed under the contract by the end of 2007, and at least seven fully automated self-cleaning toilets. Beginning in 2008, ten new bike racks will be installed per year, with all 175 expected to be in place by summer 2015.

The public toilets have been delayed due to difficulties deciding on the most appropriate locations. The city now anticipates seven toilets to be installed this year. None of the 210 maps have been installed, and locations have yet to be decided.

According to the City, some delays and temporary removal of furniture have been caused by other construction projects.



# is it all downhill from here for the fixie?

BY LYLE VALLIE

ILLUSTRATION BY BEN FREY

**FIXIES ARE QUICKLY** going mainstream. One stroll down any Main Street is all it takes to see that: singlespeed and fixed-gear bikes are to 2007 what cruisers were to the early 2000s.

At that time, non-cyclists saw pretty people out and about on seductive retro and shiny new cruisers and thought, "That looks fun! Wouldn't it be great if you and I had pretty bikes to ride around on?" Hordes then went out and purchased \$500 cruisers, rode them twice, and found them to be ill-fitting, inefficient, and inconvenient for more than the occasional Seawall Social.

Those poor bikes then spend the next few years sitting in a garage or storage locker, gathering dust and oxidation, until the owners put up a reduced-price posting on Craigslist. Today's popular, elegant track machines, and their reasonable facsimiles, are in danger of becoming the new cruisers.

I'll admit, though, that I ride a fixie. I built it to withstand my daily abuse mashing the pedals in some vain attempt to prove my superiority over car culture. Also, doing the shifter dance after every light was getting to me. I like the connection to the road that a fixie provides. It makes every kilometre that much more real if I can't just stop and let it coast by.

I had a hard time finding a 1/8-inch track cog when I built up my first. I went to every shop in town and was eventually sent to my favourite bike shop, where a skeptical mechanic sold me my first cog, inquiring how I was going to lock it on.

The first danger of DIY lies in the fact that some are converting their freewheel bikes to fixed-gear simply by removing stock parts and adding a track cog, building themselves in effect what is called

a "suicide hub." This system can allow the cog to quickly unscrew itself in the event of hard emergency braking, leaving the pedals of the bike useless. A proper track-specific hub has a reverse-threaded lock ring so that in the event that the cog loosens under backpressure – as a lot of fixed-gear braking is done with your legs – the lock ring and cog will tighten themselves together.

Some also might go too far with the stripped-down look, and toss out their only brake, whereas most wiser street-use fixie riders have a front brake. What does a "noob" riding brakeless with a suicide hub spell? Catastrophe in waiting. Learning to control a fixed gear bicycle shouldn't be one's first goal when returning to cycling for the first time since adolescence.

The commodification of the fixed gear image has gone a little too far for some fixie aficionados, now that select advertisements and fashion magazine spreads are shilling this year's newest slacks and shoes by propping chic-looking models next to track bikes and singlespeeds.

The downtown bicycle messenger crowd – a good number of whom ride fixed, some brakeless – are some of those most upset about the new trendiness. First, they had to deal with the appearance of "messenger" bags on the backs of non-cyclists. Now, they cannot even tell who is or isn't a messenger when they see other cyclists on the downtown streets.

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

Until they see how they handle their bikes, of course. Couriers ride daily in some of the most nerve-racking conditions possible. When they see someone clumsily poking a fixie conversion through traffic, they just shake their heads.

The good folks at the Burnaby Velodrome in Burnaby BC, however, couldn't be happier about the rise in fixed-gear popularity. The limited spaces in their four-session Learn To Race classes are quickly filling up, pumping much-needed cash into Western Canada's only indoor velodrome.

For the first time, the velodrome added special "courier class" races to accommodate the street riders at this year's Six Day series in January. Well-received by spectators and trackies alike, the new street-bred blood brought a palpable new energy and unexpected feasts of bike handling to the track.

Fixed-gear riding can be artful, fun, and can be a way to flaunt your consumer savvy – you can upgrade and mix-and-match expensive Japanese parts to your heart's content. But reasonably priced fixed-gears are accessible too. The Bianchi Pista and the KHS Flite 100 are off-the-shelf, track-ready machines and happen to be selling like hotcakes this year in the \$600 range, which means that I'll likely be joined by hosts of fellow fixie-commuters once the weather warms up this summer.

Has the fixed gear fad reached its peak? Will they be out of vogue by this summer? Will recumbents, perhaps, be the new hotness?

Only time will tell. But during that time I'll be watching Craigslist, looking for a deal on that pretty, twice-ridden then garaged track bike.

*Lyle Vallie is a multidisciplinary cyclist who grew up Mountain biking in Rossland BC in the early 90s. He presently commutes daily to his engineering job in Burnaby and builds/tunes bikes in his spare time.*



# WIND AT YOUR BACK AND A WORD IN YOUR EAR

## JACK THURSTON AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL PLEASURE OF BIKE RADIO

BY JUSTIN BERGER  
PHOTO BY FIFI FONTANOT

**PEOPLE TURN TO** Jack Thurston for analysis: you can read him in the *Manchester Guardian*, or hear him on *BBC Radio Four* talking about agriculture, trade, and the European common market. But Jack Thurston has other theories too, including this one about creativity and bicycles:

“It’s natural that people who are creative ride bikes. The sort of prosaic reason is that artists don’t have a lot of money, but the more exciting dreamy reason is that there’s something about being on a bicycle which is thrilling and stimulating to people who are creative, and who are oriented visually particularly. It’s sort of a collage, a real-time collage of sights you see as you ride around the city.”

But Thurston’s own creative cycling project is all about sound.

“You’ll hear the birds in the trees or the rustle of leaves blowing around or that kind of sticky sound of the wheel—the rubber on asphalt, or you’ll hear the clanking of my bike if it’s not been very well maintained. What you don’t hear, amazingly enough, is wind: it’s an amazing talent of the RE-50 Microphone that it seems to insulate pretty well against wind even up to about 20 miles an hour.”

The sounds recorded with Thurston’s microphone are broadcast on *The Bike Show*, a half-hour radio program that airs Monday nights on Resonance FM, a community station in London, England. Thurston points out that he sees a connection between the bicycle and the radio.

“I think they are both subtle technologies, and gentle technologies.”

“Television shouts, whereas radio is just a word in your ear. I think a bicycle compared to a car is the same kind of thing. There’s a subtlety the bicycle shares with radio.”

There are dozens of radio shows and podcasts devoted to bicycles and bicycling, but *The Bike Show* is perhaps unique in the way it uses the stimulating effect of cycling to make stimulating radio. Many of the show’s best moments are recorded while riding. Thurston explained why this approach makes for better listening.

“You get somebody into a studio, and they see a whole bank of technology and they are stuck there. They get terrified. They start talking like a kind of scared rabbit. People suddenly think they are on radio and suddenly stop talking in a conversational way. They start talking like talk show hosts, which is not what I wanted. I wanted to have a conversation like it is in real life.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

You can find the complete archives of the Bike Show at [thebikeshow.net](http://thebikeshow.net)

You can also find the Bike Show podcast on iTunes or Podcast Alley

# THE BIKE CULTURE OF BURNING MAN

BY SOBEY WING

**THERE ARE MANY** bike-blessed places in the world, but none compare to the experience where creativity and bicycles reach their zenith at Black Rock City, home to the annual Burning Man festival.

Burning Man began in 1986 on Bakers Beach in San Francisco. Following a previous tradition of summer solstice gatherings held there by sculptor Mary Grauberge which featured the burning of a small wooden effigy, Larry Harvey is considered the principal founder and name-giver to the festival, which in 1990 moved to Black Rock Desert in Nevada. From 2,400 people in 1995, Burning Man grew to 10,000 in 1998 and since 2004 has been attracting up to 34,000 “citizens” in what is now known as Black Rock City. For eight days at summer’s end, BRC becomes the third largest city in Nevada.

The Burning Man festival is governed by 10 principles: inclusion, gifting, de-commodification, self-reliance, self-expression, communal effort, civic responsibility, participation, immediacy, and leaving no trace. An example is the absence of vending. The only things sold at the festivals are ice at Camp Antarctica and coffee at Center Camp, the central meeting place in Black Rock City. Another example is an abundance of art everywhere you look, which makes this the most art-blessed city in the world. The dress of the participants, the vehicles and structures, and the large number of installations scattered throughout the open playa make Burning Man a place one can go for the art alone. The creations are often interactive and related to the festival’s annual theme.

In the early days of Burning Man, there was less organization and more of a wild, west coast, auto-based Mad Max feeling. Bicycle culture arose in 1997, and demonstrates how sustainability began to factor into the design of Burning Man. This was the first year that it was really safe to bike around at the festival without having to worry about an uncontrolled population of cars. It was the year the car culture took a backseat to the bicycle. Only regulated art cars or “Mutant Vehicles” remain now as car-based forms. For the most part, everyone uses a bicycle, unless they are on foot, which is tiring and not recommended.

In the desert, there is cause to ensure that as a cyclist you are aimed towards safety. Night lighting of your bike and being able to see where you are going is important when you are moving in a population of over 30,000. Battery-powered electroluminescent wire is used for this in ways that often entertain and surprise, creating mobile neon animation on the wheels of bikes. A bell or noisemaker of some sort is an important thing to have on a bike at Burning Man. Consider also getting batteries that are solar-rechargeable as you’re sure to need many for all your lights. When it comes to funky bikes of all kinds, this is bike heaven. A plain-looking bike will never satisfy again.

At a festival based on self-reliance it’s important to get the bike in working order before you go. In recent years the demand for bike repair has exceeded the number of mechanics. Know how to teach a bike maintenance/repair workshop in a fun way? Here’s an ideal place to gift that. It’s also a wise idea to bring extra bike parts, especially inner tubes, and not depend on people at the event to supply those. Burning Man formerly had a Bike Camp but it closed in 2003, overwhelmed by over-dependence.

Victor Veysey of San Francisco’s Bike Hut proposed a solution in 2003 to the emergency bike repairs by envisioning a Bike Guild where anyone with bike repair expertise could become part of an informal network. In 2005 it became a reality with “Bike God” mechanics ready to serve as part of their gift to Black Rock Citizens. The Bike Guild throws volunteer recruitment parties which help boost the numbers needed, especially toward the end of the event.

Bike theft is relatively low at Burning Man. It happens, of course, but for the most part people don’t lock their bikes despite being advised to do so. It is always recommended that you use a “beater” bike that works well and is lit up, and leave the expensive or prized one at home. Also recommended is having a system worked out for finding your bike in the dark of night. Losing one’s bike when everyone’s ready to roll to the next soundsystem is no fun, especially in an altered state. And on Burn night (the closing ceremony when the huge “Man” is burned), leave the bike at the camp.

Be sure to note (especially if you’re a woman) the part in the week when one of the largest Critical Masses in North America occurs. If you’re



planning on getting anywhere at the time of the “Critical Tits” ride, do so in advance of the parade of bare-breasted women, or you may find yourself stuck staring at a seemingly endless blur of boobs and bikes.

The theme of this year’s Burning Man is The Green Man. All participants are invited to share in the aim of greening the festival as much as possible, consciously seeking to lower our carbon output in our camps and throughout the playa. At the same time, Burning Man is ever about radical expression, so there will be many people exemplifying innovative, creative ways of expressing their symbiotic relationship with nature.

*Sobey Wing is coming onto his 7th burn in 2007. He hosts the annual Gathering of the Tribes Council at Black Rock City while representing his Tribal Harmonix community.*



## BIKE MOOP

One of the Principles of Burning Man is to “leave no trace.” The word “MOOP” means “matter out of place” and refers, among other things, to the traces left behind in Black Rock City by humans. After cigarette butts, bikes are the most common form of MOOP on the Playa. Despite efforts to educate the community about bike theft and bike MOOP, nearly 700 unclaimed bikes remained at the close of the 2005 event. Two non-profits, the Bike Hut in San Francisco and the Bike Club in Reno have taken many of the abandoned bikes in the past. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe has also been the recipient of BM bikes. After the alkali dust took its toll on the gears and moving parts, the remaining bikes went to the dump.

Each year the Burning Man Project publishes an AfterBurn Report which provides an overview of the objectives and challenges of the festival – including issues related to bikes and bike MOOP. The 2006 report should soon be posted at [afterburn.burningman.com](http://afterburn.burningman.com)

Many websites are flourishing with the wave of interest in greening festivals. For more on the initiatives visit: [www.burnerswithoutborders.org](http://www.burnerswithoutborders.org) [www.coolingman.org](http://www.coolingman.org) Burning Man’s site is [www.burningman.com](http://www.burningman.com)

Photo of big bike by Moses Ma  
Critical tits photo by Pat Kinney



## CYCLING'S GREATEST MISADVENTURES

EDITED BY ERICH SCHWEIKHER  
Casagrande Press, Solana Beach, California  
252 pages, \$US 16.95

REVIEWED BY TERRY LOWE

**THIS BOOK IS** an anthology of 27 true stories drawn from a full spectrum of cycling experiences. As the title suggests, most of these tales are stories of accidents, foolishness, or calamities ranging from silly to tragic. At least one story describes behaviour so infantile I was surprised the author would admit to it, much less publish it.

Bob Mina's *Spin Cycle* tells how he managed to crash a stationary bike in a gym class by pretending he was in a road race and braking much too hard.

Amy Tavala's story *Riding Tandem with Rodent* describes her experience of having a large live rat trapped in her front spokes, wrapped around the hub. The rat's tail whipped her bare leg with each rotation of the wheel.

There are stories of mountain bikers who were attacked by a bull; of an aspiring hotshot road racer who was defeated by husky young farm workers riding singlespeed clunkers; and of a guy who thought he could sew up a rip in a tire with dental floss. There is also an engaging historical story about the US Army's 25th Infantry Bicycle Corps, which was formed in 1896. That year and the next, the Corps made three long-distance rides (often where there weren't any roads), before being disbanded at the beginning of the Spanish-American war. Photos of these rides are included.

