

MOMENTUM

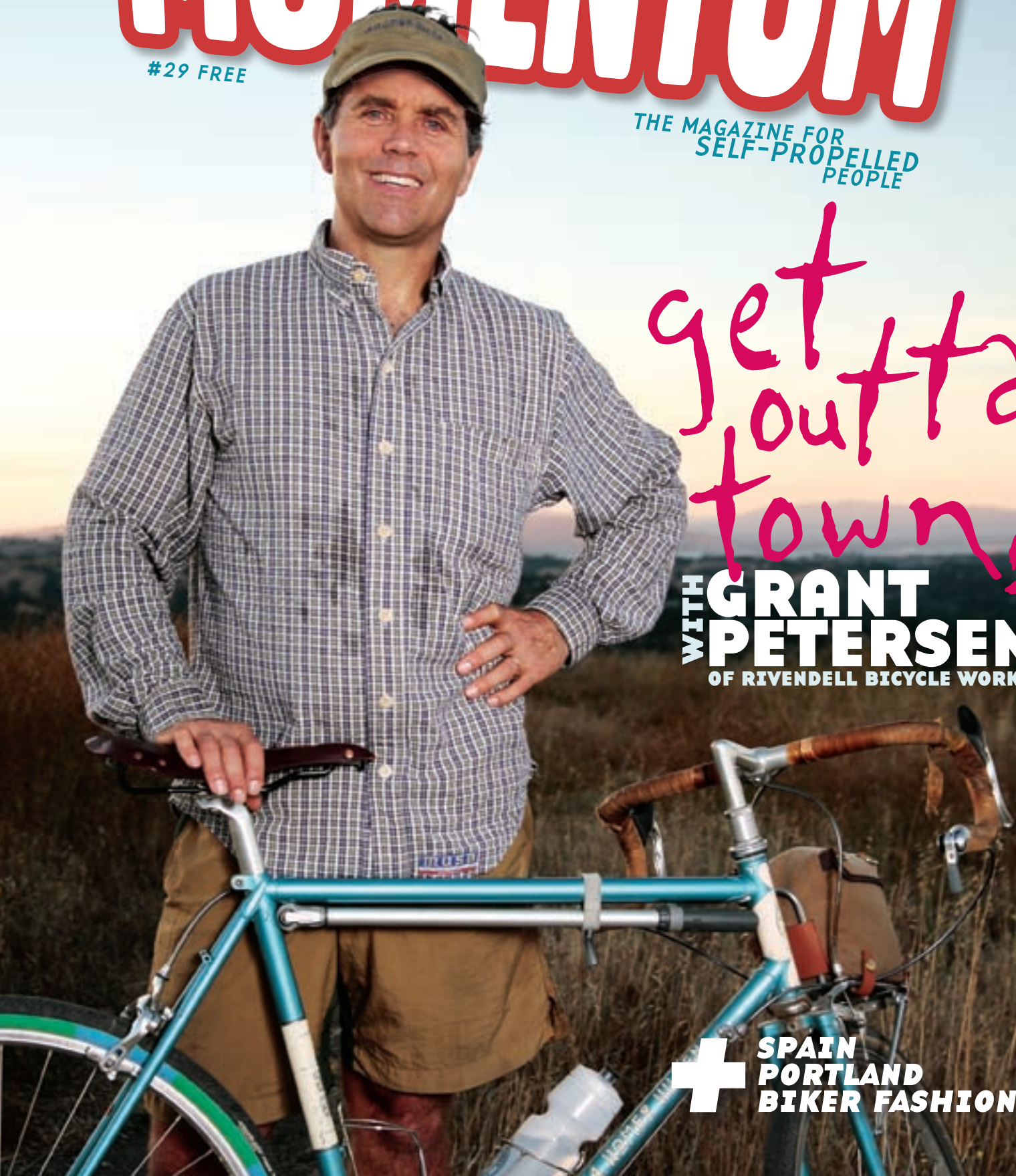
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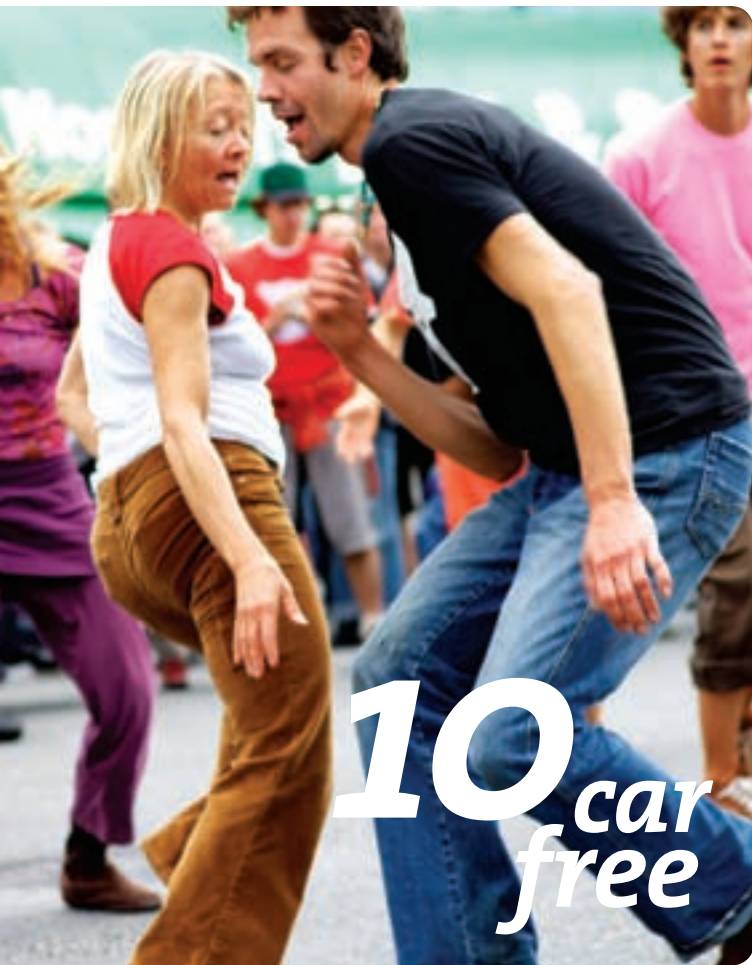
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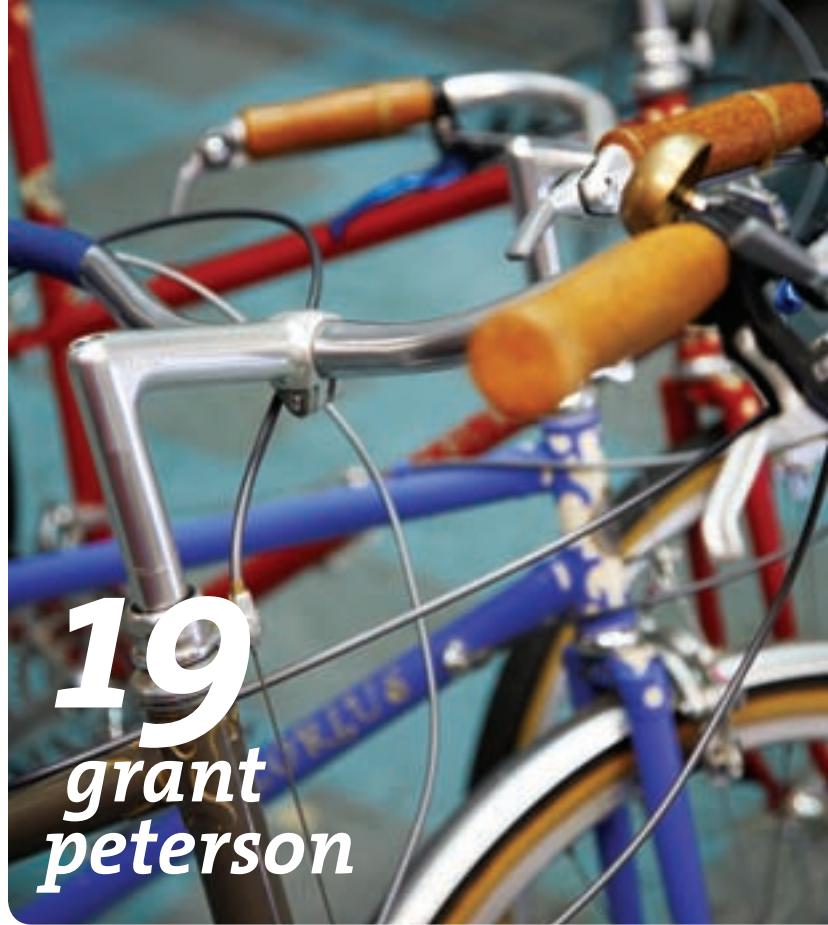




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MOMENTUM

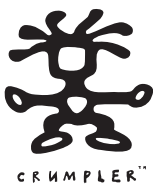
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MOMENTUM MAGAZINE cultivates biking culture by publishing words and images that reflect the lives of people who ride bikes. MOMENTUM provides urban cyclists with the inspiration, information, and resources to help them fully enjoy their riding experience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



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MOMENTUM?

This question has bothered me for years. Why when on a long downhill coast, do I always pull away from my wife without any additional effort?

My first explanation was that I weigh more than her. But then I remembered (from physics) that Galileo proved that falling objects fall at the same rate regardless of weight differences. He proved this, not by dropping cannon balls from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, as legend has it, but by rolling objects of different weights down an inclined plane to slow the action down – he did that to “dilute” gravity because he was using his pulse as a timer – he had no accurate timepiece.