Several stories relate the type of endurance cyclists must find within themselves to keep going against adversity. Michael McCann's *Divided on the Basin* tells of crossing the Great Basin, a high plains desert in southern Wyoming: "a 134 mile stretch of desolation, without trees, drinkable water, or resources of any kind." (The guidebook neglected to mention the wind.) Heather Andersen's *The Shock and Numbness Are Starting to Set In* is a sensitive account of two people struck and killed by cars while on cross-country tours that she was leading.

The book concludes with Shashi Kadapa's wonderful *The Gowda And His Bike*, about the first bicycle to appear in his remote Indian village in 1923, mail-ordered by the chief to impress the residents. He never did learn to ride it; instead he commanded two henchmen to run along beside him and hold it upright, a practice which continues in that village to this day.

As in any such anthology, the quality of writing varies, but all is acceptable, most is quite good and some is outstanding. Overall, the stories are well-chosen and well-edited. Recommended.

*Exhilarated after first going upright on a two-wheeler decades ago, Terry likes to ride up and down and all around.*



## DO NOT PARK BICYCLES!

**TWENTY OF AMERICA MEREDITH'S** original Cherokee Spokespeople paintings and a half-dozen of her spoke cards are featured in the show "Do Not Park Bicycles" running from May 3 to June 9 at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba. The show, curated by Jenny Western, as a response to the growth of the cycling population, features the work of five North American native artists with the common theme of the bicycle. In an essay about the show, artist Dylan Miner associates the bicycle with modernity and colonialism. Looking at the bicycle through the eyes of native artists invites re-contextualization and challenges conceptions of first nations and the bike. The show incorporates a bike related workshop, a group ride and other interactive events. The other artists whose work is featured in the show are Tania Willard, Dylan Miner, Terri Saul and Yatika Fields.



Bicycle Race by Terri Saul, 2005 terrisaul.com

The Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba is located at 710 Rosser Avenue, 2nd Floor, Brandon, Manitoba. [www.agsm.ca](http://www.agsm.ca)

## YOU NEVER BIKE ALONE

BY DAMON RAO

Since *Return of the Scorcher*, we have seen a number of bike documentaries on the theme of Critical Mass. Some, such as San Francisco's *The Truth Is Out* and, more recently, *Still We Ride* from New York City, are simply an attempt to highlight police crackdowns. *You Never Bike Alone* is much more than just another Critical Mass documentary. It's a well constructed, historical sequence of events spanning the last 15 years of bicycle advocacy and activism in Vancouver, BC and surely just the first chapter of a colourful history of bike culture community development.

*You Never Bike Alone* is now available on DVD.

Produced and directed by Robert Alstead

Documentary 82 minutes, 2006

Featuring music by The Peacekeepers, Dubfreque, Roots Roundup, Boskey, Wannas Rombouts, NN, Hieronymus, and The Flykicks.

Copies of the DVD are available for \$20 CAD from [www.youneverbikealone.com/dvd](http://www.youneverbikealone.com/dvd)

*Damon Rao has been Critical Massing in Melbourne, Australia for ten years as of this month. He has been living in Vancouver for a year.*



# ARTIST AMERICA MEREDITH GIVES SPOKE CARDS A CHEROKEE SPIN

BY AMY WALKER

**SPOKE CARDS ARE** decorated, laminated cards held in the spokes of a bicycle wheel. Predominantly used by bike messengers to commemorate races and events, their popularity has spilled over into the wider cycling culture; bicycles in cities all over the world are rolling art galleries and vehicles of expression.

Artist and sometimes San Francisco bike messenger America Meredith has given spoke card art a new spin by making it a medium for the endangered Cherokee language. As Meredith says: “With less than 10,000 native speakers, primarily in North Carolina and Oklahoma, Cherokee is, like all other Native American languages, in extreme danger of extinction, as the social and economic impetus to speak English drives out smaller languages.”

Meredith, who is of Cherokee, Swedish and Celtic ancestry, enlisted the help of the worldwide bicycle messenger community to realize her Cherokee Spokespeople project. Meredith creates paintings incorporating an image and Cherokee syllabary (a set of written characters representing syllables and serving the purpose of an alphabet) to represent each word. The paintings are then reproduced as spoke cards which are available to cyclists on request.

After receiving a spoke card, any participating cyclist who sends a photo or video documentation of the card on their bike, in their city, can request a hand-drawn spoke card with a word of their choice. For words that don't exist yet in Cherokee, Meredith enlists native speakers to create a new word, using traditional Cherokee methods of description.

Words featured on the cards range from the prosaic (beer, telephone, microwave) to the absurd (“this is not a pipe”, umbrella drink, monkey and fez). This is fitting, says Meredith, as “there are a lot of puns in Cherokee. The whole language is rife with really silly jokes. When she asked David Scott, a very traditional and knowledgeable Cherokee speaker to invent a word to represent her other

heritage, Swedish, he came up with *Aniuganasta* or “they are sweet.”

“I try to talk to a lot of native speakers every time I go back to Oklahoma because I want different people's opinions. It's a living language so there are a lot of different views. The word magpie was the most epic one because no one could think of a word. I talked to seven different

Three years later she says it's the most fun she's ever had. “I keep thinking I should quit but there's no reason to and it's really fun. I like the challenge of working with people and racking my brain for how I can illustrate a word. I like the interaction and all the weird requests.”

The spoke cards have now been documented in 85 cities around the globe, from Helsinki, Finland



Seng Chen's photo at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, MN [www.iheartbrains.com](http://www.iheartbrains.com)

The artwork on the right: *Adawadvisdi Tasdi* = umbrella drink; *Nuhlisdi Gvnisdisgi* = microwave (literally “fast cooker”); *Svdoni* = tub / barrel



people then finally somebody [Beverly “Mooney” Squirrel] invented the new phrase, *uwonidi tsisqua*, or ‘chatty/outspoken bird’”

Being of mixed ancestry, Meredith has made a decision with her artwork to stay in the “awkward in-between place.” Her artwork is constantly exploring this in-between-ness, creating playful connections and bridging traditional and contemporary cultures.

Meredith began making Cherokee spoke cards in 2004, thinking it would only last for the summer.

(where each of about 20 messengers received a spoke card) to Auckland, New Zealand.

For details on how to request the Cherokee Spoke Cards and to see the list of words and cities included to date, visit America Meredith's website at [www.ahalenia.com/cherokee](http://www.ahalenia.com/cherokee)

Amy Walker, *MOMENTUM's* publisher, is continually amazed by the genius the bicycle attracts.

# *the true story of an* **adult bicycle beginner**

BY LITTLE WOO

PHOTOS BY CLANCY DENNEHY

**WHEN I WAS A CHILD**, I remember seeing kids in the neighbourhood riding on their bicycles during the lazy summer days. I could hear distant laughter and chatter as crowds of children would gather and then disappear over the hills. I didn't know where they'd go, but I knew they were having fun.

Growing up, I was not allowed to own or ride a bike. Nor was I allowed to play outside. As I yearned to go out and ride with the other kids, the forbidden bicycle became a symbol to me of childhood joys, and of freedom.

One day, when I was 13, I managed an escape out of the house with my uncle's bike in tow. Once safely out of viewing distance, I climbed onto the bicycle, took a deep breath and pushed off. The bike wobbled as I pedaled, but I soon realized that I wasn't going to fall and that I was basically riding the bike. The wind swept over my face, my hair flickered wildly behind me, and the world rushed by in a pleasing flow of colours and shapes. I'd obviously been in a car before but this was a wholly different experience: I could feel the road and the surroundings so viscerally. A deep sense of utter bliss came upon me – free at last; finally, I was free at last!

However, it was a small town and word innocently reached my parents about my little experiment. Abruptly, my bike riding days were over before they had even begun.

In the next decade, I would have the most meagre exposure to this wondrous two-wheeled machine. Many people did not have the patience to ride with a complete novice nor the desire to teach someone how to ride. Another aspect was that bicycle culture was simply not very visible in my immediate surroundings. In university, people were more tuned into car culture and when I moved to Montreal, public transit was the preferred mode of transport. For me, bicycles were out of sight and, hence, out of mind.

On occasion, the pedalled wonder did faintly call to me but I felt estranged from its world of sleek helmets, smooth stops, and secret hand signals. I was the rare breed who had never even climbed onto the bike bandwagon, much less fallen off it. As I sat in the dust of those who started when they were kids, I felt like I'd been left behind. How could I catch up on all those missed years of practice and experience?

An additional challenge was that I did not have a physiological foundation to build on, as physical exercise was also absent from my early years. I was unfamiliar with the world of athletics and sports. Concepts such as stamina, speed and distance were purely intellectual to me. My mind knew how long a kilometre was, but my body had no clue.

"Locomotion" is defined as the self-powered, patterned motion of limbs or other anatomical parts by which an individual customarily moves itself from place to place. In terms of actual locomotion, I had rarely traveled faster than walking speed and not for more than six blocks in distance. Quite simply, I was not given the usual physical

education so I had little experience with cardiovascular endurance, muscle-building and hand-eye coordination.

It was not until I was 26 years old that I found a mentor who saw the athlete within me. He was my boyfriend at the time and he enthusiastically supported my explorations. He cheered me on as I made the time and effort to discover a side of life so foreign yet compelling.

My journey began unceremoniously in a parking lot. Here, I practiced riding and manoeuvring a bicycle. We took short trips to contained locations such as the Seymour Demonstration Forest, where there is a long undulating road free from cars. I felt safe as I rolled along its gentle slopes and curves. When we tried the UBC endowment land trail, we stuck to the easy routes where even a novice could enjoy the forest ride without getting snagged by tree roots or tricky terrain. Though I did have a few close calls and my adult body was more apprehensive of injury, I persevered through the awkwardness.

Pretty soon, I found myself riding on city streets, discovering the many rewards of self-propelled travel. That was a real goal for me, as I had long admired those brave cyclists whipping along in traffic. When BC's longest transit strike hit the City of Vancouver in 2001, I was able to get to work without a worry. In fact, for four months, I watched the city come alive as people started to walk or bike to their offices. As convoys of cyclists took to the streets, I was able to join in the revelry this time. Late bloomers of the world take heart: better now than never.

Since then, I've discovered a tremendous bike culture here. In keeping with the laws of manifestation, you will indeed find more of what you focus on. Keep your eyes on the bikes and they will multiply. All over the world, there are communities that are tangibly united by velolove – in the spirit of independence, ecological reverence, sustainable living and playfulness. Locally and abroad, there are mass rides every month, with ongoing events, performances, and parties inspired by the passion for cycling.

It's so marvellous that biking is not only about getting exercise, developing skills, or commuting; it's also about having fun! I really enjoy decking out my bicycle and wearing kooky outfits when I go riding. Truly, it feels like an adventure on the high seas, with the wind on my face, my joy sailing along, and my innocence returning in waves. Long Live Freedom – I am free at last!

*Little Woo is a performance artist and spiritual guide in Vancouver, BC. For information about workshops, shows, or to subscribe to her events list, please visit [www.littlewoo.org](http://www.littlewoo.org)*

*Azor 'Oma' bike courtesy of Rain City Bikes. Woo's shoes courtesy of John Fluevog.*



*“Growing up, I was not allowed  
to own or ride a bike.  
Nor was I allowed to  
play outside.”*







BY OMAR BHIMJI

**MOST PRESENTATIONS GIVEN** by the Otesha Project start with a history of the organization's name. Otesha, loosely translated, means reason to dream in Swahili, the native language of Kenya, where the project was first conceived. From an idea that was born in East Africa, Otesha morphed first into a cross-Canada bike tour, then into a number of different programs, and is now a multi-faceted, Ottawa-based organization that works to empower today's youth to change the world through their choices and actions. **MOMENTUM** caught up with Jessica Lax and Jocelyn Murphy, the Project's founders, in the spring of 2007 as Otesha was gearing up for its busiest summer to date.

# Riding on hope

## 2007 OTESHA BIKE TOURS:

SUNSHINE COAST/VANCOUVER ISLAND TOUR:

MAY 1 – JUNE 30

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TOUR: MAY 1 – JUNE 30

EAST COAST TOUR: JULY 1 – AUGUST 31

MARITIME TOUR: JULY 1 – AUGUST 31

LAKE SUPERIOR TOUR: AUGUST 19 – OCTOBER 19

For more information, or to download "The Otesha Book" in PDF format, visit [www.otesha.ca](http://www.otesha.ca). Also available in PDF is a manual for high school teachers.

In the summer of 2003, the first Otesha bike tour saw 25 volunteers ride from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Cornerbrook, Newfoundland, over the course of six months. On their way, they stopped at schools, summer camps, community centres – anywhere they could find a young audience – to give presentations. The medium was ever-evolving, incorporating skits, workshops, interactive games, discussion groups, etc. but the message was always the same: that youth have the future in their hands. That, by living their lives according to their values and vision for the world – walking the talk, in Otesha speak – young people have the chance to create the world they wish to live in.

A great responsibility, to be sure, but also a great power. And showing youth the power they have to make a difference in the world is at the centre of everything Otesha does. The presentations focus on how to make a difference through your everyday actions, whether it be supporting worker's rights by drinking fair trade coffee; respecting water by turning off the tap when you brush; choosing to ride your bike; going vegetarian; or making your own clothes, if that speaks to your values. Presentations are given by youth volunteers, either during the summer bike tours or during the year by members of the Triple H (High school Hopeful Hooligan) program, which helps students organize projects and events to empower their community and peers. The bike tours bring Otesha's message of hope and empowerment to communities across the country while simultaneously inspiring people with their epic scope: self-propelled across Canada in search of reasons to dream of a better future.