I did this experiment myself (with a stopwatch) and verified his results. A bicycle (a rolling weight) running down a hill (an inclined plane) should behave the same way, but my experience proves that it does not. Any idea why the seeming contradiction?

Gene Walker
San Diego, CA

MOMENTUM Editor Terry Lowe responds:

I’m no physicist, but Sandy Eix, of Vancouver’s Science World, assured me that Galileo was right: with all other things being equal, two objects of different weight will indeed fall at the same speed.

My thought is that something is unequal between your two bikes, and the first thing I’d look at is the tires. I’ve seen this phenomenon before. Except, in that case, I was the weightier of the two riders, but the other bike coasted down a hill faster. The reason: the other bike’s tires were half the width of mine (and inflated harder), and thus offered much less rolling resistance.

Air resistance – the wind pushing back against you – is also a factor, as may be mechanical resistance of your wheel bearings. A simple and interesting test would be to trade bikes and see what happens.

FIXED GEARS ARE FOR JERKS

My name is Eric Frame and my band *Fixed Gears are for Jerks and Lesbians* is coming out to play Queeruption in Vancouver on the 4th of August. We are Minneapolis’ preeminent bike power punk rock band. We like riding bikes and rocking faces off, and if you’re interested, you should come out to Queeruption and check us out. Our contact info is:

Fixed Gears are for Jerks and Lesbians
myspace.com/fixedgearsareforjerksandlesbians

DUTCH PROOFREADING

I read your article on the bakfietsen in MOMENTUM, which was nice for me to read as a Dutch citizen. These types of bikes are getting more and more popular in the Netherlands.

I’d like to mention, though, that the singular is “bakfiets”, and the plural is “bakfietsen”. A “fiets” is a bicycle in Dutch.

Sincere greetings from a Dutchman with four “fietsen”,

Erwin de Vries
Leiden, NL

SHORTS NEED FILLING

This is call out to all creative people in the bike community. My partner and I were recently at the 2007 Bike Shorts film event this year. We were excited to see bikes and bike culture on the big screen.

The evening had a few moments of joyful bikeness but overall was a disappointment. The greatest loss of my time was a film that involved automatic rifles shooting people on bikes. Most of the film was long boring shots of a man cycling slowly through a ghetto. Then in ridiculous Hollywood fashion our protagonist and friends are gunned down.

There was a distinct lack of applause at the end of it. I think almost everyone was glad it was over. I had a burning urge to hiss and boo but was contained by my polite Canadian socialization.

If there is a gap big enough in the roster for a film with firearms and murder then there is simply not enough content. It is up to us to produce it. My request goes out to the cycling community. Please find or create a peaceful bike story and film it.

Dustin Anderson

WONDERFUL FOLKS

As a regular reader of your magazine, occasional Critical Masser, sometime photographer and full-time cyclist, I’d like to thank you for your magazine. My only complaint is that it isn’t a monthly publication. I thought you might like these photos. Keep up the good work.

Bruce Twerdy





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Hi Folks!

Here's my renewal of a subscription for your fine publication. I've been studying the literature of global warming for many years, and over the last year on long bike explorations along the many paths and byways of Southern Vancouver Island, I put together this poem/song which I call "The Slaves In My Garage." I hope it might shake some folks off the highway of sloth, the home of mobile couch culture.

THE SLAVES IN MY GARAGE

I'm going to buy a sixteen, and ride that asphalt path,
Though the people who make sixteens are very poor at math.
Had they hired Pythagoras, you can bet for bloody sure
They'd all be called a sixteen and not a four-by-four.

I'm going to buy a sixteen or perhaps an SUV,
to protect me from bad drivers who have big cars like me.
But if they switched to bicycles I'm sure I'd buy one too,
To place upon my roof-rack by my motorized canoe.

And I'd really like a sports car so I can exercise;
I'll drive my muscles to the gym, impress the girls and guys.
From healthy body exercise you'll never see me shirk,
Unless I find that it involves some kind of useful work.

And I'd love to have an RV and like a hobo roam,
Or better yet a tow truck to pull a mobile home.
I'll go to all the festivals, camp out on the grass,
Then drive on to the next one in a cloud of "Classical Gas."

And I've got to have a monster truck, to ride amidst the stars,
From my elevated viewpoint look across two billion cars.
Yes, with speed designed for comfort, when I'm wondering what to wear,
I'll try the many four-wheeled fashions on sale now at Vanity Fair*

[years later]

I'm going to buy a lifeboat. That's where I'll make my stand.
Now that the seas are rising and my car's stuck in the sand.
Though I don't really need a lifeboat, I'm going to buy one anyway,
Cause it's very nice to have one on a hot December day — at the North Pole!

*ref. Pilgrims's Progress by John Bunyan

David Querido

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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BIKE TAX CREDIT PETITION PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT

Earlier this year, MOMENTUM reported on the efforts of Chris Tomasini and others asking Canadians to sign a petition requesting tax credits for cyclists, similar to the credits provided by the federal government to public transit users. The petition seemed well-timed, as the government's environmental policies were rated extremely low in Canadian polls, and they were even being criticized by other countries.

In June, Member of Parliament Olivia Chow stood and presented the petition with about 3,000 signatures to the House. At press time, there had been no indication that the government was considering credits for cyclists.

Tomasini was asked for his views on the effectiveness of his efforts and petitions in general. He also had some strong opinions on how cycling activists could be more successful.

"One single petition which isn't followed up by others is probably useless. If you go into the House of Commons debates page and type in 'cycling' you'll get a couple of hits I think. But if you type in 'gay marriage' you'll get hundreds of hits from all these very conservative people asking the government to outlaw gay marriage again.

"So to begin with you need petition after petition. To be really effective, cyclists probably need to operate like the agribusiness and pharmaceutical conglomerates and pay millions

of dollars to lobby groups to actually grease the palms of the party insiders who dream up public policy. I think the backrooms are where action takes place, not on the floor of the House.

"Regarding the effectiveness of petitions in general, I don't have super high hopes. Parliament is under no obligation to do anything about what they hear in a petition, which makes sense, because they could get lots of dumb petitions.

"Petitions have two big benefits. First, they raise public awareness. When we were emailing people across the country asking them to sign, we were driving people with a lukewarm interest in cycling to a document which laid out pretty clearly why cycling is so important, and getting these lukewarm people more interested in cycling issues. Second, at least to some extent, they make the MPs realize that this is something which is important to Canadians, and they'll hopefully throw us a bone or two when they're devising new policies.



MP OLIVIA CHOW

"I was glad to get that petition done and read, and it was worthwhile to do. But to actually cause change, there needs to be some sort of campaign. One person writing a letter to his or her MP or MPP is great, but that person working with a group to gets hundreds of people to write these letters is better."

Tomasini described a presentation that he saw about how lobby groups should work to steer public policies. "At one point it mentions special interest groups working together. I think this is something which cycling groups in Canada should do which they don't really do. If we had a national cycling lobby driving letter writing campaigns and petitions, I think we'd make a lot more progress.

"I'm not optimistic about how strong of a voice cyclists currently have in Canada. Look how hard it is to get bike lanes built in Toronto even though all the money for them has already been set aside. But I am optimistic about the "perfect storm" which seems to be brewing against the automobile, and therefore in favour of bikes and public transit I mean: with peak oil; global warming; soaring diabetes, obesity and chronic heart disease rates; urban gridlock, and suburban sprawl – how can governments not eventually push alternative transport over the automobile?"

NEW MOUNTAIN HUT ROUTE FOR RIDERS

A new "hut-to-hut" system for mountain bike riders has opened this summer in Oregon's Mount Hood range. The system is a series of cabins along a scenic wilderness route that enables riders to travel without carrying a heavy load of gear and supplies. The cabins are furnished with sleeping bunks for eight people, and are fully stocked with food, water, stoves, and other essentials.

Hiking clubs have long had systems of shelters for hikers to travel light in mountain areas, but this is only the second wilderness hut system in North America designed specifically for people traveling on mountain bikes. After James Koski and Don Bain rode the first such route in Colorado (the San Juan hut system), they brought the idea back with them to Oregon and developed it, negotiating permits with land management authorities and building the cabins.



LOLO PASS HUT ON THE MT HOOD LOOP; PHOTO BY DON BAIN

River and pass through terrain that varies from the low arid valley of the Columbia River Gorge to mountain passes in the Mt. Hood National Forest. The trip takes four days, with riders spending each night in a different cabin. James Koski estimates that each day will involve five to eight hours of riding.

Asked whether the trip is suitable for people who are regular cyclists but not regular mountain bikers, Koski replied that he believes that it is. "There's certainly a lot of climbing. The downhill sure are fun! But anybody in decent shape will

The 220 kilometre route travels in a loop around Mount Hood, the highest mountain in Oregon. Travelling mainly on dirt forest service roads, riders start in the town of Hood

be able to do it. There's nothing that technical unless you choose to do some single-track. The whole loop can be done via Forest Service roads. For those looking for a bigger challenge there is about 30 miles of single-track.

"Don and I are 40 years old and while we're in decent shape for middle-aged men, we aren't Ironmen and didn't do any special training to do the loop, besides a couple of hilly bike rides on a few of the weekends beforehand."

For more information: www.cascadehuts.com

Paul Halychuk is a writer based in Vancouver. He is spending the summer selling lemonade for five cents a glass and advice for a penny.