While 2003 and 2005 saw groups of Hopeful Hooligans travelling across the country, this summer the tour program is comprised of five regional tours, two-month bike trips that will focus on specific, strategic areas. Past tour members who were surveyed after four tours in the summer of 2005, felt that a six-month tour was simply too much of a good thing. Their experience suggested that smaller tours in denser areas would give participants most of the benefits of an epic cross-Canada ride while allowing them to do just as much during a shorter period of time, as well as being much easier to plan and implement.

This refocusing is perhaps the most visible aspect of a greater change that Otesha is undergoing. It is a carefully-planned process that will dramatically alter the nature of the project and, according to its founders, offer a new vision of how non-profits can operate.

Having tired of the grant-for-project cycle that has funded their activities, and with a wealth of feedback and experience running their programs, Otesha staff put together an ambitious five-year plan that would see the project become financially self-sufficient by 2011, while doubling its program offerings.

The five-year plan calls for almost every aspect of the organization to be reconsidered. Rather than reinventing the wheel every time a tour needed to be planned, staff put together a tour toolbox, a template that would

facilitate the planning of future tours. Instead of looking for funding to pay for volunteer expenses, Otesha established a fundraising program to help tour members fund their own bike trips. A book was written and published to spread Otesha's message beyond the scope of the presentations. The Triple H program was started to give youth who wanted to take action a platform from which to do so. Tours have become more horizontal, with members being encouraged to take on more responsibility for the direction and focus of the tours. The concept of laddering is now embraced at every level of the organization: instead of new staff having to be hired and brought in cold, people can be introduced to Otesha in various ways and invited to take an active role in the project's work.

Already, the laddering philosophy has started to bear fruit. Many of the members of this year's tours have seen an Otesha presentation at some point, and were inspired to join up. Kristina Hunter, who was in the audience at one of Otesha's first presentations, joined the Great Lakes tour in 2005, and this summer is working as an intern at Otesha's Ottawa office, helping to put together the same tours that spoke to her in the first place.

The five-year plan doesn't represent a change or departure for Otesha, but rather a crystallization of its original path. As founder Jessica Lax notes, "The goals have changed very little – there's just a lot more to do!" Many different models and conversations inspired the plan, which required a lot of careful planning, monitoring, and up-front funding. But the opportunity to become independent and self-sufficient was too good to pass up. For a group working towards a sustainable future, organizational sustainability – both financial and structural – is a natural and complementary goal.

Now, in its second year of implementation, Otesha is already well ahead of schedule. The process is being

heavily monitored and documented. A number of other organizations have read the plan, drawn inspiration from it, and are waiting to see how it goes. While it probably couldn't be replicated, many of the lessons and ideas incorporated into the five-year plan could prove instructive to other organizations seeking to escape the usual NGO pitfalls. With an eye on the bigger picture, the prospect of helping their allies in the not-for-profit world further motivates Otesha's staff to succeed on their path. As founder Jocelyn Murphy sees it, "To succeed as a movement, (NGOs) need to find an alternative to the "funder" model."

Between the two of them, Jess and Jocelyn have probably explained the meaning and origin of the word Otesha a thousand times. But what does Otesha mean to them? "When we first came up with the name in Kenya, it reflected our belief that, in spite of all the problems we face, an alternative future is possible," explains Jessica. "Now, it carries with it all that the organization has achieved over the past five years." The accomplishments, the lessons learned, the people it has touched, inspired and been inspired by – all these things make up Otesha and imbue it with meaning. As Jess sees it, "They have become our reasons to dream."



*"...many of the lessons and ideas incorporated into [Otesha's] five year plan could prove instructive to other organizations seeking to escape the usual NGO pitfalls."*





# CAR-HEAD HOW OUR MINDSET LIMITS BICYCLING

BY ALAN DURNING

ILLUSTRATION BY SHAUN KINGERLEE

*Car-Head is adapted from a series on “bicycle neglect.” Find the whole series at [www.sightline.org/bike-neglect](http://www.sightline.org/bike-neglect).*

IN THE FALL OF 2000, in broad daylight, I pedaled straight into the tail of a stationary Jeep Cherokee. The SUV, parked in a cycling lane, complained noisily: its alarm wailed. I dusted off my bike shorts (and ego) and checked the damage. The truck was unscathed, of course. My knee was lightly bruised where it had hit the ground. My two-wheeler – my baby blue Trek roadster, beloved companion for a decade, magic carpet over thousands of urban miles – was totalled, its frame buckled at the headset joint.

Bone-headed move, I told myself. How embarrassing!

I had been slowly climbing a rise on the Dexter Bikeway, Seattle’s main north-to-south commuting route. The sheer familiarity apparently lulled me into inattention. My eyes were on the scenery, not the road. So I barely saw the 1.5-ton obstacle in my path, and my brakes didn’t stop me in time. I felt as foolish as if I had walked into an oversized stop sign. (The Jeep was, in fact, bright red.)

But looking back now, after fourteen car-less months, I see the event through different eyes.

I see my own reaction – blaming myself exclusively – as a symptom of a North American condition: Car-head. Unintentionally and even unknowingly, we see the world as if through a windshield. We evaluate our surroundings as if from the driver’s seat (Obstacles to speed? Places to park?). We consider “automobile” almost a synonym for “transportation.” And we consider such thinking utterly normal. This Car-head mindset, this set of auto-oriented assumptions and perspectives, is so deeply enmeshed in our life experience that we are little aware of it. It’s so universal that we certainly shouldn’t be blamed for holding it. But it’s there and it’s powerful and it has consequences in our actions and, more important, in our communities’ decisions. Bicycle neglect is one of these consequence.

What am I talking about? I pedaled straight into a truck! I’m an idiot. I should have been watching where I was going. All true, but also all Car-head thinking. What it ignores is the culpability of the owner of that SUV. He, or she, was parked in a bike lane. Parked in a bike lane!

In Cascadia, as across North America, parking in a bike lane seems a minor infraction – discourteous, perhaps, but forgivable. What’s the big deal? Cyclists can just go around.

Such thinking is a symptom of Car-head. If you doubt me, consider the case inverted. Imagine that I had temporarily left my bike in the middle of Interstate 5. Imagine that Mr. Jeep Cherokee, admiring the scenery, had carelessly impaled his undercarriage on my naked front fork, severing control of his brakes. Imagine that Mr. Cherokee had then smashed into a retaining wall with enough force to bend his truck’s

frame, rendering it totalled (in the insurance sense of repairs costing more than replacement). Imagine that Mr. Cherokee, cushioned by an air bag, escaped with only a bump on his knee.

Now, would he have felt foolish and blamed himself, as I did? After all, just like me, he could have gone around if he’d just paid attention.

I think not. I think he and the law and most North Americans would have blamed me squarely for totalling his car and endangering his life.

But why? The two cases are similar. True, riding into a parked car on a bike is rarely fatal, while accidents on the freeway sometimes are. But both involve illegally parking a vehicle in plain view in the right of way of a major commuting route. Both involve at least modest risk of severe injury: slamming into a parked car can easily hurt a cyclist. I knew a man who suffered a brain injury from a collision with another cyclist – a far less massive mass than a Jeep. As bad, after striking a parked car, you might simply fall over into the street, still strapped into your toe-clips (as I did), where you could get run over (as I did not).

The point of this unpleasant hypothetical is not to dream up worst-case scenarios. It’s to illustrate that parking in a bike lane ought to trigger at least a tremor of outrage.

The reason it does not is that, at some level, we do not consider bicycles real vehicles, and we do not consider bicycle lanes real roads.

How could we, when we’ve been assimilated to the Car-head?

Car-headed as we are in North America, we don’t enforce traffic laws in ways that hold drivers accountable for the risks they impose on cyclists and pedestrians. You can, no doubt, think of examples of this yourself, but I’ll mention two: one extreme, and one homespun. In 1999, Charlie Komanoff of the group Right of Way published *Killed by Automobile*, the first comprehensive analysis of pedestrian and cyclist fatalities in New York City. Charlie reviewed four years’ worth of police reports concerning hundreds of deaths. The reports showed that drivers were legally culpable some 74 per cent of the time. They also showed that only one fourth of those motorists were even cited for traffic violation. I repeat, most drivers whose illegal actions killed people didn’t get so much as a ticket.

The presumption in New York, as elsewhere on this continent, seems to be that public roads are for cars, not bikers or pedestrians. You can test this yourself – my homespun example – by stepping up to any street corner in the Northwest. By law, every street corner has a crosswalk (unless it’s specifically marked otherwise). The crosswalk is there whether it’s painted on the asphalt or not. And any pedestrian standing in or at the entry to such a crosswalk has the first right to proceed (unless the intersection is regulated by a traffic light, in which case pedestrians must wait for the signal). As a pedestrian, all you should have to do to cross any street in Cascadia is go to the corner and stand at the curb. To a driver, the sight of you there should be, legally, the same as a red light. Drivers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43



# FROM POOP TO POPCORN

## A REFLECTION ON BIO-FUELS



BY RICHARD CAMPBELL

**AT THE TURN** of the twentieth century, the streets of major cities stank from the manure produced by the hundreds of thousands of horses used for moving goods and providing personal transportation for the wealthy. Not only was this an environmental problem, it was also a huge health problem as the putrid mess in the streets also led to disease. When fossil fuel powered trucks and automobiles first appeared, these horseless carriages seemed to be a great solution for this rather crappy situation.

Now, a century later, the use of fossil fuel powered vehicles has far exceeded what the pioneers of the auto age could ever have imagined. The scale of problems created by the overuse of the automobile far exceeds those created by horse-based transportation. The extraction of fossil fuels has ravaged vast areas of the planet. Global warming is likely to cause unprecedented disasters around the world if use of fossil fuels is not dramatically reduced.

Motivated by genuine environmental concern, technological challenge, or merely an opportunity for profit, many are joining in the search for alternatives. Stories of people driving across the country in buses powered by the waste vegetable oil from deep fat fryers are certainly captivating. Unfortunately, beyond this novel use for waste fat, the biofuel industry is off to a rather rocky start, both environmentally and socially. Price increases and shortages of corn due to production of ethanol have led to riots in Mexico. There is also great concern that millions of hectares of virgin

tropical forests could be lost due to the production of biodiesel from palm oil, and ethanol from sugar cane. These forests are not only vital carbon sinks but also very important for biodiversity.

Development of biofuels needs to take place without the reckless abandon that marked the pursuit of petroleum. Without strict regulation and standards, the production of biofuels could lead to greater environmental and social problems than the production of fossil fuels. The use of food crops (or land needed for them) for the production of biofuels will lead to food shortages and high food prices. Even worse, beer prices will go up.

The production of biofuels from wood and agricultural waste is less problematic but still poses challenges. So far, the production of ethanol from such waste products has not been efficient on an industrial scale; whether or not this industry can ramp up quickly enough to make a difference in the battle against climate change remains in doubt. Such products will likely prove best suited for electricity and heat production, and not as biofuels for vehicles.

Regardless of what powers the world of the future, it is clear that we must all use much less energy in our daily lives. The climate crisis provides an opportunity to transform our transportation systems. Even if it is possible to use biofuels to power the majority of vehicles, it makes sense to provide people with practical and efficient alternatives to driving everywhere for everything. Biofuels cannot solve congestion, land-use problems caused by automobile use, nor will they lead to fewer vehicle injuries or fatalities. They

also do not address the environmental problems caused by automobile production.

Much of the interest in biofuels is driven by the perception that people will never give up their cars. The reality is that people do what it is easy for them to do. It's no surprise that almost everyone drives in North America, where for the last 80 years or so, cities were designed around the automobile and hundreds of billions of dollars were invested in roads and highways, at the expense of transit and cycling. In cities with excellent transit such as New York, London, and Zurich, the majority of people take transit. In cities with excellent cycling facilities such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen, more people cycle than drive.

Public transit and cycling are proven energy-efficient solutions used by hundreds of millions of people each day. In the Vancouver area, there is great demand for improved transit service. Far too many people are waiting while packed buses and trains pass them by. In 2006, 19,000 such pass-ups were reported by bus drivers. After a century of under-funding and neglect, it is obvious that the provincial and federal governments need to invest much more in public transit and cycling. Producing enough biofuel in a responsible matter to power buses is a much more feasible task than producing enough to power private automobiles.

A city that smells like popcorn instead of horse poop: perhaps that is progress.

*Along with his finer qualities, Richard Campbell has a talent for horrible puns.*

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# A Penny-Farthing Race Reliving The 1870s With

BY MARGO MACTAGGART

ILLUSTRATION BY LEO HAEFEMEYER

leo\_haefemeyer@ahoo.com

**CYCLISTS IN BOWLER HATS** and bow ties stand ready beside their penny-farthing bicycles. The starter gives the signal, and the racers are off. Each rider places a foot on the mounting-peg and pushes to accelerate, scooter style, swinging quickly up into his high saddle.

In the 1870s, the penny-farthing or “ordinary” bicycle was an exciting innovation. Today, though the bowler hats have been replaced by helmets, the excitement is still alive on the scene of the annual penny-farthing race in New Westminster, BC.

Riding a penny-farthing is a true challenge. Gordon Hobbis, race organizer and owner of Cap’s Bicycle Shop, likens it to riding a five-foot high tricycle with the added challenge of balancing on only two wheels. Like a tricycle, the penny-farthing is a fixed-gear design, so pedalling hard requires good upper-body strength to keep the handlebars straight, or the force of the pedal thrusts would otherwise push the huge front wheel from side to side. It’s far from easy to accelerate quickly and still maintain a steady course. Cornering is a delicate matter, since with steering and power together in the front wheel, leaning into the turn isn’t an option. In last year’s race, a rider misjudged a corner, and came away with a case of road rash and a front wheel looking like a giant taco.

Bicycle history buffs know that the heyday of the “ordinary” bicycle was short. With the arrival of the “safety bicycle” in the mid 1880s, the “ordinary” quickly went out of fashion, since the new design was so much easier to handle with its equal-sized wheels and chain drive. Most of the penny-farthings that will be used in the upcoming criterium style race are replicas, but nostalgics may admire the 130-year-old originals on display at Cap’s Bicycle Shop.

*Margo is an avid touring cyclist, and is probably pedaling across Spain as you read this. She'll be back in time for the race.*



## **PENNY FARTHING RACE**

Saturday, June 16, 2007

Sapperton Street Festival

Cap's at 434 East Columbia Street, New Westminster

Penny-farthing race starts at 2 pm. For event details, visit [www.shopsapperton.com](http://www.shopsapperton.com)

For penny-farthing race details, call Gordon Hobbis at 604-524-3611

# on the road: FOOD FOR A TOUR

BY PARIS MARSHALL SMITH

**PLANNING MEALS WHEN** preparing for a trip is more challenging than one would expect. Everything from the pots available for cooking, the ability of your stove to vary its heat level, the serving sizes for hungry bicyclers, and necessary spicing requires additional attention so as not to end a great day of touring with a grumpy crew.

For this issue, we have asked some of our regular contributors to offer their tried and true recipes from the road. The recipes have been written with the assumption that:

- you are using a basic cook-set that includes 1.5 and 2L pots
- you are cooking on a single burner stove
- you have limited storage ability
- you are feeding hungry people

Here are some of the highlights. Happy eating!

**HELPFUL HINTS:** You may find it helpful to pack your meals in clear Ziploc® bags with the cooking instructions written on the front. Ingredients that need to be added later can be put in the Ziploc® bag first, and then tied off with an elastic, creating a separate compartment.

## SALSA

*Naturally fermented.*

Following our theme of fermented food products, here is a recipe that allows you to have fresh nutritious food on the road without refrigeration. This salsa can be made a variety of ways with whatever you have on hand; the key is the whey (liquid from strained yogurt) and keeping the ingredients under liquid while they ferment (2-3 days). The longer the fermentation, the greater the zip – a matter of taste!

- 4 MEDIUM TOMATOES, PEELED, SEEDED AND DICED
- 2 SMALL ONIONS, FINELY CHOPPED
- 3/4 CUP CHOPPED CHILI PEPPER, HOT OR MILD
- 6-8 CLOVES GARLIC, PEELED AND MINCED (OPTIONAL)
- 1 BUNCH CILANTRO, CHOPPED
- 1 TSP DRIED OREGANO
- JUICE OF 2 LEMONS
- 1 TBSP SEA SALT
- 4 TBSP WHEY
- 1/4 CUP WATER

Peel tomatoes, cut along the “equator” of the tomato, and squeeze out the seeds. Dice tomatoes, combine with all the other ingredients and place in a quart-sized, wide-mouth mason jar. Press down lightly with a large spoon, adding more water if necessary to cover the vegetables. The top of the salsa mixture should be at least 1 inch below the top of the jar. Cover tightly and keep at room temperature for about 2 days before transferring to cold storage or your tummy. (adapted from “Nourishing Traditions”)

Denise Wrathall contributed these next two – the first being an adaptation of her friend Selena’s recipe. Thanks, Denise!

## EGGS IN A BAG

*This recipe comes from Jean Smith who has enjoyed many trips around the Richmond dykes with her husband.*

If you are lucky enough to be traveling where farm fresh are abundant, eggs here is a great recipe for omelettes made without a pan.

- 1 ZIPLOC® BAG
- 2-3 EGGS PER PERSON PER BAG
- ANY OTHER INGREDIENTS YOU WISH:
- CHEESE, ONIONS, GREEN PEPPER, AND/OR SPINACH
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

Crack eggs right into a small Ziploc® bag. Add the cheese and any other ingredients you like. Seal the bag, mix the ingredients and release all the air out. Bring a medium-sized pan of water to a boil and allow water to simmer gently (you do not want to overheat the plastic). Place baggie into the boiling water. Boil for 5 minutes. Carefully remove bag from the water. Open the bag and roll the omelette onto a plate.

## CURRIED COUSCOUS

*Serves 4.*

- 2 1/4 CUPS COUSCOUS (ABOUT 500G)
- 1 CUP CASHEWS
- 1 TSP CURRY POWDER
- 1/2 – 1 BROTH CUBE OR 1 TBSP ENGEVITA YEAST
- 2 CARROTS, CHOPPED
- 1 SMALL ONION, CHOPPED
- 1 CUP CHOPPED DRIED FRUIT (RAISINS, APPLES, APRICOTS, PEARS ETC)
- 1 TBSP OIL
- 1 TSP SALT
- 3 CUPS WATER

I usually pack 125 – 150g of pasta per person for a meal. Pack 125g for smaller eaters, and/or closer to the beginning of the trip. On longer trips where people are working hard, you may find that more pasta is needed for later meals – up to 200g, if my friends are anything to go by. Although couscous is a kind of pasta, 125g per person is usually too much. This couscous recipe feeds four average eaters who have been biking all day.

**AT HOME:** Toast or roast the cashews. In a sturdy Ziploc bag, mix couscous, cashews, curry powder and the fruit, if your dried fruit isn’t too hard. Pack the remaining ingredients separately. For a super light-weight meal with a longer shelf life, chop the carrot and onion and dry them before leaving home. The onion could also be replaced by onion powder. Onion powder can be mixed with the couscous in the bag. If you are using dried vegetables, pack them separately.

**ON THE TRIP:** Sauté the onion in the oil. Add the carrot. When you can no longer keep the carrot and onion from burning, add the water and the broth cube or yeast to the pot. Cover and bring to a boil. Cook the onion and carrot until tender and ensure that the broth cube is dissolved (if using one). If you are using home-dried fruit that is a little too crispy, add it at the very end of the boiling time, to let it plump a bit. If you are using dried carrot and onion, bring the water to a boil first and then add the dried veggies and boil until tender.

Turn the stove off, and immediately add the remaining ingredients, stirring well. Let sit 3 – 5 minutes. If the couscous is still not soft enough, add a bit more water, making sure to use drinking water, since it won’t be boiled. Add salt if necessary and serve.

## COCONUT BEAN STEW FROM ZANZIBAR

*This recipe is a favourite at my community kitchen. Here is my camping version. Serves 4.*

3 CUPS INSTANT RICE  
3 CUPS WATER  
1 – 60G POUCH COCONUT CREAM OR COCONUT MILK POWDER, OR 1/3 BLOCK OF CREAMED COCONUT  
2 – 398 ML CANS BLACK-EYED PEAS  
1 SMALL TOMATO, CHOPPED  
1 TSP CURRY POWDER  
1 CLOVE GARLIC OR 1/4 TSP GARLIC POWDER  
1/4 TSP GROUND GINGER  
1 TSP SALT  
2 CUPS WATER

Coconut cream powder and blocks of coconut cream are widely available, often at the supermarket in the ethnic food section. The powder that I currently have at home is Chao Thai brand, and the block is in a little green box (Hanif's brand). If you plan to keep the block for

several months, it needs to be refrigerated.

You can also substitute one can of coconut milk for the powder or block, if you aren't concerned about the weight of your meal.

Cooked beans that have been dried in a dehydrator rehydrate faster than the uncooked dry beans that you buy at the store.

**AT HOME:** Dehydrate the black-eyed peas and tomato. You can skip this step if you aren't worried about the weight of your food. Pack all ingredients except the rice into one bag. Pack the rice separately.

**ON THE TRIP:** Chop the garlic finely, bring 3 cups water to a boil, remove from heat, add the rice, cover and set aside. Place remaining ingredients, including garlic, in a pot and cover with about 2 cups water. Bring to a boil. Cook, stirring often if your stove doesn't simmer, until the dehydrated ingredients are tender. Add water as necessary so the food is well rehydrated and has a nice stew-like consistency. If you add untreated water late in the cooking process, make sure that you cook the stew long enough afterwards for the water to be safe to drink. Add salt to taste. Once the stew is finished, the rice should also be ready. Serve the stew over the rice.

# 100-MILE DIET: A YEAR OF LOCAL EATING

BY ALISA SMITH & JAMES MACKINNON

Random House Canada, Toronto; \$32.95

REVIEWED BY JEFF NIELD

WHEN ALISA SMITH AND JAMES MACKINNON started their year-long experiment in local eating they didn't plan on writing a book. As a result, *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating* is full of candid tales of their personal journey, rather than an account of questionable business practices or columns of statistics. The book is a reflection of personal curiosity built on a unique and naïve challenge, and the desire to explore the boundaries of the local food system.

Inspired by a locally-sourced meal at their cabin in Northern BC, and by a study estimating that each ingredient on a typical North American dinner plate has traveled 1500 miles from the farm, Smith and MacKinnon decided to try to eat from within a 100-mile radius for a year. The experiment began on the first day of spring. While the day is symbolic, the two soon realized that early spring is perhaps the hardest time of year to find local food from within the boundary around Vancouver. Storage crops are coming to an end and spring crops are just starting to emerge, or are just being planted. This was not as easy as walking into a neighbourhood market and simply choosing the local over the imported. Powered by almost too many potatoes and a strong dose of determination, the two made it — bodies, minds and relationship stretched but intact — to the bounty of the summer season.

Alternating the writing for each chapter (one for each month), Smith and MacKinnon deftly take us through all the pitfalls and triumphs of their journey. The success of finally finding wheat to make flour for bread turns to disappointment when they discover that it has been contaminated by rat droppings and weevils. Wheat makes a triumphant return later in the season in the form of Red Fife, the celebrated heirloom variety, coming from a small farm on Vancouver Island. Other high points include the enviable experience of tasting the sweetness of fresh walnuts for the first time and finally finding a 100-mile source for

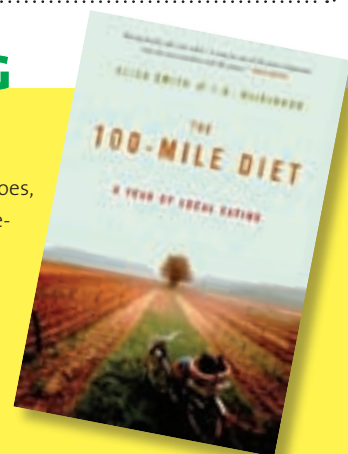
salt. They make sauerkraut, can tomatoes, and even learn the subtle art of cheese-making, all in the tiny kitchen of their one-bedroom apartment.

Given that the marketplace supplies all the bounties of the agricultural world, allowing British Columbians to eat oranges, bananas and strawberries year round, it would be too simplistic to say that Smith and MacKinnon decided to live like their grandparents did. Surrounded by Twinkies®, frozen dinners, and power bars, most of us have lost touch with what the land around us can produce. This is not a story of turning back the clock, but rather a journey of reconnection.

There is simplicity in *The 100-Mile Diet* that makes it attractive and accessible. It is not about rules; it's about the exploration of local regions and communities everywhere. Smith and MacKinnon are not breaking down a system or digging up the dark side of an industry. They're celebrating — creating community. What starts as a struggle through the first spring grows into a quiet revolution around the dinner table.

The 100-mile diet has become a cultural phenomenon, and has struck a chord with people around the world. Smith and MacKinnon demonstrate how the daily need to eat can build lasting and sustainable communities by consciously connecting, in the most basic way, with the immediate environment. Throughout the year, people living in Scotland, Alaska, Sweden, even Antarctica, share 100-mile stories with them. While their journey is restricted by geographical boundaries, the movement transcends them.

Of special note is Smith's post-diet century ride that took her the distance of their self-imposed limit. MacKinnon supported her along the way with 100-mile snacks, and Smith happily completed a life goal powered by local food.





## GO FISH

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BY AMY CHOW

**NEXT TIME YOU** are wandering through the crowds of Granville Island, duck out and head toward False Creek Fishermen's Wharf. There you'll find the fish and chip shack Go Fish, a small and delightful food court alternative.

On a rare sunny spring day, the place was packed. This roofless outdoor restaurant has a blue awning to cover a small patio – four tables surrounded by a bar-style counter.

The long line-up gave me a chance to ponder my choices.

I was glad I brought my friend Wayne, who is originally from the East Coast. Despite being tempted by the other items, he said, "You can't visit a place like this without trying the fish and chips." That gave me the chance to decide between the oyster "Po Boy" burger (\$8), or the daily special: a grilled scallop burger (\$10). The "Po Boy" is filled with three juicy oysters, shredded lettuce, and a chipotle sauce mixed with sweet onions and tartar sauce. As I moved closer to order, I could see on the grill that the scallops would be generously big.

I was also tempted to try the fish taco, a grilled salmon and cilantro spiked salsa chipotle cream rolled into a white flour tortilla cone. For \$5, it was hard to pass up this good deal. (It's \$9 for two tacos if you're hungry or with a friend).

While waiting in the line-up, I overheard a regular customer with a British accent say, "You're never disappointed when you come here. It's just as good as Victoria, and Great Britain." As British people love and know their fish and chips, she seemed like a person I could trust. Plus, Gord Martin of Bin 941 and 942 is the executive chef.

'Go Fish' supports local fishermen; they buy their food right off the wharf. According to their menu, they also make a point to harvest their Pacific fish and shellfish during their season. This makes the food fresh and sustainable for their customers. A sticker on their garbage can cheekily says, "Friends don't let friends eat farmed salmon."

Gord Martin is also educating his customers about buying sustainable seafood like BC spot prawns, a delicious and sweeter option to Asian tiger prawns. To celebrate the start of the season, Martin and local chefs John Bishop (Bishop's), David Hawksworth (West), Nico Schuermans (Chambar), Don Letendre (Elixir), Neil Wyles (Hamilton St. Grill), and Dino Renaerts (chef consultant) each cooked their favourite spot prawn dish at Go Fish on May 5. Afterwards, spot prawns were available for purchase from the fishermen on the wharf.