FIETSPONT

This is a brand new bike storage facility for 350 bikes on a decommissioned ferryboat in the IJ river behind the Amsterdam station. It was painted and decorated by homeless people (who ride bikes too). Free bike parking here.

From: www.bakfiets-en-meer.nl

LAS VEGAS HOSTS TWO MAJOR CYCLING EVENTS

On September 27, Las Vegas will be hosting two major cycling events: the annual Interbike Expo trade show and the World Criterium Championship.

Interbike is the largest bicycle trade event in North America. According to Interbike's web site, last year's event drew over 21,000 attendees and 700 exhibitors.

The World Criterium Championship races will be the finals in a ten city national series, and will take place on a one-kilometre long course on the grounds of the Mandalay Bay resort, a Vegas hotel. A criterium is a technical bike race typically held on a short city street course with many sharp corners.

For more information:
www.interbike.com
www.worldcriteriumchampionships.com

PORTSMOUTH, ENGLAND LOWERS SPEED LIMIT

Portsmouth has become the first British city to introduce a blanket 20 miles per hour (30 km/h) speed limit on residential roads in a bid to cut accidents and help the environment.

The lower limit takes effect in streets in the south-east of the city and will be introduced to other areas later this year. Major arterial routes, including the seafront, will be exempt.

Alex Bentley, the city council's executive member for traffic and transportation, said: "This is a bold step but it's a vital safety measure. Portsmouth is a crowded city and on most of our residential streets it's not safe or appropriate to drive at more than 20 miles per hour.

"It will help to change attitudes and make speeding an anti-social way to behave. I'm sure this scheme will save lives."

Some suggest that strong enforcement and traffic calming measures will be necessary to make it really work well.

Adapted from the London Daily Telegraph

SENIORS ON TRIKES

No, not the old style sit-up-and-fall-over trikes. Instead, recumbent trikes with mountain bike gearing

The Portland Office of Transportation is in the second year of a trial program that provides stable recumbent trikes free for seniors to ride in a local park.

Program organiser Kirsty Hall reports an enthusiastic response from many of the seniors, some of whom may not have ridden for 50 years or more. A few of the participants will likely be buying their trikes for use in their neighbourhoods

It's true: bi (and tri) cycling is for everybody.

Short video clip courtesy of BikePortland.org : mac.com/trorb/TOPP/iMovieTheater178.html



In 2006, the World Carfree Network established a car-free spaces design competition, encouraging entrants from across the world to submit design ideas for urban spaces free of cars. The second annual competition is currently underway, with an entry deadline of August 15, 2007. For information on the Street Conversion Design Contest, go to www.worldcarfree.net/contest/

PHOTO BY DAVID GREGORY

CAR-FREE DOES NOT INSTANTLY FILL THE STREETS WITH HULA-HOOPING CHILDREN. THIS PHOTO, FROM VANCOUVER'S CAR-FREE COMMERCIAL DRIVE FESTIVAL IS MORE AN EXAMPLE OF "DOING SUNDAY."

ACCORDING TO THE World Car-Free Network, "World Car-Free Day is an annual celebration of cities and public life, free from the noise, stress and pollution of cars." The aim in taking cars off the streets for all or part of a day is to give residents a chance to consider how their city might look and work without cars.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CAR-FREE DAYS

A long history of car-free days would, of course, take us back to the late nineteenth century, before which every day was car-free. But if we consider the current situation of cities designed for the movement and storage of cars as a starting point, the history begins in the early 1970s.

It was then, precipitated by the oil crisis, that some of the first car-free days took place, mainly in Europe, and continued sporadically until the mid-1990s.

In 1994, American sustainability activist Eric Britton, issued a call to systematize and co-ordinate these projects in a keynote address at the International Ciudades Accesibles (Accessible Cities) Conference in Toledo, Spain.

DOING WORLD CAR FREE THURSDAY DAY

BY BONNIE FENTON

In his presentation, entitled "Thursday: A Breakthrough Strategy for Reducing Car Dependence in Cities," Britton declared us all addicts and noted that since "you cannot usefully engage in meaningful dialogue with addicts, what you have to do is start treating them in some way."

His prescription? A carefully administered dose of car-free days. Specifically:

- To spend one carefully prepared day without cars.
- To study and observe closely what exactly goes on during that day.
- To reflect publicly and collectively on the lessons of this experience and on what might be prudently and creatively done next to build on these.

Taking up Britton's challenge, Reykjavik, Iceland, and the city of Bath, UK both staged car-free days in 1996. A Europe-wide initiative was piloted in France in 1998 under the slogan "En ville, sans ma voiture?" ("In town, without my car?"). The slogan, ending with a question mark, leaves the impression that even the organizers weren't too sure about the idea. With time came a change in punctuation – and perhaps in attitude – to the more assertive "In town without a car!"

In 1999, campaigns were run in more than 150 French and Italian towns and the canton of Geneva in Switzerland. Other cities around the world (Fremantle, Australia; Bogotá, Colombia; Chengdu City, China) participated in 2000. In 2001, Toronto became the first North American city to take part. Meanwhile, European Car-free Day expanded in 2002 to include a full "mobility week." More than 1,300 cities participated in 2006.

PEDESTRIAN ZONES

Since the ultimate goal of such events is to encourage more car-free urban spaces, it is interesting to look at the ones currently in existence.

The term “pedestrian zone” hardly rolls off the North American tongue. It’s not common parlance on this continent, and – not coincidentally – it’s not a concept we see much in practice. But while there aren’t many places in North America where cars are turned away, some do exist.

Mackinac (pronounced Ma-ki-naw) Island, Michigan (population approximately 600), has the distinction of having the only state route in the United States that doesn’t allow motorized vehicle traffic. M-185 is a 13 kilometre long road that circumscribes the island (located in Lake Huron). The only recorded traffic accident occurred when the fire truck grazed the ambulance as they both reported to a medical emergency on an incoming ferry.

Another car-free Great Lake island is the former hippy colony on Toronto Island, a short ferry ride south of Toronto in Lake Ontario. At the other extreme, the yuppie Resort Municipality of Whistler is one of the only North American towns with a car-free central core.

Outdoor pedestrian malls can also be found in a handful of Canadian cities. Sparks Street in Ottawa is one of the earliest North American examples, having been pedestrianized in 1966. Calgary’s Stephen Avenue Mall, with its restored turn-of-the-century buildings, is a pedestrian area and a National Historic District. Granville Mall in Halifax is another historic centre that has been converted into a pedestrian space. Similarly, Toronto’s Distillery District – the former home of Hiram Walker distillers – is now a pedestrian-oriented centre for arts, culture, and entertainment.

DOING THURSDAY

Sadly, our lack of pedestrian zones leaves us with very few opportunities to envision our urban spaces without cars. As Britton notes, our welcome-anywhere-anytime attitude toward cars in North America is a sign of our addiction, and, given the size of our dealers’ advertising budgets, the odds for societal recovery are stacked against us.

So how do we overcome our collective habit? Britton suggests we do it by thrusting ourselves cold-turkey into a no-choice situation. Or, more accurately, into an “any-choice-but-one” situation, the hope being that drivers will get out of their cars long enough for us to determine what needs to happen to make a car-free urban transport paradigm work.

In his paper, Britton claims that the key is to hold a car-free day on a Thursday so that people see their city under normal circumstances, but with different eyes.

Thursday allows people time to deal with mundane chores early in the week and to plan how they’ll manage their work day without a car. Doing a Thursday on, say, a Sunday doesn’t teach us all we need to know.

In keeping with Britton’s recommendation, in 1998 the European Union effectively decided to “do Thursday” by establishing a fixed date – September 22 – for European Car-free Day. That way, commuter traffic and daily mobility could be factored in, people could plan for it, and there was an opportunity to learn what structural changes are needed to make the goal of a car-free city possible.

“Doing Thursday” allows us to find out how people like the way their city feels on a regular workday done irregularly, how (in)convenient it is, and what might be done to make it better the next time.

When seen in this light, Car-free Day becomes a grand public experiment wherein we all agree to accept a bit of chaos for a day and to report back on it until, with some luck and perseverance, we perhaps find a way to kick our habit.

Bonnie Fenton is dreaming of a city with a welcome-anywhere-anytime attitude to bikes.



CAR-FREE VANCOUVER DAY
BY PAUL HALYCHUK & TERRY LOWE
PHOTO BY BEN JOHNSON

VANCOUVER’S OWN Car-Free Day has been taking place since 2005, along eight blocks of a busy four-lane street where, usually for one day (two days in 2007), buses are diverted to adjacent roads, and a giant block party ensues.

The hugely popular Car-Free Commercial Drive Festival was the brainchild of Matt Hern and Carmen Mills (also a co-founder of MOMENTUM – “We love you, Carmen!”), and is now administered by the East Vancouver Celebration Society. The festival itself is put on by 300+ volunteers (and four traffic cops), and is attended by 40,000 people. The local merchants love it. It’s their biggest sales day of the year, surpassing even Christmas.

The key themes of the festival are “fun for free” and reclaiming public space. There is no charge to attend the festival and no corporate sponsors, although there are roaming “donation fairies” happy to accept contributions to help offset its costs.

Dancers, musicians, singers, poets, storytellers, stilt walkers, and DJs get the crowds hopping, and the local bike-art organization PedalPlay display their homemade freak bikes and invite people to ride them.

At least five other local neighbourhoods are interested in hosting similar events in the future, all to occur on the same day. With that in mind, efforts toward a Car-Free Vancouver Day, slated for 2008, are underway.