The British woman was absolutely correct. The food was delicious and the portions were generous. My East Coast friend ordered the cod and chips (\$10). I ended up ordering the oyster "Po Boy" burger. The fish and chips were served in a dim sum bamboo steamer, and had five big pieces of cod and purple cabbage vinaigrette coleslaw. My burger also came with coleslaw and a huge plateful of spring mixed greens which I was almost too full to eat. While the sauce on the burger was a bit messy, it was well worth it. The oysters were nice and plump, and wonderfully fresh and meaty. The cod and chips were super hot, and both were very crisp.

A nearby table was having a fish taco, and their portions also looked big. From looking at their meal, I've decided that this is what I will try on my next visit.



TEXT AND PHOTOS BY CHRISTA THOR

**LIKE A SECRET GARDEN** that one happens upon unexpectedly, a lucky turn off 16th Avenue on a Saturday morning bike ride may just lead you to stumble upon one of Vancouver's gems. Tucked away on 24 hectares of south campus land, UBC Farm is the only working farm within the city of Vancouver, serving up, among other things, a heaping portion of community-driven sustainability.

UBC Farm's vision begins with the following statement:

"The UBC South Campus Farm is a student-driven model farm integrating sustainable land management and food production practices with basic and applied research, innovation, education and community outreach."

While the farm provides a foundation for research initiatives in a broad range of fields, food production is perhaps one of the most important features. The farm movement at UBC has gained momentum in past years in response to the university's Official Community Plan (OCP), ratified in 1997. The plan called for the residential development of school lands in order to build a university community that would reduce commuter traffic to and from the campus. In the OCP, the area occupied by the UBC Farm was designated as a "future housing reserve." Fear of losing such a valuable educational facility to residential construction spurred students and faculty to transform the farm into a key element of a sustainable university community. They have strong community support backing them.

One indication of this support is the line-up at the UBC market garden every Saturday morning. If you want a chance to eat the farm's fresh eggs this week, you had best be an early riser. The market operates from June to October and in addition to the unadulterated eggs, one can purchase a plethora of fresh, chemical-free, local produce, ranging from salad mixes, chard, kale, berries, carrots, potatoes, squash, fresh herbs, and edible flowers. There are even plans to offer a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program this year.

The UBC Farm is located at 6182 South Campus Road. Follow the signs and turn left onto Wesbrook Mall off West 16th Avenue, then right onto South Campus Road. The farm entrance will be on your left through the gate.

The UBC Farm is a must-do summer excursion. Better yet, make it part of your weekly grocery shopping, and remember to bring a mug since they also serve up organic fair trade coffee by donation. This year's first summer market is slated for June 16th.

[www.landfood.ubc.ca/ubcfarm/](http://www.landfood.ubc.ca/ubcfarm/)





**COMING  
TO GROUND**  
ROBIN WHEELER



# THE LAZY *gardener*

**A FUNNY THING HAPPENED** when I gave up trying to be a good gardener. Not that I had ever been one – I’d never had a garden that people oooh’d and aaaah’d at. I was too practical to worry about beautiful placements and colour coding. But I would madly pull out clumps of weeds and prepare window boxes and have some pretty flowers that looked “just so” from the road, and would hope that everything grew big, because big was good. And I used to “clean up” my garden in winter and try to shape my bushes and trees so that they looked “pleasant” or something.

And then I had one of those crazy epiphanies one day. I was standing on a path with a small hawthorne tree in my hands, wondering where to plant yet another one. Val had dug this little shoot up and given it to me, but creepy-crawly feelings were wrapping themselves around my planting arm. I thought (and I can hear it now), “Someone will think I’m crazy if they see I have two hawthorne trees in this little side garden.” Yes! Imagine! What would people think if they saw me, alone in the bush on the side of Mount Elphinstone, with two haws growing away? And all those “weeds” and untied vines and crazy herbs that no one uses anymore? What would people think?

I realized that the stress of having a garden that others would approve of was taking more energy than was needed to support and enable a truly healthy garden. So I changed my ways. I started worrying about the needs of individual plants instead of how they looked. I started making sure the habitat for birds and bees made sense to them even though it meant letting the Pearly Everlasting grow all through my best garden bed. I let things grow in mixed clumps with whoever they happened to go to seed with. I let huge dandelions grow amidst the rare Chinese medicinals to see if it actually bothered them at all. I stopped pruning a lot of things that

were growing into the paths because after all, a garden is for plants, and the people can just duck and watch their heads. I put showy, beautiful things behind the fence because they actually wanted to be in the shade.

And a crazy thing started happening – the plants grew in lush and bigger than ever (now that my fat ego was out of the way), and the garden vibrated with insects. People, strangely, started to oooh and aaah. Things got messy, though; I mulched with anything I could get my hands on, so there is cardboard all over the place. But those mulched areas need much less in the way of weeding and watering. There are piles of wood chips right along the pathway, which is unattractive, but easy to access. Snake houses are right near the gardens, which give certain visitors the willies. But the slug-eating garter snakes are happy.

I leave my hoses out now, because real gardens have hoses in them. My little apple tree has branches hanging right onto the ground, which I refuse to tend, and the tree is covered with apples each year despite my lack of care. And in late summer I actually permit some plants to do what they naturally do during a late summer drought – curl up and die – only to return with great zeal the next spring.

It did occur to me that I might just be terribly lazy, and I also realized that humans feel largely unneeded when plants grow boisterously and joyfully without them. Sometimes I go out and meddle just for the hell of it. Keeps me busy. And keeps me in a place full of love and health, and with a lot less stress.

*Robin Wheeler is the author of Gardening for the Faint of heart (Raincoast Books) and the owner of a small plant nursery in Robert’s Creek BC. See her website for previous articles: [www.ediblelandscapes.ca](http://www.ediblelandscapes.ca)*

## URBAN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY KITCHEN GARDEN PROJECT

BY RON PLOWRIGHT

**THE URBAN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY KITCHEN** Garden works with people who have become disconnected from their home communities – which are usually rural – and tries to reconnect them with the Earth by being a bridge between what is healthy in modern culture and traditional culture.

The Garden started in early 2005 when the Musqueam Community Kitchen Garden realized that they were no longer using all of their garden space, at the UBC Farm, and the Farm told the Urban Aboriginal community that they were looking for a group to share it with. We called a community meeting and about 30 people showed up. Together we formed a steering committee; we then started planting right away because it was almost May. Over 200 people came out that first

year. A strong core group formed and lasted the whole year.

Today, we steward a half acre of land at UBC Farm in partnership with the Musqueam Community Kitchen Garden. We help people from East Vancouver get out to the Farm by vanpooling or bussing to our garden, where we collectively grow veggies, fruit, and medicines. We use the food for community kitchens and canning, and use the medicines for healing, offerings, and ceremonies. Although the funding has slowed down a little this year, we have built a ton of capacity, and are able to continue with the support of local funders such as Vancity Credit Union. Of course, the UBC Farm still gives us a lot of support.

I feel so blessed to be able to work with so many

amazing people, and to get my hands dirty in such a beautiful place. Each year we have celebrations in May (Blessing of the Land) and September (Harvest Festival), where we celebrate aboriginal cultures and spiritualities, the seasons, as well as the tasty and healthy food that we grow together.

People love coming out to see eagles flying around, to pick berries, or to soak up the sunshine. It is a perfect bike ride from East Van on a Saturday. You can hang out at the market and maybe you’ll want to buy a slice of fresh baked bannock, some home-made jam, or organic coffee from our table.

*Contact Ron Plowright at the Vancouver Native Health Society for more information. 604-254-9949 or [www.vnhs.net](http://www.vnhs.net)*



# WILD FERMENTATION THE FLAVOR, NUTRITION, AND CRAFT OF LIVE-CULTURE FOODS

By Sandor Ellix Katz  
Chelsea Green Publishing, 2003, \$20

REVIEW BY  
KATE ARCHIBALD

**WILD FERMENTATION** IS much more than a cookbook. It is a guidebook to the fantastic and mysterious microbial world of live-culture foods that is written with wonder, excitement, and delight.

This book explores the nutritional and cultural value of preparing and eating live-culture foods, and offers information on what the foods are and where they come from. The accessibility of Katz's recipes is inspiring. Without losing any of the integrity of these centuries-old traditional processes, his instructions are simple. Suggestions are always offered on how to adapt and play with different methods or recipes based on what you already have in your kitchen or what's growing outside your house. Katz also eloquently weaves interesting (and occasionally very funny) personal stories from his extensive experience playing with live-culture foods.

The most dramatic and exciting ferment I've tried so far has been Amasake, a sweet pudding-like beverage traditionally made with rice in Japan. The only ingredients are grain, water, and a cultured rice starter called *koji* that can be found at Fujiya Japanese Foods ([www.fujiya.ca](http://www.fujiya.ca)). I've tried millet, barley, quinoa and kasha. Instructions: heat, mix, wait, and within about 8 hours the grains are transformed into deliciously sweet Amasake, which can be enjoyed as is or blended up with some soaked nuts or seeds (my favourite), or any other flavours you like.

By giving you all the tools, information, inspiration and encouragement you need, this book offers a window into the huge and exciting world of live-culture foods and could change your life. So get right in there and grow!



# GREAT FERMENTATIONS FRIENDLY BACTERIA FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH

BY CRISTA THOR

**SUMMERTIME IS UPON US** and with it a bounty of fresh, living foods. In keeping with the cycles of the seasons, many of us have come through spring detoxifying our bodies of winter's excess and, now eager for the abundance of summer, our diets take a dramatic shift from building to cleansing.

Fruits and vegetables burst with juicy, cooling, and refreshing vitality. These living foods, with their high antioxidant content and easy digestibility, will continue to cleanse our bodies well into the autumn months.

In the pursuit of balance, summer becomes a time when it is necessary to be conscious of including building foods in our diets alongside those wonderful fresh ones. Bodies need cleansing and building – too much in one direction tips the balance.

One method of balancing out the diet and supporting optimum digestion is to incorporate more fermented foods. Fermentation precedes human history. The oldest evidence of humans fermenting foods is winemaking, where yeasts converted the sugars in fruit to alcohol, first found in archaeological sites in Georgia and Iran, dating from 6000 to 5000 BC. We also have evidence of bacterial fermentation through the leavening of bread and the fermentation of milk and vegetables in other ancient civilizations, where ferments of yeast produce alcohols, and bacterial ferments produce acids. The latter process lends itself well to optimizing human nutrition.

The process of fermentation in foods, where complex starches are converted to acids, serves many purposes:

**INCREASE IN DIVERSITY OF TASTE AND TEXTURE OF FOOD:** Fermented foods offer the palate an array of new flavours and textures. From earthy to tart, the zest of fermented foods can brighten up the most mundane of meals. From crunchy to chewy, fermented foods lend layers of texture as well.

**NUTRIENT ENRICHMENT:** Fermentation generally increases the bioavailability of nutrients in food, supports the synthesis of some nutrients, increases the amino acid content of foods, and produces valuable enzymes.

**IMPROVED DIGESTIBILITY:** During fermentation, certain nutrients that would normally be difficult for humans to digest are broken down into their smaller constituents. In dairy ferments such as yogurt, lactose and milk proteins are essentially pre-digested. In grain ferments such as sourdough, complex starches are broken down into simpler ones. Fermentation also imparts enzymes to foods, which further aids our bodies' ability to digest complex molecules.

**ELIMINATION OF ANTINUTRIENTS:** Bioavailability of the nutrients in many foods is sometimes drastically decreased due to the presence of various chemicals that we refer to as antinutrients. The phytic acid present in beans, for example, makes them very difficult for humans to digest because it tends to neutralize our own digestive enzymes (this is what causes the gas). During fermentation, the phytates are broken down, thus eliminating their interference.

**FOOD PRESERVATION:** Lactic acid, the by-product of lacto-fermentation, has preservative qualities. Perishables like vegetables and fish could be kept for long periods of time before the advent of refrigeration. We live in times when this is no longer a concern, but consider the potential for those times when you don't have access to refrigeration, like camping trips. The fermented salsa featured in this issue makes a great substitute for its fresh counterpart.

**PROBIOTICS:** These friendly bacterial cultures or microflora, often referred to as probiotics, populate the human digestive tract where their primary role is to keep pathogenic bacteria in check. By nature they are antibiotic, antiviral, and anti-carcinogenic; serving to enhance the immune system and support intestinal balance.

While it would seem that fermented foods have a lot in common with cleansing foods (antioxidants, enzymes, pathogen fighting properties to name a few), let's look at what this means in terms of building. In fact, fermented foods are ideal because they support both processes (digestion and building), which is part of their charm. We can now access those building blocks without the common negative digestive

## GREENCYCLE'S MAX THAYSEN

BY AMY CHOW

**MAX THAYSEN'S ROOMMATE**, Ryan Nassichuk, a certified horticulturalist, first showed Max how to grow tomatoes in 2003. Excited by his new-found skill, Thaysen wanted to share it with others. They started Green Cycle Urban Agriculture in 2005 as a bicycle-based, edible landscaping company helping people develop food gardens in their yards.

Being bicycle gardeners came naturally as Nassichuk didn't have a driver's license and both are "green-minded." Nassichuk chose not to drive because he didn't feel confident, comfortable, or safe in a car. For Thaysen, it was for environmental and financial reasons – he didn't want the extra costs when he was starting a business.

With \$1,500 they purchased gardening tools, bought trailers, and "just did it on bikes with an Xtracycle." As Max explains, an Xtracycle is "a frame extension that makes your bike 14 inches longer, and gives you a big beefy frame behind your seat to throw stuff into. It can haul 150 pounds worth of gear and has big pannier-type bags on the sides."

Thaysen hauls tools, compost, fertilizer, planter box mix, and plants. He also often hauls debris away from people's houses. The biggest thing he's transported was a trunk segment after removing a tree. It weighed almost 300 pounds; fortunately he was biking downhill and it wasn't too far.

In North Vancouver, where Green Cycle does most of its work, you can see him riding down 29th Street to Mountain Highway, and vigorously cycling the steep climb of Mill Street to a regular client's house. With his daily commutes, Thaysen has no need to go to a stuffy indoor gym for exercise.

Some clients want Green Cycle to handle all aspects of gardening after discussing what they want grown. Others are avid gardeners who only want guidance in the planning, building and labour involved in vegetable gardening.

Thaysen helps them grow vegetables such as peas, lettuce varieties, carrots, radishes, beets, and tomatoes. He also encourages his clients to grow foods they don't have much experience with such as kale, chard, and golden berries. Added benefits of growing your own food, he says, include knowing what is in your food and how it was grown. Throughout the year, Thaysen and Nassichuk are able to eat freshly grown vegetables from their gardens.



Photo by Amy Walker

Thaysen defines sustainability as "a city or culture that can be sustained [so] it works indefinitely without corroding its environment." While some people aren't optimistic regarding his goal, Thaysen thinks we have a responsibility to fix the problems we've caused. He believes that "growing food in the city is important for continued health, happiness, and survival." Similar to the recently popular 100-mile diet (eating food grown within 100 miles), Thaysen hopes to encourage and teach others to grow some of their own food within 400 metres.

Thaysen wants people to consider how much less energy and oil would be consumed if more people biked, and how much smaller their ecological footprint would be if people learned how to grow their own food.

To learn more about bicycle gardening or growing your own food, contact Max through his website: [www.greencycle.ca](http://www.greencycle.ca), or by phone at 604-690-4070.

*As a child, Amy Chow had a Canuck's bike with a banana seat.*

symptoms associated with complex protein, carbohydrate, and fat molecules.

Learning to incorporate fermented foods into your diet can be an adventure. Here are some ideas:

- **DAIRY:** raw milk cheeses, yogurt, cultured cream, kefir
- **BEAN:** tempeh, miso, natto, dosas, idli
- **GRAIN:** sourdough bread, ogi, injera, rejuvelac, amasake
- **VEGETABLE:** cabbage, carrots, ginger, cucumbers, virtually any vegetable
- **OTHER:** raw apple cider vinegar, kombucha tea, chutneys

Commercially prepared products rarely contain the quality of bacterial culture that can be attained in a homemade ferment. Experimenting with fermentation at home can be as rewarding as the nutritional benefits themselves.

Find recipes online, or consult my two favourite fermentation books: *Nourishing Traditions* by Sally Fallon and *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Katz. And here's to putting friendly bacteria to work for you this summer!

*Crista is a registered holistic nutritionist who is committed to creating a conscious food culture through the notion of just abundance – sustainable food systems for optimal well-being. [crista@justabundance.ca](mailto:crista@justabundance.ca)*





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BY TARA IRWIN

### SEEING THE CITY FROM ABOVE

FOR MANY YOUTH, especially those from low income families living in the inner city, access to riding a bike, and outdoor pursuits in general, is limited. Marilyn Price struggled with this reality and turned her grappling into what is today a thriving non-profit, Trips for Kids (TFK). The moment of inspiration for Price came mid bike-ride, following the realization that the majority of low income inner city youth living in her city, San Francisco, had never experienced the surrounding wilderness areas, or had the opportunity to see the city they lived in from the hills above.

Marilyn started TFK with ten donated bikes, running the first trips out of her home in 1988. From those grassroots beginnings, TFK has taken off in all directions. The non-profit now has 50 chapters throughout the US and Canada and continues to introduce economically disadvantaged urban youth to mountain biking and the environment.

### TRIPS FOR KIDS VANCOUVER STYLE

Like many great West Coast dreams, TFK Vancouver started on a rainy afternoon, in February of 2001. Dana Starritt, along with Guy Patterson and Darcy Carroll, started discussing the possibility of a local chapter of Trips for Kids. Fortunately, unlike so many rainy day plans and good intentions, TFK Vancouver was off the ground by that summer, and has been running ever since.

This year TFK Vancouver is entering its seventh year of summer programming. The Vancouver chapter was the ninth TFK chapter in North America, and the first in Canada. TFK Vancouver has continued to grow every year, increasing the number of trips and kids involved. Starritt recalls, "Initially, TFK needed to recruit youth to participate in the program, focusing on kids in the Downtown Eastside. But by the second year, TFK already

had more interest than we had [capacity] and there was no longer a need for outreach." In 2004 the Vancouver chapter started hiring summer staff, to facilitate the actual bike trips, leaving Starritt and the co-founders time to manage the scheduling, programming, and everything else that goes along with running a grassroots non-profit.

Today, the program consists of four rides a week for eight weeks, from the last week of June to the last week of August; over 200 kids participate. TFK Vancouver provides the kids with all that they need for the day, from everything bike-related to a healthy lunch. Most excursions run as days

trips. Typical destinations range from the Delta Watershed to the Seymour Demonstration Forest, and a few times a season, TFK is able to do overnight trips to Squamish or Pemberton.

The philosophy of the Vancouver chapter is clearly stated on their website as supporting "personal responsibility, achievement, and environmental awareness through the development of practical skills and the simple act of having fun." Starritt says, "Embedded in each outing are elements of teaching leadership skills, enabling empowerment, and with every trip there is a focus on environmental education, usually integrated as a game or activity such as

nature treasure hunt."

She continues, "The youth who participate in the outings are never divided into skill levels or ability groupings. It's rewarding to see them supporting each other, and the encouragement that is shown to those who are struggling is inspiring. Some of these kids have never been outside of Vancouver, and some have never been on bikes, so just seeing their reactions is rewarding." Starritt explains the program goes beyond the individual child and aspires to promote practicing responsibility on many levels. "Another

*"The youth who participate in the outings are never divided into skill levels or ability groupings. It's rewarding to see them supporting each other, and the encouragement that is shown to those who are struggling is inspiring."*

—Dana Starritt, Trips For Kids, Vancouver

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



dimension we try to highlight is illustrating that as bikers, the kids are part of a community that they need to give back to, and so, for example, we are trying to get them involved in trail maintenance.”

### BEYOND THE BIKING

For Price, and the Vancouver chapter founders, TFK started with a belief that outdoor recreation should be accessible for all youth, along with an intimate knowledge of the benefits and challenges that being active in the outdoors brings. If recent research findings are any indication, these implicit benefits of being active are becoming increasingly important. In March of this year, American and Canadian researchers announced that for the first time ever, this generation of youth will not live longer than their parents. The main cause of this is obesity. In most areas of North America the highest rates of childhood obesity are seen among low income groups living in cities, and the relationship of activity and health is clear.

For the so called Media or M-Generation, the need for increasing physical activity is greater than ever as it continues to be overshadowed by the amount of time spent exposed to various forms of electronic media. The Kaiser Family Foundation (a non-profit group that studies health policy) found that the average exposure to various forms of media (including video games, TV and Internet) is approaching six hours per day. Similar research conducted by the Canadian office of the World Health Organization reports that the average Canadian child spends in excess of three hours a day watching TV, and that low income youth in urban areas tend to be at the top of this measure.



All photos were supplied by Trips for Kids.

### BIKE TO THE FUTURE

Despite the success of the Vancouver chapter, Starritt is quick to point out that the largely volunteer driven organization faces ongoing challenges. Dana explains, “one of the challenges is volunteers. We are somewhat limited by the Monday to Friday schedule of our programming, and although currently we run TFK as a free program, one of our greatest barriers is that we do not currently have a van for transporting the youth.” Dana explains that this means they cannot provide the transportation to get groups of youth to the trail head, which can often be a challenge for the most in-need youth organizations.

Overall, Starritt seems excited about the future of Trips for Kids. “This year, for the first time, we have hired a full time program manager, with the hope that the program will gain greater continuity and be able to continue expanding in capacity. Eventually we’d like to start running Trips for Kids in the winter, things like snowshoeing trips and whatnot.” Ultimately, she explains, “it would be great to get to the point where there is a full loop, wherein youth who participate in the program have the opportunity to become mentors/volunteers in later years.” If successful in this, Starritt hopes that TFK will continue to allow more and more children access to the activity and to the wilderness that is so easy – especially in Vancouver – to take for granted.

*Tara Irwin is a freelance writer currently living, loving and cycling in Vancouver; ideally all at once.*

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# BC SUPERWEEK

RACING FANS WILL be busy all around the Lower Mainland during BC Superweek, July 13 to July 22, 2007. There are criteriums, hill climbs, and road races in four municipalities.



cqgraphics.ca © 2007

## SCREAMCYCLES

BY CHRISTOPHE QUILLEVERE

**BORN IN VICTORIA, BC,** Christophe Quillevere is an artist who attributes his penchant for “velo imagery” to growing up in a family where five of his older cousins were members of the Victoria Wheelers Cycle Club. Quillevere cites a childhood introduction to competitive cycling and early exposure to the Belgian comic Tin Tin as his most formative influences.

The ScreamCycles illustration is available on high quality silk-screened Guildan and American Apparel T-shirts from his website at [www.cqgraphics.ca](http://www.cqgraphics.ca). Also available: vinyl stickers, postcards and poster prints, and soon water bottles and stainless steel travel mugs.

### 28TH TOUR DE WHITE ROCK

July 13-15

**HILL CLIMB:** Friday, July 13  
700 metres at a 16 per cent grade

**CRITERIUM:** Saturday July 14,  
1 km circuit

**MEN'S CAT 3/4 RACE:**

30 minutes + one lap

**WOMEN'S RACE (ALL CATEGORIES):**

30 laps / 30 km

**MEN'S RACE (PRO 1 & 2):**

60 laps / 60 km

**ROAD RACE:** Sunday July 15

**WOMEN (ALL CATEGORIES):** 80 km

**MEN (PRO 1 & 2):** 134 km

[www.city.whiterock.bc.ca/  
2005Leisure-Services/  
Tour-de-White-Rock.html](http://www.city.whiterock.bc.ca/2005Leisure-Services/Tour-de-White-Rock.html)

### TOUR DE GASTOWN

Vancouver, Wednesday July 18

1.2 km course

**WOMEN (ALL CATEGORIES):** 30 laps/36 km

**MEN (PRO 1 & 2):** 50 laps/60 km

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

### GIRO DI BURNABY

July 19, 1.85 km course

**CRITERIUM**

**WOMEN:** 20 laps/37 km

**MEN:** 30 laps/55.5 km

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

### KOKANEE CRANKWORX

July 21-29

Crankworx is one of the largest mountain bike events in the world. Top riders will be crashing/flying down the slopes for nine days and nights. New this year is two days and nights of women's freeride events. Free lift tickets for the first 100 women.

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

And if that's not enough, the **WORLD BMX CHAMPIONSHIPS** are being held in Victoria from July 26 – 29.

The sport of BMX now has Olympic status. With over 2,500 competitors from 40+ nations expected, results in Victoria will help determine country rankings and athlete participation numbers for the sport's Olympic debut in Beijing in 2008.

[www.bmxworlds2007.com](http://www.bmxworlds2007.com)

### TOUR DE DELTA

July 20-22

**HILL CLIMB:** Friday, July 20; 700 metre climb with a 9 per cent grade

**CRITERIUM:** Saturday, July 21

0.9 km course

**MEN'S CAT 3/4 RACE:**

30 minutes + 1 lap

**WOMEN'S RACE (ALL CATEGORIES):**

40 laps / 36 km

**MEN'S PRO RACE (PRO 1 & 2):**

60 laps / 54 km

**ROAD RACE:** Sunday, July 22

**WOMEN (ALL CATEGORIES):**

11 laps Tsawwassen / 88 km

**MEN (PRO 1 & 2):** 4.5 laps North Delta

+ 10 laps of Tsawwassen / 140km

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





# CONSIDERING *the commuter*

FOR BIKE MONTH, I got it into my head to design the perfect commuter bike. I've given it a few tries but, riding by a packed bike rack this afternoon, I realized there are as many different set ups and variations as there are cyclists. So instead of handing down my version of the ultimate around-town bike, I thought I'd discuss a few important options to weigh when you're thinking of purchasing a bike or tweaking your ride.

Commuter bicycles tend to fall into five main categories – road bikes, cruisers, (ex) mountain bikes, hybrids and touring bikes. Each type has its strengths and weaknesses, but with a little work and thought they can all work as commuters.



## CRUISERS

Cruisers get lots of points for style, but aren't the most practical bikes for getting around. Heavy steel components and few (if any) gears make even slight hills a challenge. On the plus side, most of them will come equipped with fenders and a chain guard, so you'll look good while you're riding and when you arrive.



## ROAD BIKES

Light and fast, with narrow, high-pressure tires and high gears, a road bike will keep you pushing your personal speed limits. Sleek and sexy, they seem to pass those characteristics on to their riders; there's something about the way the back arches over a pair of drop bars. But the case against road bikes as commuters turns on these same features: skinny road tires can make for a jarring ride, and high gears often come at the expense of low ones, meaning you'll be huffing and puffing up those hills you just raced down. Drop bars can put too much weight on the wrists, make it difficult to reach the brakes, and keep your head low – not the best place from which to watch traffic. Particularly in the second-hand market, "cheapos" abound – old department store ten-speeds that look like racers and ride like shopping carts, with steel rims that make stopping in the rain an unlikely proposition.



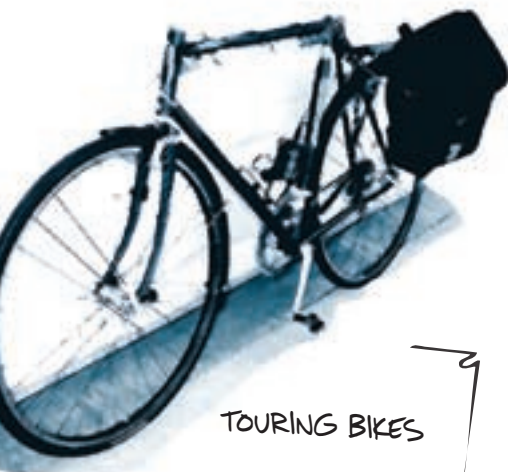
## MOUNTAIN BIKES

Especially of the old steel variety of mountain bikes, are pretty light and plenty strong, able to take years of pounding from trails or potholes. And because of BC's longstanding love affair with mountain biking, they're readily available at second-hand shops and can be had for cheap. They usually have braze-ons for racks and fenders, and lots of clearance for fat tires. On the flipside, mountain bikes make more obvious targets for bike thieves, who, like magpies, are often attracted to shiny things like shocks and disk brakes. And the recent glut of department store mountain bikes has made buying one a real minefield – those "cheapos" aren't really designed to be ridden at all (let alone on a trail!).