For further information, please see:
www.commercialdrivefestival.org
www.mightymatthern.com/evcs_carfree.html

To read “Thursday: A Breakthrough Strategy for Reducing Car Dependence in Cities,” go to www.ecoplan.org/carfreeday/general/thursday.htm

To find out more about International Car-free Day and European Mobility Week, go to www.22september.org

For those who recognize their addiction and would like to shake it, Autoholics Anonymous provides an on-line support group for autoholics, and a 12-step program to help addicts kick the habit and become “happier, healthier and wealthier by reducing [their] car dependence.” Find out more at www.autoholics.org

Tour De Vin

BY FOSZÆ MANCHOT BOSATSU

THE COMPETITORS ARE lined up on the porch: three red wines with bicycles on their labels. The purpose? Three laps, with winner-take-all victory to the wine that pulls ahead at the last corner. As the wines wait at the starting line, the field looks like it will be interesting.

The Australian competitor, Rolling, is an unknown 2004 Cabernet Merlot. No one's seen her race before, but with her hat and coat, she gets a mention for wearing the nicest label. And from the alcohol content, she promises to have the most kick of the three.

The second competitor is Red Bicycleette, a 2004 Syrah from France. With wobbly wheels and a dog on a leash, it's questionable how fast he'll go. He's the lightest of the three at 13% alcohol, and is known as a viable bike wine.

Filling out the pack is Cono Sur, from Chile. He's a Cabernet Sauvignon, younger by two years than the others, and for some reason, he's decided to show up without a rider. Nice looking bike though. And as a special benefit, he's organic!

During Lap One, Rolling gets a head start. She has the best legs, and smells most like a serious wine, with an oaky nose followed by a hint of blackberry or currant. But Red Bicycleette takes a bit of a lead, skinny legs flailing away. The pepper flavours are fruitier than Rolling's and the spectators start smacking their lips. Cono Sur is still showing some promise. Driest of the lot, he seems to have the most going on – yummy, smoky and a sparkle as it hits the top of the mouth. A strong start!

A little into Lap Two, Red Bicycleette is starting to lag. Some question his ability to carry all the way through this (or any) race. Rolling is definitely looking better on this round. If there's any compliment to offer her it's that there's very little struggle in her race. But Cono Sur is coming on strong in this lap. Even more flavours are coming out; a true revolutionary wine (as in wheels and as in Cuban cigars).

The third lap is a sloppy one. Or perhaps the spectators have become sloppy – but that's what happens when you get those laps in quickly. An unannounced competitor arrives (with little bicycles drawn onto the label), further blurring the spectators' minds.

At the finish line, Cono Sur has broken away from the peloton. Biggest, thickest, driest wine with a long finish, it would be the one most easily



enjoyed on its own. Pulling up second is the Frenchman, Red Bicycleette, his little dog still carrying a baguette in its mouth. Fruity and dry, it might not be the best for serious drinking, but would make a great accompaniment to a BBQ. Rolling falls to third; she's got a nice outfit, is fast and light, but is just too sweet to be in a competition like this. Today the Chilean Cono Sur is the winner.

All three wines are available in a price range of \$14.50 to \$18.

Cycling Style on a roll

BY ZINNAT ALI

WHILE TUCKING PANTS into socks serves a function for cyclists, the look has never really caught on as a fashion trend. Velorution, a London-based cycling shop specializing in folding bikes, work bikes, and town bikes, held a fashion show to highlight stylish clothes that also take a rider through their day in comfort.

At the Village Underground club on June 21, Velorution held the *Prêt-à-Rouler* fashion show to showcase fashion-forward clothing designed for cyclists. Since commuting cyclists are not known for being a fashion-conscious group of people, Velorution sought out hot designers to fill a niche that could potentially change the way cyclists dress forever: "We get many customers asking for good clothing that works well on a bike but that does not label the wearer as 'cyclist.' We expect that many non-cyclists are put off from trying riding by the garish and nerdy clothes many wear on a bike."

Choreographer Jason Piper and producer Nikolas Gleber ensured that *Prêt-à-Rouler* was slick and entertaining, presenting stylish Londoners with

clothes that easily translate from the bike to work, or to the pub.

The designers brought a colourful array of clothes constructed with deep pockets and waterproof fabrics. While models strutted down the runway in structured plaid suits, flirty knee-length skirts, and leather helmets, others enthralled the audience with their cycling prowess by doing stunts and tricks.

The event, sponsored by Transport for London (TfL), the company responsible for London's transit system, attracted designers like Karta Healy, who debuted his TWOnFRO line; Guy Hills, whose fabric Lumatwill™ combines twill with a reflective yarn and Teflon coating; and Bill Amberg who showed a number of his leather bags ergonomically equipped with cross-body straps designed for commuting.

Velorution also teamed up with Sustran's Bike It project for the 'Teenage Girl Cycle Fashion Project,' a national venture aimed to attract more girls to cycling culture, while maintaining current trends and style.

For more information on Velorution, *Prêt-à-Rouler*, or the Teenage Girl Cycle Fashion Project visit: www.velorution.biz/pret



PHOTO COURTESY OF GUY HILLS

Zinnat Ali is an aspiring fashion writer and currently a student of Douglas College's Print Futures: Professional Writing Program.

JANET ATTARD

BY SARAH J. HAMILTON

TORONTO-BASED ARTIST Janet Attard (a.k.a. “Janet Bike Girl”) didn’t expect to forge a career out of bicycle stenciling. Attard worked for textile-industry giant Brunschwig & Fils in the mid-1990s, and immersion in the graphic artistry of textiles cultivated her eye for stenciling. What began as a stencil side project (“the bicycle concept”) eventually became her full-time passion. “It’s funny. It seemed like a limited concept at the time, but the more I get into it, the more I realize how limitless it could become,” Attard tells me in her downtown studio at Spadina and Richmond.

A decade into the bicycle project, her passion has made her internationally known as “Janet Bike Girl.” Her commitment as an independent artist is visible everywhere one looks in her studio: it is criss-crossed with laundry lines full of cycling-themed T-shirt commissions that she can barely keep up with. As we talk, Attard recounts the Catch-22 of successful independent art: all of her stenciling is done by hand, a lengthy procedure from the design and cutting of stencils to the imprinting of T-shirts, handbags, and unique prints. The care she puts into her work is integral to its appeal.

Yet there is so much demand that Attard has trouble keeping up, and finds herself explaining to enthusiastic customers that they may have to wait weeks for a T-shirt. She reuses stencils until they break, but this non-mechanized method of “mass production” still seems likely to challenge the expectations of a public acclimatized to more immediate gratification. Nevertheless, Attard’s list of orders continues to grow.

The more ubiquitous her stencils of bicycles and cycling culture become, the less time she has to actually ride her upgraded 1970s old-fashioned women’s bicycle. When I met with her at her studio, her high-energy enthusiasm was peppered with fatigue. She is planning a vacation to France with Martin Heath from CineCycle, whose warehouse-like studio and screening space is next door to Attard’s own studio. Heath wipes bike grease off



his fingers and prepares lattes (then offers to fix my front fender), as Attard and I pore over portfolios stuffed with clippings of the shows she has participated in.

Attard’s work has shown in Toronto, New York, and throughout Ontario. She designs the volunteer T-shirts for diverse Toronto art events such as Lift and Images Film Fest, and counts MuchMusic and NDP leader Jack Layton among her customers. She was also published in *99 Silhouettes*, a collection of international stencil art. Occasionally, Attard tells me, she comes across her work unexpectedly – in media as various as blogging sites, *MOMENTUM* magazine, and the side of an art-van in New York City. “I’m really happy it’s out there,” she says, shrugging off concerns about copyright.

Attard reaps the benefit of such exposure through cycling activism: the more prevalent her bicycle imagery becomes, the more visions of bicycles will ride through the heads of the general public. Attard notes that the image of cycling has improved a lot over the last 15 years; yet car culture continues to dominate the visual landscape. “You see cars in commercials and movies all the time. There’s a lack of bike imagery out there. So little that people come into my studio thinking it’s a repair shop – any object with the image of a bike on it equals repairs



in people’s minds.” The antidote for this one-track, car-centric thinking, Attard suggests, is to saturate society with depictions of bicycles, especially removed from traditional contexts.

“Wearing a bike T-shirt into, say, a bank, gets cycling imagery out there. Even if people hate bikes, even if they only look at the image for a second, it gets into their heads and raises consciousness.” She recounts how cycling activists in New York stencil her bicycle images onto public sidewalks. She usually discovers such usage haphazardly, and in spite of being a successful gallery artist, she doesn’t worry about permissions. This reflects her artistic philosophy – Attard moved into bicycle art after taking a step back from cycling advocacy work. Art, she implies, achieves what activism sometimes cannot: it unites instead of divides.

Janet Attard can be reached for gallery events, publication, and T-shirt commissions at janetbikegirl@yahoo.ca. Her studio is open to the public and is located at 401 Richmond St. W., Studio S-26, Toronto, M5V 3A8.

Sarah J. Hamilton is propelling small children with the Kids CAN-BIKE Camp in Toronto this summer. She is an MA student in Theory, Culture, & Politics at Trent University, and a section editor for George St. Magazine.

Contact: sarahmaya7@yahoo.ca.

Biker Make-over

TAKE YOUR BIKESTYLE FROM BAD TO RAD WITH A FEW SIMPLE PIECES THAT WILL ALSO MAKE YOUR RIDE MORE COMFORTABLE.