HYBRIDS

As their name implies, Hybrids combine features from different kinds of bicycles that make sense for transportation. They have large-diameter wheels like road bikes, upright or swept-back handlebars like cruisers, and have lots of braze-ons and the space for larger tires that characterize mountain bikes. Buying a used hybrid can be hazardous. Historically they were outfitted with low-end parts, and will often have been subjected to heavy use (they're meant for commuting, after all). Also, because the North American cycling industry has been influenced primarily by racing and style, little thought went into the design of hybrids beyond borrowing from existing types. However, with the growth of the commuter cycling market in recent years, bicycle companies are starting to take hybrids seriously, so design and selection are improving.



TOURING BIKES

Touring bikes also combine characteristics of road bikes (drop bars and large diameter wheels) and mountain bikes (strong brakes and lots of braze-ons). However, unlike hybrids, they have a long history and are usually well thought out: a long wheel base and low bottom bracket make for a very stable ride and little chance of your foot hitting either the front tire or your pannier. And because they're designed to carry gear over long distances, they're usually fitted with strong, durable components and wheels. Touring bikes are expensive to buy new and hard to find used. They aren't the lightest or most agile bikes, but they're solid and practical - the station wagons of the bike world.

## GEARING UP

In the normal course of things, a bike can have anywhere from one to 30 gears. Both extremes, and the middle ground between them, have something to recommend them - the trick is to match your set up to your particular brand of riding.

Fixed-wheel and fixed-gear bikes both have only one gear. With no derailleurs and fewer parts, they're light and efficient and there are no distractions, temptations, or excuses - you're free to just ride. Proponents of single-gears laud their simplicity and ease of maintenance, but at the end of a long day, with a heavy load or facing a serious head wind, having only one gear becomes a liability. Over time, "sucking up" the pain and required effort can lead to chronic knee problems.

At the other end of the spectrum, modern road and mountain bikes can come with as many as 27 or 30 gears. A century of advancements in shifting technology have made changing gears almost effortless. And having such a vast array of options means you can always find the perfect gear. However, while this constitutes a performance advantage to racers, for commuters it means finicky equipment and narrower chains and cogs - which spells trouble in the form of increased costs and decreased durability.

Older set ups - such as ten-speeds and internally geared hubs - offer a compromise. They're cheap, and provide a narrow, but perhaps adequate, range of gears, while at the same time offering a durability and reliability that are hallmarks of a bygone era of bicycle design.

So the question you have to ask yourself is: what's your bike for? Hauling a load of groceries up the hill, or ripping around with your friends on a Thursday night? Consider what's important to you, what kind of rider you are, and what you're going to ask your bike to do; then decide how many gear options you'll need.

## TIRE TECHNICALITIES

Fat knobbies or skinny slicks? Both have their places, and will do in a pinch, but neither is ideal for transportation cycling.

The skinny, high pressure tires found on road bikes are great for racing on smooth, even roads. Low rolling resistance reduces the amount of effort it takes to push your bike and increases your speed. But rock hard, high pressure tires mean less pneumatic suspension - the cushion provided by the air-and-rubber tire - creating a jarring ride and compromising handling on rough or slippery surfaces.

The fat tires that come standard on mountain bikes are great for gripping the trail and absorbing impacts. But wider tires mean less pressure, increasing rolling resistance and presenting a softer, weaker surface to flat-inducing road debris. And while those knobs provide great traction on trails, they actually reduce surface contact between tire and road.

The best of both worlds is a medium-width, slick tire: 28-32 mm wide for road bikes, 1.25-1.75 inches for a mountain bike. These tires will give you low rolling resistance, good traction and a comfortable ride. And if you're thinking of "cheaping out" on tires, consider how much time and money you'll spend patching flats and changing tubes - by far the most common problem to plague the commuter cyclist - then go out and treat yourself to a pair of new, puncture-proof tires. You'll be glad you did.

## ACCESSORY EXCESS

Enough ink has been spilled on these pages about commuter accessories, so I'll keep this part brief. The bike commuter's credo should be the same as the Boy Scout's: Be Prepared. That means lights (white in the front, red in the rear) for after-dark rides, a lock you can depend on and lock to a variety of objects, fenders for rain or wet streets (even if you're a fair weather cyclist, consider how quickly the weather can change and invest in a little peace of mind) and a rack - hey, they might not be sexy, but no one has ever regretted having one on hand.

I could talk about helmets but I'm a mechanic - not your mother. If you can't figure that one out for yourself, you might want to consider taking the bus.

*Omar Bhimji has been riding, fixing and breathing bikes since he saw the light 13 years ago in Germany. He works for PEDAL ([www.pedalpower.org](http://www.pedalpower.org)), teaching bicycle mechanics to adults and kids.*



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# RED TIRES

TEXT & ILLUSTRATION  
BY REDSARA



Dear Road,

I am writing to inquire whether you like the feel of my bicycle tires. As I speed along, can you tell that they are red? Do they tickle? Certainly they stick. We stick together you and me: bike and body, road and tire.

In a peloton – that crowded close pack of fast bikers – my eyes flit around, but are focused mainly on the back tire of the rider ahead of me, just a few centimetres from my own front tire. As I am pulled along by this pack, by the suck and lack of wind resistance in this flock-like formation, does it matter that my tires are red?

Is it simply vanity to want red tires?

Did you know that in *Feng Shui* red is known to attract good luck and good fortune? Red stops good energy from leaving your room or home. Do red tires preserve the energy of the rider, preventing it from dissipating into the roadway? Can we ride farther faster with red tires?

Red, the color of hazard symbolism, catches people's attention. It is often used to indicate danger or emergency. I'm going fast, don't hit me! Emergency flaming red tires spin on downhill safely for sure!

In the making of black tires, a filler material called 'carbon black' is used. It is like soot, and is produced by the incomplete combustion of petroleum products. It adds elasticity and abrasion resistance to the tire. If you want a tire of another colour, the replacement ingredient is fumed silica, made from silicon or a silicon-rich chemical precursor, with a chemical transformation process. Which is environmentally better? Better to ride those tires 'til the end of their days. Reuse, reuse, and re-ride.

I switched to red tires. A pair of RED Schwalbe Blizzard Sports, sticky slicks with puncture protection inflated to 110 psi. As soon as I put them on my bike I was stuck to the road, I couldn't get off, I had to keep riding.

Thanks for being there for me, road, and for meeting my red tires half-way.

Sincerely,  
RedSara

P.S. I like it this way... always riding, always rubber-side down.

*RedSara is a Vancouver-based bicycle organizer, and general AMPLIFIER of good ideas. Her art is online at [redsara.ca](http://redsara.ca) and she loves her bike.*

## MARATHON RACER TIRES A GUILTY PLEASURE?

TEXT & PHOTO  
BY WENDELL CHALLENGER

THE SCHWALBE MARATHON line of tires is designed to give a variety of choices to cyclists pursuing non-racing types of cycling activities. Many of the tires have desirable features such as built-in puncture resistance, reflective sidewalls, and a tread pattern for increased traction. A recent addition to the line is the Marathon Racer, which promises to be "the fastest Marathon tire yet."

Who needs such a tire? According to Schwalbe, the target audiences are riders used to performance road bikes but who are now involved in activities such as light touring or performance commuting. These cyclists may be looking for performance tire characteristics such as low weight and spare tire foldability, but with a nod to reliability.

As a self-confessed racer-boy, I am the first to be seduced by promises of speed and efficiency. However, after spending a few weeks on these tires I was left with the feeling that these tires purport to solve performance/reliability problems that do not need solving.

For example, in order to gain lightness, a thinner flat protection layer was used, as well as a reduced tread thickness. The light tread pattern struck me as non-functional. Traction on hard surfaces such as road or hard-packed dirt is more a function of tire compound than tread blocks. A tread design is mainly functional in off-road riding on loose dirt, yet it is ubiquitous in commuter/touring tires due to public perception that any tread is safer than no tread. The tread pattern on the Racer is too shallow to be of much use on off-road surfaces and only confers a small traction advantage over a slick tire in daily use.

While I did notice a slight traction advantage with the Marathon Racer (mainly on compacted gravel), it came at the cost of rolling resistance. For comparison, my slick Specialized Nimbus tires have similar traction, but far less rolling resistance.

Like most Schwalbe tires, the Marathon Racer handles fantastically. But in the end, I was left feeling that the tire made too many compromises. It didn't have the reliability of heavier non-performance tires, and it also had more rolling resistance than a dedicated performance tire. I was left with the impression that the Marathon Racer is great, but only as a guilty pleasure.

*Wendell Challenger is a self admitted uber bike geek, so much so that when he was younger he wondered if it was possible to directly weld his feet to the cranks.*





“When you get out on the road, you suddenly disarm your interviewee and you put them at their ease. You’ve got riding the bike to think about, and you’ve got the route to think about, and so they just happily idly chat away and as you go different places and different things pop into people’s minds — you’re really out there in the world you are talking about rather than trying to recreate it in the barren confines of the studio.

“I did an interview with psychologist Rosie Walford about why you are more creative when you are riding your bike: the way you get these alpha state brainwaves when you are doing a repetitive activity like cycling or swimming, and which can trigger more creative thoughts and get you out of that very limited beta state. I don’t know if that’s happening when we are riding around — if people are able to think more eloquently and have more creative insights.”

Rolling interviews may encourage creative

exchange, but Thurston admits it adds some new challenges to making radio.

“It’s about being able to ride one-handed, which is rather tricky, and being able to reach out far enough with your microphone to reach your

*“Television shouts, whereas radio is just a word in your ear. I think a bicycle compared to a car is the same kind of thing. There’s a subtlety the bicycle shares with radio.”*

guest’s mouth and getting them to speak up. We are in the city of London, and there is traffic, so every now and then we get honked at by delivery van drivers who don’t know why we are conducting an interview going around Hyde Park

corner or the Hammersmith Roundabout.”

*The Bike Show* has a strong sense of place: between the accents and the cultural and geographical references, it’s always apparent to the listener that the show is based in London. The range of the FM broadcast is tiny, but thanks to the Internet, *The Bike Show* now has a worldwide audience. “I think it’s remarkable. The idea that this show is being picked up and broadcast in Halifax, Nova Scotia at 4:30 on a Tuesday morning just after Radio Goethe is hilarious and brilliant. There is some universality to the cycling experience. I think I would listen to a bike show that came from Bombay, Hong Kong, Capetown or anywhere else. I think ultimately what I’m trying to get at is the transcendental pleasure of the bicycle.”

*Justin Berger is a lapsed bike courier, semi-competent knitter and community radio producer who looks as if he walked off the set of a Jean Pierre Melville remake of Pride and Prejudice.*

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This bike screams to be customized. Put your own ape-hangers and chopper fork, and turn it into a primitive hucker for old-skool downhill thrills. Or strip it down and turn it into a BMX cruiser by throwing on a set of Skull Skates cruiser bars. With the modern quick-release seat post, the bike can be adjusted to accommodate a rider’s height from less than five feet to well over six, making it an ideal bike for a still-growing rider or an adult wishing to recapture the magic of their first ride. The single-speed coaster hub hasn’t changed much in a hundred years, and a 44/19 gear ratio is nice for level cruising. Of course, for bigger hills there are the two hidden gears: standing on the pedals, or pushing when it gets hard to pump with a big load.



The Unpopular Mechanic put this bike together straight out of the box, just like the first SuperCycle his dad bought him in 1969. Nostalgic memories flood in: “What? Five dollars to have it assembled by the store? Bah! You think I’m made of money?” In about half an hour with basic tools from the kitchen junk drawer we had a rideable classic. Today you can ride ride your Supercycle out of the store fully assembled without an assembly charge.

And what a ride this Canadian Tire special is: a stately cruiser with whitewall tires and a sharp red paint scheme. Matching fenders and chainguard make this a beautiful and practical bike right out of the box. The attractively styled and wide, comfy saddle will accommodate even the biggest car-potato butts.

And you get performance here, too. The coaster brake has a nice bite that allows you to lock up the rear wheel and do skidding contests just like you used to do when you were a kid.

Accommodation for racks and baskets, wide tires, and a low, stable centre of gravity make this an excellent sturdy shopping or utility bike. The adjustable seat post allows different family members to use the same bike, although city riders are well-advised to deter seat thieves by installing a locking bolt.

For \$99 US our American readers can pick up much the same bike, a Huffy “Cranbrook” (where do they get these sexy names?) at Target.

*The Unpopular Mechanic is unpopular in bike shops for good reasons.*

## CAR-HEAD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

should halt immediately and wait until you’re on the opposite curb. If they don’t, any police officer who witnesses the act should write them a ticket.

Instead, stopping for pedestrians is considered courteous, polite – not obligatory, not something to do or risk facing punishment. Consequently, to cross many Cascadian streets is to run a gauntlet, and tickets for not stopping at crosswalks are rare.

Right around now, you may be thinking that I have strayed far from my story about bending my bike by hitting a Jeep Cherokee. I haven’t. I’m talking about the Car-head: the belief that roads are actually for drivers, not walkers or cyclists. The lack of crosswalk enforcement – and the absence of outrage over that lack – is a manifestation of the same condition that prevents outrage over parking in bike lanes.

In Germany and the Netherlands, countries that take bicycles seriously (and where big shares of trips are taken on two wheels), the failure to stop for pedestrians waiting to use crosswalks is a serious offense – one for which tickets are routinely issued.

In fact, in northern Europe, legislators have actually outlawed Car-head – or, at least, the behaviour it inspires. They’ve turned walkers and bikers into sacred cows, at least in traffic regulations. They’ve deprogrammed Car-head by assigning greater responsibility for collisions to drivers than to walkers and cyclists. If you’re driving in Germany, for example, and you fail to anticipate a bone-headed move by a cyclist, you will likely still be fined for recklessness. In the Netherlands and Belgium, if you drive into a biker or walker, your insurance will pay the damages, no matter who was at fault, documented by Rutgers professor John Pucher and his colleagues. (In fact, your only legal defense is to prove that the human-powered traveller deliberately caused the crash.) In these countries, bikes actually have priority over cars.

If I’d slammed into a Jeep parked in a Dutch bike lane, Herr SUV (or his insurer) would have bought me my current bike: a navy blue touring beast that’s less racy than its predecessor but handles better loaded. (It also has superb, responsive brakes). But Cascadia is no Holland, not yet. Bicycle Neglect remains the rule, though Car-head may be receding.

*Alan Durning is executive director of Sightline Institute, a Seattle-based think tank that promotes a healthy, lasting prosperity in the Northwest. Read more at [www.sightline.org](http://www.sightline.org).*



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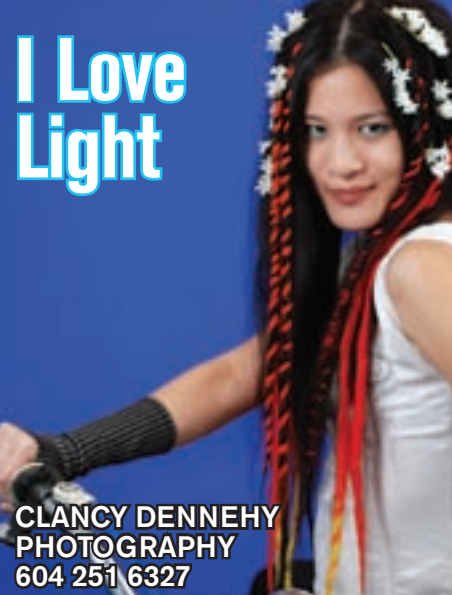
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*Bikeway Openings*



## June Bikeway Openings

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openings of three of the city's newest cycling routes. Bring your bike and following the opening ceremonies, you can take a tour of the bikeways. There will also be refreshments and copies of the new Bicycle Route Map. Copies are also available by calling the Bicycle Hotline at **604.871.6070**, by e-mail at [cycling@vancouver.ca](mailto:cycling@vancouver.ca), or at City Hall, Vancouver libraries, community centres and most bicycle stores.

These events will be held from 4 - 6 pm at the following locations:

**Dunsmuir/Mellville Bike Route Opening**  
Tuesday June 19, 2007, Cathedral Square Park

**49th Avenue Bike Route Opening**  
Thursday June 21, 2007, Tisdall Park

**4th Avenue Bike Route Opening**  
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# INFERENTIAL *treatment*

**THERE IS NOTHING** like a ride on a warm summer evening. Van Morrison said that the warm air and peaceful feeling produce a feeling of “wonder” and an “everlasting sense of life.” This was probably so for Sean Wayland, a cook employed by The Keg Restaurant, who was riding his bike home after a hard shift on a warm evening in early August.

I look fondly on Mr. Wayland’s case, not for its summer evening facts, but because I often cite it for the proposition that robust, reasonable inferences can be drawn from circumstantial evidence, even when the plaintiff cyclist himself has no idea what happened.

Let us examine the facts.

Mr. Wayland was travelling eastbound to his home in East Vancouver across the Georgia Viaduct. He was in no particular hurry. The weather was good. The Viaduct was well lit and Mr. Wayland was filled with a sense of well-being, and perfectly sober. The eastbound half of the Georgia Viaduct has three lanes, each of which is roughly 11 feet wide. Mr. Wayland was riding in the south (curb) lane as near to the concrete barrier as practical.

Those familiar with the Viaduct know that it splits into two off-ramps, one for Prior Street traffic and the other leading to Main Street. Mr. Wayland intended to take Prior Street to his East Vancouver neighbourhood. When he was 100 feet west of the split he started to move away from the curb. It was night but the lighting was good and Mr. Wayland had a fluorescent orange backpack, a halogen generator headlight, and a strip of reflective tape at the rear.

Mr. Wayland’s last memory was noticing that the only headlights of eastbound traffic in all three lanes were approximately two blocks behind him. He had taken his left hand from his handlebar and looked to his rear over his left shoulder to make this observation. He then faced back in the direction in which he was travelling and replaced his hand on his handlebars.

Mr. Wayland’s next memory was sliding along the cement barrier with his body twisted right around. He was quite badly hurt and, in particular, suffered acute dental and jaw injuries.

Counsel for ICBC placed reliance on the general onus of proof in a civil case. His argument was that there was total absence of evidence of negligence on the part of the unknown driver, if there had been a driver, and that accordingly, the Plaintiff failed to satisfy the onus of proof. ICBC’s counsel went further and argued that the Plaintiff owed the same duty of care as the driver and failed to exercise that duty by properly signalling his intention to change lanes.

Mr. Justice H.A.D. Oliver, as he then was, rejected ICBC’s argument. As to the intention to signal, Oliver J. said the cyclist had not yet begun to change lanes, therefore no signal was required. Secondly, and more importantly, Oliver J. accepted that when the cyclist turned to look behind him and saw no headlights for two blocks, it was reasonable to infer that there were no headlights to be seen. Taking that together with the fact that the collision occurred within a second or so of the Plaintiff’s slight change of course, Oliver J. inferred that the vehicle that collided with the cyclist must not have been employing headlights. In other words, this vehicle was in fact immediately behind the cyclist when he looked, but all the cyclist could see were headlights in the distance. He stated:

“I find that the automobile was not one of the vehicles whose headlights the Plaintiff had seen but that it was another car which had been travelling eastward, east of the vehicle observed by the Plaintiff, without its headlights on. Had its headlights been on, I am satisfied that the Plaintiff would have seen it and that its driver would have no

difficulty in seeing (in the beam of her or his headlights) the reflector tape, the fluorescent orange knapsack, Plaintiff’s white shoes moving up and down, the red and white shoulder markings on his shirt and his red cap.”

His Honour also found that the driver was at fault for attempting to pass the cyclist at night in the same traffic lane which the cyclist was riding when another

lane was open and unobstructed by any other traffic.

Clearly, for Oliver J. to draw the inference that there was another vehicle, about which no evidence was led at all, he must have placed tremendous faith in the ability of the cyclist. Indeed, the judgment contains many references to the cyclist’s familiarity with the roadway, his experience, his sobriety, and his credibility.

One of the reasons I love this decision is that it required the presiding Judge to make a leap of faith. The case stands as a shining example of a Judge drawing a judicious and reasonable inference, based on a positive impression of a cyclist, and against the background where there clearly was an absence of evidence as to what happened. It was wide open for Oliver J. to conclude that the cyclist simply misjudged the distance between himself and the approaching headlights. Instead, based on what he knew about the cyclist, he found this to be unlikely, and drew an extremely robust inference which established his case against the unidentified driver.

*David Hay is a litigation lawyer and partner at RBS Lawyers. The information above is not legal advice. Anyone seeking legal advice should call David directly for a free consultation at 604-661-9250*

*“The driver was at fault for attempting to pass the cyclist at night in the same traffic lane which the cyclist was riding when another lane was open and unobstructed by any other traffic.”*

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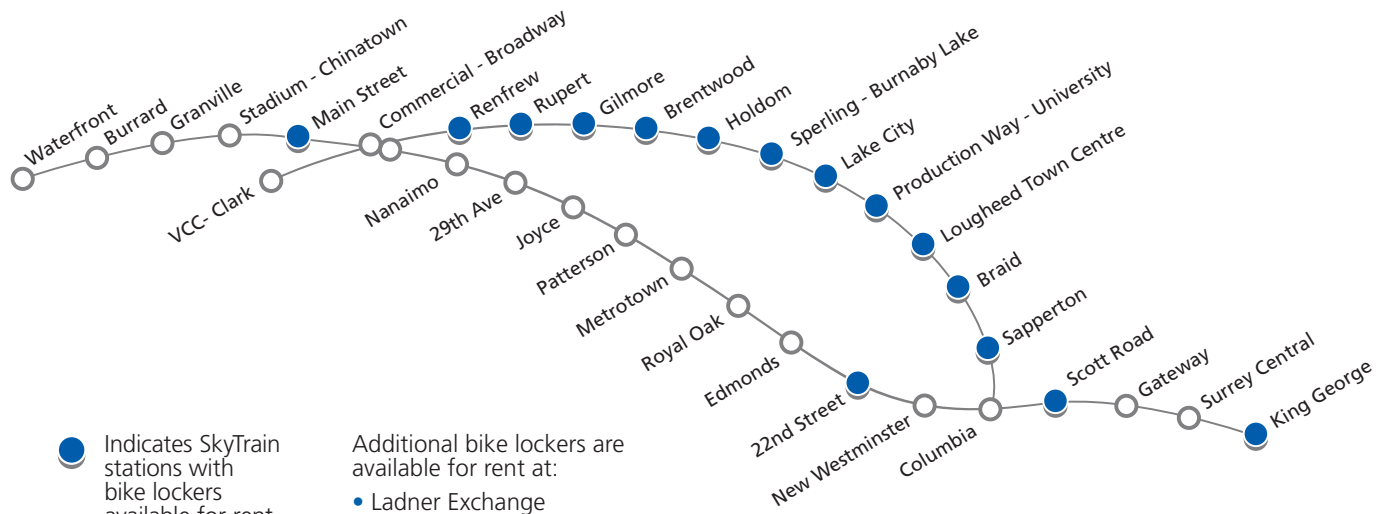
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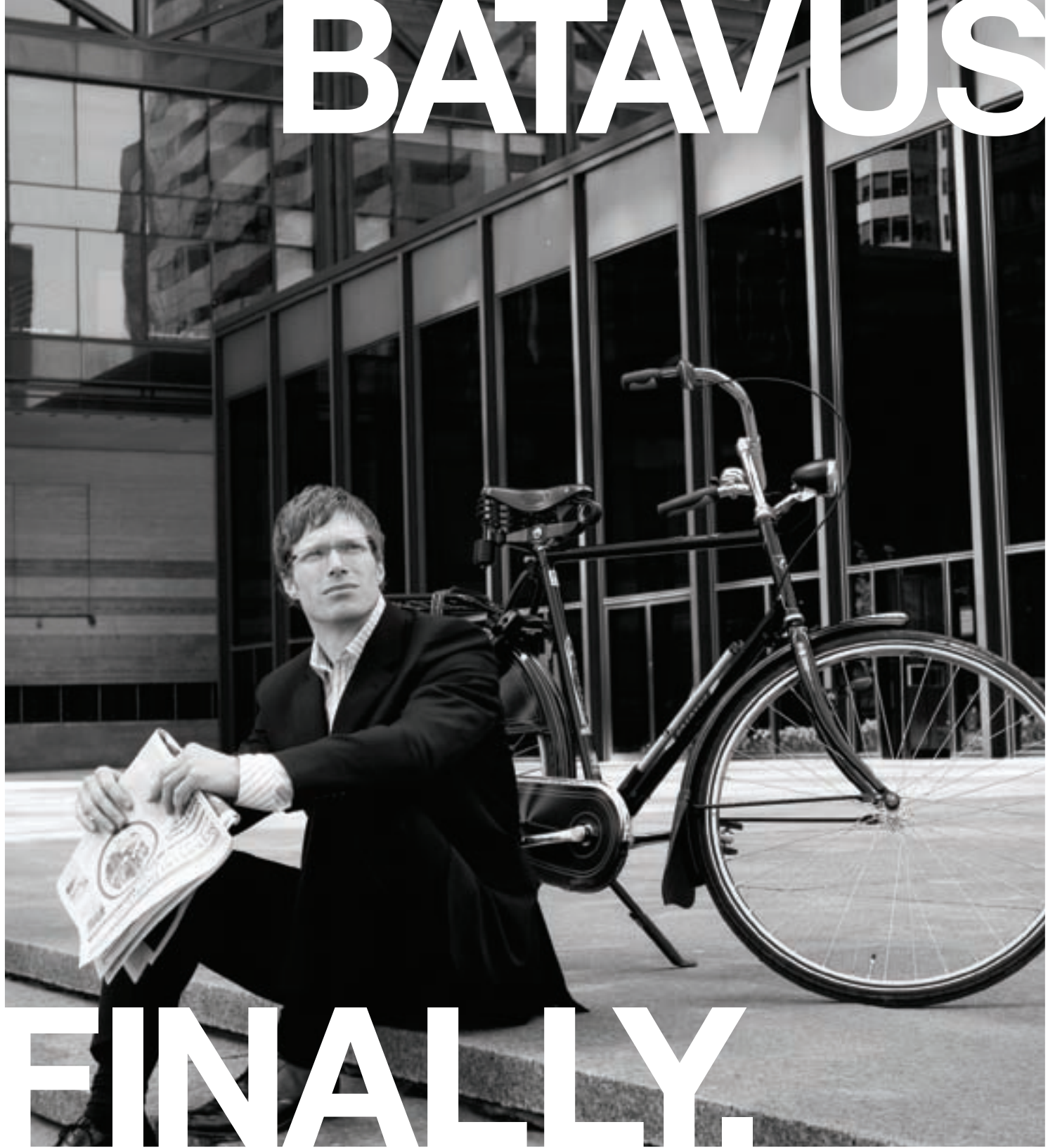
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