IN OUR QUEST for bike style we visited On the Rivet, Vancouver's newest cycling specialty boutique. Opened in June by Ed Luciano, owner of the adjacent bike shop, Mighty Riders, this new venture caters to the style and comfort needs of regular riders. An amazing feature of the location is its spectacular view of the Ontario bike route. It's a great place to watch stylish bikers (as well as those unconcerned with fashion) waiting at the stop light and whizzing down the hill into town. Since many urban riders would rather not look like a spandex clad "roadie" as they travel, the folks at On the Rivet seek out bike clothing that helps cyclists look stylish everyday.

PHOTOS BY CLANCY DENNEHY



Swobo men's short sleeve merino wool jersey
(Also available in cranberry, mars 1 orange,
army green, grass green, orange and true red)
\$129

Rudy Project
Kontakt helmet
\$125

Toast 100% cotton twill tan knickers with
crotch gusset and reinforced back pockets
(Also available in UPS brown and black).
\$75



Laser cut wooden belt buckle and
leather belt from Motherland

John Fluevog
Hans Nature Angels
\$109



◀ Scott Nelson is a technology steward, cyber ninja, meditator, and man of action. He is an everyday cyclist and has been car-free since 1993. Scott describes his style as 'unassuming' and recommends readers visit the website: www.d.i.y.dharma.virishi.net

Tannis Braithwaite is a civil litigator and organizer of Vancouver's annual Bike Shorts film night (which she ensures always features ample bike parking). Tannis is a highly organized free spirit. Though she is a bike advocate and has been car-free for 14 years, she often walks to work. ▶

Giro Eclipse helmet
\$100



Swobo bluenote merino wool short sleeve jersey (Also available in tree mud, grass lemon, bubblegum, light blue and black)
\$129

Terry quick-dry synthetic wrapper skirt
\$56

Shebeest Pedal Pusher knicker with chamois
\$84



Specialized Riata cycling shoe
\$145

ON THE RIVET

8 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC
www.ontherivet.ca

JOHN FLUEVOG

www.fluevog.com

MOTHERLAND

2539 Main Street, Vancouver, BC
www.motherlandclothing.com

Bicycle Dream Date

BY MYKLE HANSEN

ILLUSTRATION BY SHAWN GRANTON

GOOD MORNING! It's 8:15 am on Vancouver Avenue in Portland, Oregon: bicycle rush hour. I'm swimming in a stream of bike traffic: passing careful moms in yellow safety vests towing their twins in Burley trailers, and being passed by spandexed road-captains on titanium sprinters shaving seconds off their personal best commute times. I follow two stylish hipsters on restored Japanese ten-speeds (nice!), and wave as I pass a front yard full of tall-bikes and choppers. Riding with other bikes is the norm here, not the exception. The adjacent car traffic, while rushed and stinky, is mostly polite and attentive. Bike gospel is spreading like wildfire, bike traffic is up 400 per cent in ten years and growing by dozens daily – and yet, the number of car-bike collisions in Portland has remained about flat. Drivers here, God bless 'em, have started seeing cyclists. The more we ride, the safer riding gets.

I zoom downhill to the Hawthorne Bridge – recently widened to accommodate bike traffic – where SHIFT, Portland's bike-fun-advocacy group, is serving free breakfast to bike commuters. Because we ride, we get free coffee and donuts on a somewhat random schedule. The Shifties are festive but somewhat bleary-eyed – we're in the second week of Pedalpalooza, Portland's annual bike-fun festival, and it appears some of us have been celebrating a bit too hard. I ask one Shiftie what's on the Pedalpalooza menu today, and she rolls her eyes – what isn't? Let's see: there's a gelato ride, a taco ride, a bike-in movie in the park, rumours of a bicycle dance party in a traffic circle somewhere... just ride your bike and you'll find something, is the advice I get. Just follow the pack of laughing cyclists.

Biking in Portland is a social thing – you run into people you know all over town, maybe take a detour with them so you can talk a bit. There's a plethora of bike clubs and regular monthly fun-rides. Biking gets you out of glass boxes and puts you into the world – we all know that – and in Portland the world is smooth, flat and smells like fresh rain. It is also full of front-yard gardens and old wooden houses, street art, bridges,

waterways, and nice people who'll talk to you.

Fast forward: It's 2 pm and I'm folding up my laptop at the Stumptown coffee shop, favourite hangout of messengers and bike hipsters. The speed limit downtown is only 15 miles per hour and riding on sidewalks is forbidden. So, even though riding is not really difficult, doing so downtown scares a lot of recreational cyclists and has become home to a harder-core element. A twice-weekly noontime ride takes off from Pioneer Square, sometimes climbing the west hills, sometimes taking off down one of Portland's many bike paths, trails, or boulevards. But me, I head home for lunch, crossing the river on the three-year-old Steel Bridge bike/pedestrian path, then using Portland's first dedicated bicycle crosswalk to connect from the eastside bike/pedestrian esplanade to the new Northeast Portland bike boulevards.

Biking in Portland is feeling that the city cares about you. Every time I take off in a new direction, I find some lovely new piece of bike path, some bridge, some stripe, some new signage, some connection that didn't exist before. It's like an Easter-egg hunt for short-cuts and rights-of-way. Portland's city planners have been working hard to make biking easy. Since 1991 they've added 200 miles of urban bike paths, and – surprise! – ridership has grown proportionally. And when you notice that the icon painted on the pavement to mark the bike lane is a bicyclist wearing a scarf and holding a martini in one hand, you know these lanes were paved with love.

Fast forward: It's almost midnight, and my wife and I, slightly tipsy, are party-hopping on the newly constructed Springwater Corridor, riding from a fancy animation-industry soirée downtown to a bike-freak wedding reception in deepest Southeast. The Springwater is a bicycle expressway. It runs south from downtown along the undeveloped East riverbank, connecting the outlying neighbourhoods of Milwaukie and Sellwood to the growing bike network. It's quiet, scenic, newly paved, straight, flat, empty, and green. Its visibility is excellent, its river views are

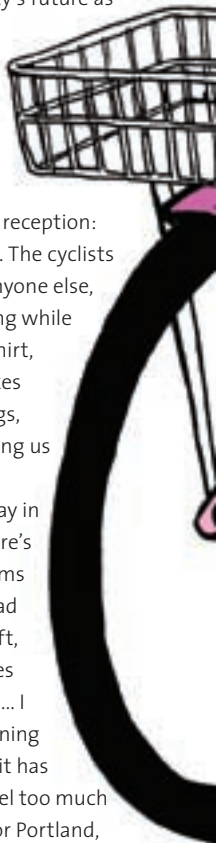
scenic, pedestrians are all but nonexistent, and it takes us exactly where we want to go. It's perfect – it puts other bike paths to shame.

This is a glimpse of the dream we've been fighting for: a city that plans for bicycles as normal transportation, cyclists as first-class citizens of the road, deserving of space, planning, understanding, and funding. Until recently, cyclists have fought for crumbs – white stripes of paint, curb cuts, and rights of way on multi-million dollar roads designed for cars. In 1971, the state of Oregon mandated that a whopping 1% of all federal highway funds be spent on trails for non-motorized transport, and cyclists had to file lawsuits to even get that money spent. But today our City Hall considers "bike appeal" and alternative transit crucial to our city's future as a dense and thriving urban center. Bicyclists have found their voice in local politics and have their hands on the levers of change.

We cross through the new Oaks Park bike path to Milwaukie Boulevard and locate the wedding reception: right behind the giant pile of bikes. The cyclists inside are having more fun than anyone else, as usual. The dance floor is booming while the groom, in a loosened tuxedo shirt, karokes to 80s synth hits. Minibikes circle the dance floor like sheepdogs, herding us back to the music, making us dance all night.

Biking in Portland is like being gay in San Francisco: it's just normal. There's still more to be done, many problems to be solved: incomplete routes, bad traffic design, careless drivers, theft, even bike congestion on the bridges during rush hour. I could complain ... I should complain, because complaining is part of the political process and it has gotten us a lot. But I just can't. I feel too much bike pride, too much mushy love for Portland, the City That Works.

Oh my God, it's 5 am! We're biking home with



*Just ride your bike
and you'll find something...*

a tired, happy pack of wedding guests. What we hoped might be the setting moon is in fact the rising sun. I'm too old for this: this afternoon my head will honk like a car horn. But right now I'm in love with this road, these people, this city. Bike Fun is the secret weapon of our pedal revolution. It keeps me inspired to get involved with the organizations, the city meetings, the clubs and parties, and with the beautiful people who are making this all happen. Biking in Portland, you feel like you could change the world.

Mykle Hansen lives, writes, bikes, makes music and fixes things in Portland, Oregon. He hacks online at www.mykle.com



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THE ADVOCATE
JOHN LUTON

one less car

LAST MONTH Richard Miller came to my house bearing gifts. Richard owns Fairfield Bicycles, a Victoria shop with the most eclectic selection of bikes and equipment of any shop I've ever visited. I'd been coveting an old model Mavic, a butter-smooth cartridge-bearing hub to outfit my bike.

As a mostly full-time advocate and consultant, and sometimes tour guide, riding is essential to my profession, and my bicycle is as essential to my workday as the computer and cell phone.

My bike has been beaten by the rides it's been forced to endure over the last several months, travelling to meetings or heading out for field work along the Galloping Goose. Rain or shine, winter or summer, the work of advocacy goes on. And getting there by bike isn't just necessary to establish your bona fides; it's the quickest and most flexible means of travel for a schedule that is anything but routine.

Last fall I took a trip to the Pro Walk – Pro Bike conference in Madison, Wisconsin. It was a 700 kilometre workout for both me and the bike, travelling 170 kilometres each way between Milwaukee – where Air Canada flies – and Madison. Some of the other conference attendants were travelling further to meet with the Thunderhead Alliance, the community of US bike advocates that follows the bike conference circuit and share strategies at their own retreats. At the main conference, commuting between my home stay, the conference and its social events, a couple of mobile workshops, and some of my own exploring added up to a lot of overtime for a working bike.

I have to admit that Air Canada is pretty good with my bike. I like that they use plastic bags for transport. It's less work – turn the handlebars and take off the pedals. Most airlines, especially those in the US, put your bike into a box. It makes riding to and from airports a bit of a challenge. At the Victoria airport, we have a bike assembly and box recycling facility that the local airport authority delivered for Pro Walk-Pro Bike in Victoria in 2004.

They've made it permanent now and I'm looking forward to using that on my next trip.

But last winter was the worst – ergo my need for new hubs and wheels. I was travelling by bike between Victoria and the mainland, chasing ferries to report on bike racks on ferries. 13 in all, not always on the schedule I'd planned on, and most often during the expected coastal winter weather. A trip through a West Vancouver monsoon drowned my bike and soaked my notes.

My bike is protesting the cruel and unusual punishment. My wheel bearings run like gravel in a salmon stream after a November storm. My bottom bracket squawks like a throttled crow. My brakes howl, my gears change at a slug's pace and the chain drapes loosely over the chainwheel where the teeth used to be.

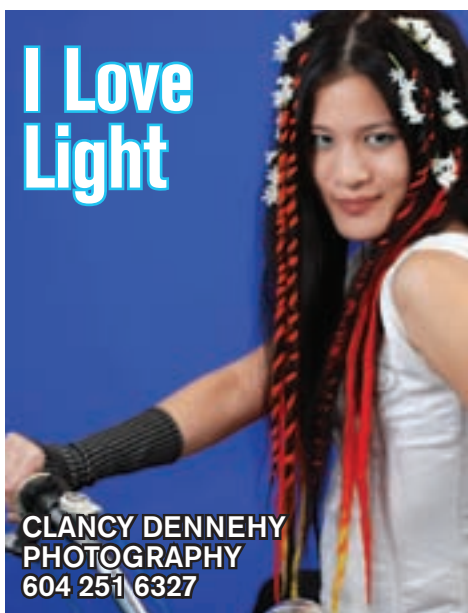
“...my bicycle is as essential to my workday as the computer and cell phone.”

Richard, who is also committed to the cause, presented the Mavic hub and told me that, “rather than going to meetings,” here's how he'd like to support my work. He chipped in some credit at the store to get the wheels built and at a \$500 value, it's a substantial donation.

The Executive Director of the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation got his bike “swagged” while he was doing a tour of a local cycling industry plant. And Planet Bike – the Madison based supplier of some very nice accessory equipment – commits 25 per cent of its profits to advocacy, giving several hundred thousand dollars over the last few years to the efforts of the Thunderhead Alliance.

I'm thinking I need a full-suspension, off-road bike to play on when I'm not riding for work. I figure I get as much media as the local racing pros get for their sponsors... Hope my friends at Kona read MOMENTUM.

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



I Love Light

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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE *a few miles from home*

GRANT PETERSEN IS no magician. When we asked the Rivendell Bicycle Works founder about his role in the utility biking revival he said, "I, personally, am a big nothing. I feel like the Wizard of Oz [pay no attention to that man behind the curtain]." The self-effacing Petersen, who ran the American marketing and design division of Japan's Bridgestone Cycles from 1984 to 1994, is referring to the hype that can surround a relatively simple thing, like a well-made bicycle.

In 1994, when Petersen founded Rivendell, the company stood out for doing things simply, and for making simple bikes exceptionally well. Rivendell is known for its beautifully precise, handmade, lugged steel bicycles; its catalogue of pricey yet practical and enduring cycling gear; its *Rivendell Reader* newsletter (a wealth of cycling knowledge, advice and opinion), and its thousands of loyal customers/devotees.

Petersen is also a proponent of the "sub 24-hour overnight" approach to bike camping, which eschews long hours on the road, weighted down with an extended journey's worth of gear, in favour of quick bites of adventure, close to home. In Petersen's words: "Bike camping emphasizes the destination and what you do once you get there, and you just happen to get there on a bike."

What inspired your approach to bicycle camping?

I used to spend a lot of time in the mountains, and then I got a full-time job, got married, had children, started Rivendell, and that cut in. I missed it a lot, so one night at about 7:30 pm I said, "You know, I think I'm going to sleep in the hills tonight... nothing bad, I'm not mad, and I'll be back in the morning." And I was back in the morning – before everybody woke up. That's how it started.

How many S24Os have you taken over the years?

About seventy-five. I still leave happy and am happy to come home.

How many people do you camp with?

Usually one or two, often three, now and then by myself. I prefer company.

What foods do you pack when camping?

When the hills are brown we don't light stoves. We bring peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, brown

bread in a can, black licorice, and fruit. When the hills are green, it's split pea soup with corn, bread, and maybe a can of salmon or some kippers. But one night it was ostrich burgers and coconuts; another night, take-out burritos. It all depends.

What is the biggest mistake people make when bike camping?

Thinking about going but not actually going. I understand that doesn't actually answer your question.

What's the second biggest mistake?

Over-planning, then overpacking. It's only overnight. And not bringing reading material, or a light to read by.

People are embracing baskets on bikes again, partly through your influence. Baskets are great for city riding. Should people consider them for camping and touring?

Heck yes. A 13" x 18" x 6" basket holds a ton, lets you pack sloppy, makes you look homeless, and puts you in the right frame of mind for the trip. Viva baskets!

What bike camping moment stands out for you?

Five of us, one March, headed up the mountain. At about 2,300 feet it started to drizzle, and by the time we got to camp, about 2,900 feet, it was still drizzling and the wind was gusting about 40 miles per hour. One guy bailed when he couldn't set up his tent, and rode home in a black rainstorm. Another two got theirs up fine. I pitched a single-pole floorless tepee; and me and another guy slept under it for about an hour, until a stake pulled. I was still fine in a bivvy sack, but he got "soaked to the bone," as he put it, and then we both hopped in our bags over to the tiny tent, where four of us spent the night hoping it wouldn't get destroyed. I've done a lot of mountaineering, even in the winter, and that night on the mountain ranks among the most miserable. Of course in retrospect, it was neat to have gone through.

Visit Rivendell's website: www.rivbike.com

GRANT PETERSEN'S SIMPLE APPROACH TO BIKES AND CAMPING OUT

BY AMY WALKER

PHOTO BY SENG CHEN

iheartbrains.com



GRANT PETERSEN RIDING IN THE HILLS NEAR RIVENDELL'S HEADQUARTERS IN WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA.

BIKE TALK for a better world

JONATHAN MAUS AND BIKEPORTLAND.ORG

BY JUSTIN BERGER

PHOTO BY DAT NGUYEN

FOR SOME PEOPLE in the Pacific Northwest, BP and AP are like personal epochs. Life “AP” (After Portland), means a whole new way of understanding the world – an understanding that was inconceivable “BP” (Before Portland). Jonathan Maus, founder of Bike Portland.org, is one of those people. He explained how moving to the bridge city completely changed the way he thought about things – specifically about bikes and biking:

“Coming from California, I was blown away. It was just the level of intelligence and thinking around using bicycles as transportation, and some of the ways they were using fun as a way to get people excited about riding. One of the first rides I remember hearing about was the Bunny on a Bike ride: people dressed up as bunnies and rode around. Where I came from, before Portland, you would never think about doing something like that.”

Maus was so taken with the Portland bike scene that he started a blog hosted by the Oregon newspaper *Bike Fun*. Before long, there were so many stories to tell that *Bike Fun* gave way to something more serious: Bikeportland.org was born.

Bikeportland.org is more than a blog. Maus brings a commitment to news that takes the site beyond nearly every other independent cycling site on the Internet. Maus says that Bikeportland.org is “...really more akin to a news magazine. Most of the stories are original stories. I do a lot of original reporting: I don’t just rehash something I see floating around the web.”

Meticulous craft and dedication are not the only things that set Bikeportland.org apart. More apparent to a casual visitor is the all-encompassing nature of the site. There are posts about bike activism, bike business, bike racing, and if anyone were to think the spirit of spontaneous bike fun that started it all is left behind, postings such as the “Volcano Clown Bike Wedding Photo Set” should set them straight.

Bikeportland.org’s diversity means it often transcends a limited focus on cycling to touch issues that affect the life of the city as a whole. According to Maus,

“It’s happening often. We’ve touched on things like youth violence, racism, gentrification, and the role of police. It really transcends regular bike talk and that’s what’s drawn a lot of people in. It’s not just talking about bikes and equipment, and the experience of cycling. It relates the lifestyle and the life on a bicycle to some bigger issues.”

A good example is a recent post in which Portland resident Olivia Rebanal recounted a harrowing experience of cyclist apathy after a trail-a-bike carrying her daughter came loose during a ride. She wrote,

For some reason no one stopped to help: in the middle of the Esplanade, while bikers of all sorts zipped passed us from every direction. Bikers in lycra, bikers in khakis - no one was stopping to help a mother, her bleeding child, and her crying second child. I shouted at the Willamette River: “WHY IS NO ONE STOPPING FOR US?”

Within hours of the report appearing on Bikeportland.org, there were more than 50 responses. Some offered support, some offered advice, and some pledged to work to overcome the fear and indifference that cause people to ignore others in distress.



The best thing about Bikeportland.org is the way it brings people together and gives them the connections to make a better world. Maus says that,

“One thing the site does is educate people – the average level of knowledge around these topics has gone up a lot, because they see all these different perspectives. There’s a high level of awareness and intelligence about bike-related topics, and that’s a pretty important thing.”

*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*.*



Credit Card Touring

3412 3345 4531 2007
By Tom Demarco

HALFWAY THROUGH MY latest bike tour, I climbed the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park, Montana, all the way to Logan Pass, 2000 metres on the Continental Divide of the Rockies. There I had to wait eight hours before proceeding further east, as the road below was under repair from landslide damage. Over the course of the day, quite a number of other cyclists arrived at the pass. About half of them were young cycling campers, heavily laden with gear (two of them broke spokes on the climb). The others were middle-aged men and women on fancy racing bikes, escorted by a guided cycle touring van. The latter riders' daily travel budget was likely ten times that of the former. As usual, I was the only member of my breed: an unsupported "credit card tourer," hauling one third the load of the campers, on one third the budget of the guided "adventurers." For over 25 years now, I've regularly enjoyed light-weight bicycle touring, staying in hotels, motels, or bed and breakfasts along the way. And I have always wondered why more people don't travel this way.

As a supporter of all human-powered transport, I'm pleased to see anyone on a bike, so I have little interest in "recruiting" converts from either of the aforementioned groups. But I do believe they are unwittingly contributing to an image problem, and that this is an obstacle to broader popularity of travel by bicycle. The campers, often engaged in epic expeditions (at Logan Pass, some were bound for Alaska, others for Maine), certainly impress many people with their dogged determination. Their stories appear regularly

in popular literature. The guided cyclists I'm sure often fill less well-off observers with envy. Their itineraries regularly appear in glossy magazines. But neither of these types inspires many to follow their example.

Softer, easier, faster, more comfortable, and more convenient than bike camping, yet more spontaneous, more adventuresome, and far more economical than supported guided touring, I believe credit card bike travel is a promising compromise, especially for the over-30 crowd.

WHAT (AND WHAT NOT) TO BRING

MAP: Other than a well maintained, comfortable bicycle, this is the most important item. Should be 1/200,000 scale. The key to consistently safe, pleasant bike touring is knowing how to select your route from these maps. Do not succumb to focussing on destination or displacement; the ride is the thing. Never take a straight busy road when you have a crooked quiet alternative. Don't be afraid to follow your whims along the way. Wander off on appealing-looking side roads even if it leads to a dead end. Allow curiosity to be your guide as you discover what's over the next hill or around the next bend. Italians have the perfect word for this aimless approach to navigation: *curiosare*. Most of your time should be spent on roads where you'll experience less than four car or truck overtakes per minute. (Unfortunately, in BC that's often difficult to achieve on paved roads. Washington and Oregon are far superior and Europe is best). Avoid bigger cities – they're

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

inevitably full of cars. If curiosity overcomes you, leave the bike behind and take a bus or train into town. Be aware of prevailing wind conditions; most often from the west in temperate latitudes. If travelling along a river or a coast, plan to be on the “water side of the road” (But especially in the summer, coast roads can have heavy traffic). Good maps remove the need to carry a guide book. Conventional travel books are full of info on all the places you want to avoid on a bicycle – too many tourists, too many cars. Bike travel guides are often unimaginative in their itineraries (often overlooking the quietest routes), remove the element of adventure, and can be tedious to use but may be wise to have for the first trip. Why paint by numbers when you can compose an original?

HANDLEBAR BAG: This doubles as a purse where you can store all your valuables, camera (and compact binoculars, if you are a bird watcher like me). It snaps on and off, and has a shoulder strap. Carry it with you whenever you leave the bike. Such a piece should be standard gear for all cyclists, day-trippers, utilitarians, and travellers.

SMALL REAR PANNIERS: As most rear panniers are unnecessarily large, I use front panniers as rear ones. These are compact enough to go carry-on if flying. They should contain just one change of clothes. You must wash your socks, shorts, and shirt every night. Ask reception for a fan to dry them, if necessary. Don't over-pack with foul weather wear in the summer. I only bring Gore-Tex if I anticipate cold rain. As for toiletries, don't bring a new 120 cc tube of toothpaste! Try to guess how many cc's or grams per day you will require of all liquid items. If you underestimate you can always buy more along the way.

WATER: Don't bring a lot of “just in case” items. And don't carry too much water, it's heavy! As a doctor, I feel dehydration is overrated in popular literature. If you've packed properly (total 6-7 kilograms) you really shouldn't be sweating much. Unless you expect very hot weather, one water bottle is sufficient. Pedaling on paved roads, you are rarely more than 30 minutes away from a tap. If travelling in our western cordillera, you can safely refill from most mountain streams.

SEAT BAG: For tools, a spare tube (no spare tire), a rag, mini bungee cords, maybe a small cable lock (no U-lock).

“Allow curiosity to be your guide as you discover what’s over the next hill or around the next bend. Italians have the perfect word for this aimless approach to navigation: curiosare.”

HELMET MIRROR (or a rear-view mirror that attaches to your sunglasses): This is another favourite of mine that remains mysteriously unpopular in North America and unavailable elsewhere in the world. If you are going to be travelling on deserted roads, why would you need one? Paradoxically, the quieter the road, the more likely you are to be surprised by an overtaking vehicle, especially if your hearing is impaired by a roaring river, crashing waves, a blustery wind, or your own singing! Having this “eye” in the back of your head provides constant awareness of what is behind you (usually nothing), and allows you to use the whole road – e.g., the sunny side if it's cool, the shady side if it's hot, the smoother side, the water side, etc. A rear-view mirror is also your best protection against punctures, as it allows you to safely swerve around debris, cracks, and potholes. I average only one puncture per 3000 kilometre tour. In fact, most rides are completed without any mechanical problems at all – light-weight touring is easy on your machine. Best of all, helmet mirrors make for excellent conversation pieces. In fact, the most frequently asked question when I'm touring is “What's that thing on your helmet?” You will thus meet lots of people, which will provide you ample opportunity to extol the virtues of your preferred mode of travel.

Tom DeMarco, a family physician in Whistler, BC has been car free since 1991. He has cycled over 200,000 kilometres on five continents.

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“GOOD MORNING, CANADA!” called a Dutch cyclist as we pedalled past him and his partner in the early morning. We were following the Vía de La Plata, one of the many historic routes, or *caminos*, to Santiago de Compostela where the alleged bones of the apostle St. James lie beneath the altar of the cathedral. Less popular than the Camino Francés that crosses the Pyrenees and Northern Spain, the Vía de La Plata travels through a variety of landscapes as it passes through sparsely populated western Spain. Besides the churches usually seen in a Catholic country such as this, evidence of the Iberian Peninsula’s Roman history abounds here. Our May trip was well timed; the heat was manageable and the roads were lined with wildflowers.

I love discovering a new country’s small villages and rural areas, and I cannot think of a better way to do this than by travelling on a bicycle. There is a heady freedom to touring independently, with only a rough schedule, and with no physical or psychological barriers between the rider and the surrounding land.

Our threesome – my husband, my nephew, and me – travelled for nearly a month on quiet roads across farmland, over ridges topped with modern windmills, and through villages and historic towns. Falling into a comfortable routine, we stopped for mid-morning *café con leche* at bars, bought local cheeses and bread for lunches on park benches or shady roadsides, and on the hottest days we started early and drank lots of *Fanta Limón*. We stayed in pilgrim hostels or modest hotels, and learned to wait until the locally customary nine o’clock to eat dinner. The three of us covered almost 1100 kilometres from Seville to Santiago de Compostela, where my nephew departed to Madrid for his return to Canada. My husband and I, with more time, explored Spain for a further 400 kilometres.

We arrived in Seville by bus from Madrid, where the pilgrim route traditionally begins at the Cathedral. Feeling the need to get out into the countryside and put some road behind us, we didn’t linger in the city. We pedalled north, past olive orchards on small roads lined with poppies and lavender, until we reached the village where our first pilgrim hostel awaited.

Crossing a pass from the southern region of Andalucía into Extremadura, we entered a broad tableland that was the home of *conquistadores* Pizarro and Cortes. We spent a night in a hilltop town whose mainstay is the production of *jamón de bellota*, a local ham made from the contented pigs we saw feeding on the acorns (*bellotas*) of cork oaks. A long, hot day took us to Mérida, where the *camino* enters the city via a Roman bridge. Locals greeted us with “*Buen camino*,” the standard pilgrim greeting that wishes the recipient “good travels,” as we pushed our bikes across the ancient bridge with the Alcazaba, a 9th century Muslim fort, towering

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above us. Our next day was spent off the bikes absorbing Roman, Visigoth, Moorish, and early Christian history.

We continued north across Extremadura on a smooth and empty road, that had been recently repaved only to have a highway built right beside it. Arriving in Cáceres at midday, we found the cobbled streets full of musicians and dancers performing formally and informally, and learned that we'd arrived in the middle of WOMAD, World Festival of Music and Dance. Waiting for the temperature to drop before we continued, we soaked up the scene. As we climbed a pass and travelled into Castilla y León, poppies gave way to heather and gorse as we crossed granite outcroppings. We stayed in a tiny village just south of Salamanca, where we dined on the "pilgrim menu" in a smoky bar. Grandfathers and teen grandsons sat glued to the television, cheering wildly every time Real Madrid scored against Rome in the *fútbol* match. In the morning, we raced the last 20 kilometres past fields of wheat with the wind at our backs to enter Salamanca; a city of rose and gold sandstone, in time for morning coffee and a day of sightseeing.

Leaving Salamanca, we veered northwest and away from the standard route, having decided to follow an option that took us through Portugal for a few days. As the day's end approached, we inquired about accommodation options at a local bar. We were directed to a *posada rural* (country retreat) just a few kilometres further by roads so small that they didn't appear on our map. Pedalling on, we found a beautifully restored farmhouse that offered luxury beyond our needs. We'd left the main route, so our options were few and we decided to spoil ourselves. Juan, our delightful host, cooked a wonderful dinner. After the meal, he sat with us, speaking in measured *castellano* (Castilian Spanish) to allow me to translate for the other two. He recounted his family's experiences during the Civil War and subsequent Franco era. I'd read of the cruelties endured, but his story made history real and I was deeply moved.

Leaving the *posada*, we continued into Portugal despite Juan's warnings about Portuguese drivers. The desire to warn of dangers ahead is based on protective concern, but we found the Portuguese drivers just as courteous and competent as the Spanish and didn't regret our route choice. We crossed the Rio Duero that forms a canyon at the border, approached by an exhilarating descent to a dam and followed by steep switchbacks up to Miranda do Douro, the Portuguese border town perched on the far side. My nephew bought a Portuguese-English dictionary, and we practised greetings and numbers. As we moved away from



PHOTO BY A PASSING TOURIST

the Spanish border, we found that some older people spoke French, and younger ones often spoke English as a second language. Visibly different than Spain, buildings here are faced with blue-painted tiles, and columns adorned with ornate spirals. An old woman, dressed in black and wearing an elaborate headdress, seemed astonished to see us as we entered a bar for cold drinks. I felt immodest in Lycra shorts. We had entered a country that was poorer than Spain, with a rural society that was still deeply traditional.

After a day in Bragança spent walking the keep of a 16th century castle, we followed a *ruta de contrabandos* (smugglers' route) to re-enter Spain. Armed with local advice and the combined information from two maps, we laboured up a steep-sided valley. We were in a *parque natural* set aside to conserve wolf habitat: no traffic, empty villages, and just a few old men tending beehives. Shortly after passing old border markers, we came to a restored water mill with a sign in an unfamiliar language. We had entered Galicia, the region in Northwestern Spain that has its own language and Celtic culture.

As we travelled Galicia's hilly terrain we saw a

proudly different part of Spain, with austere granite buildings and ornate raised *horreos* – structures for storing corn. Forests of eucalyptus, an introduced species, separate farming areas where potatoes and cabbage were grown in the shade of grapevines. We took a high route to see a monastery that an old man enthused we mustn't miss, "*porque es una gloria!*" Crossing a last ridge, I knew that it was mainly downhill to Santiago, and I leaned forward, clicking through my gears and gathering speed. The exhilaration of long descents on a loaded bike lingers in my memory to sustain me on the climbs.

After a day in Santiago, we said goodbye to my nephew. With its souvenir shops and tour groups, I found Santiago a bit of a let-down, and was happy to continue towards Cape Finisterre with my husband. We were not a part of the minority who follows this route for religious reasons, but I had found the physical and geographic nature of the journey satisfying. The westernmost point in Europe, where a rugged headland meets the Atlantic and where walking pilgrims traditionally burn their boots, Cape Finisterre seemed a more fitting journey's end.

My husband and I continued South in Galicia

IF YOU GO:

MAPS:

Michelin Regional series or similar. Look for 2005 or later editions, as many new roads have been built since Spain joined the EU, and roads have been renumbered.

GUIDE BOOKS:

Walking the Via de la Plata: The Camino de Santiago from Sevilla to Santiago de Compostela and on to Finisterre.

By Ben Cole and Bethan Davies. Pili Pala Press
A hiker's guide, so touring cyclists will follow only a little of the route as described. A great resource for its information on the human and natural history, food, and culture of each region. (A touring cyclists' route guide is, at present, available only in Dutch.)

Cycle Touring in Spain.

By Harry Dowdell. Cicerone Press
Useful general information on cycling in Spain.

Spain. Lonely Planet. Accommodation and sightseeing information for major towns, and city maps useful as you first enter a town.

TRANSPORT IN SPAIN WITH A BICYCLE:

Inter-city buses allow bicycles, front-wheels removed, in the luggage hold. Local trains (*cercanías*) allow bicycles, but are of little use to cycle tourists. The long distance train situation should improve as Spain is encouraged to meet EU standards for bike-friendliness.

INFORMATION ON MADRID CYCLE PATHS:

New network is known locally as the *Anillo Verde Ciclista* (Cyclists' Green Ring). Maps available at Madrid tourist offices.

LANGUAGE:

Try to learn some basics before you go. Outside of a few tourist offices, English is not widely spoken outside Madrid.

for a few days, then took a bus to Salamanca to cycle three more days to Madrid for our return. On the final day, as we slowly climbed from Segóvia to the 1880 metre pass over the jagged Sierra de Guadarrama, I was the target of cheering encouragement from passing motorists. As a grey-haired woman, I must have been conspicuous in a country with an overwhelmingly male-dominated road bike culture. As they say, everyone finds their own *camino*.

Margo is in the second touring phase of her life now that her children are young adults. She loves the adrenalin of long and fast descents, and hit 66.4 km/h in Galicia.

HIT THE BOOKS AND HIT THE ROAD

BY MARGO MACTAGGART

IF THE IDEA of bicycle touring – locally or beyond – appeals to you, but you'd like information or inspiration to get started, then here are some reading suggestions that will help you become an independent two-wheeled traveller.

THE ESSENTIAL TOURING CYCLIST:

A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR THE BICYCLE TRAVELER (SECOND EDITION).

Richard A. Lovett, Ragged Mountain Press 1994.

This is a clearly laid-out book that covers most aspects of gearing up for a tour, including planning routes and living life on the road. The gear information is a bit dated since there is no mention of Aheadset handlebar stems, which are treated differently when boxing a bike for travel, or of clipless (step-in) pedals. Published in the US, the suggested tours are mainly in the continental states, but mention is made of Canada and Australia, and there is a brief section on "International Touring."



ADVENTURE CYCLE TOURING HANDBOOK:

WORLDWIDE CYCLING ROUTE & PLANNING GUIDE

Stephen Lord, Trailblazer Publications 2006.

If you're considering an extended trip in the developing world, you'll find this book a superb resource. The detailed "Practicalities" section covers gear and planning, and includes choosing a new bike or buying a used mountain bike for touring. Published in Britain, a number of the new bikes suggested are European, but some are available in North America. The section on "Route Outlines" suggests general itineraries and includes snapshot reports from correspondents. "Tales from the Saddle" from Kyrgyzstan and beyond will inspire and entertain. The "Bicycle Maintenance" appendix addresses upkeep and repair of your long-haul bike in countries where tools and parts are likely to be scarce.

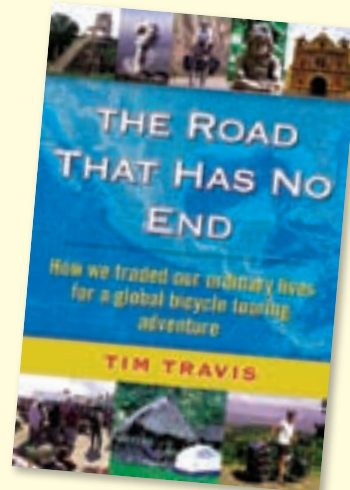


THE ROAD THAT HAS NO END:

HOW WE TRADED OUR ORDINARY LOVES FOR A GLOBAL BICYCLE TOURING ADVENTURE

Tim Travis, Down The Road Publishing.

This is an account of the first year of a planned seven years of travel by Tim and his wife, Cindie. It covers their preparations, their departure from Flagstaff, Arizona in March 2002, and their travel through Mexico and Central America as far as Panama. Already culturally open and aware at the start, it is fascinating to see them grow and examine themselves as they experience generosity in the midst of poverty, and experience first-hand some of the effects of their country's foreign policy.



Margo and her husband are dreaming of taking a year to pedal from Southeast Asia to Britain – before they have grandchildren.

FIELD GUIDE

TO VANCOUVER CYCLISTS

With Illustrations by Ian Hoffman

With ever-increasing numbers of cyclists on local streets, an interested observer needs a way to identify the various flocks. Herewith we present the first ever Field Guide to Vancouver Cyclists. Our examples are local, but the characteristics are universal.

1. ROAD RACER (AKA "ROADIE")

Scientific Name: "Curvus Actuarius"

By Luis Bernhardt

CAN BE SEEN: Throughout North America, although sightings tend to be sparse in the northern latitudes during the winter months; some migrate to warmer climates, particularly Southern California and Arizona.

LIKES TO HANG OUT: Frequents European coffee bars, Italian restaurants, and cheap smorgasbords; can usually be found in large flocks on weekends along deserted rural roads, especially in extremely hilly areas, or in empty industrial parks on weekday evenings.

LIKES TO EAT: Diets vary, but species usually consumes vast quantities of its particular staples, whether vegetarian or carnivorous. If hoping to feed this species, it is best to plan on serving the largest size (and then triple it). Unlike its distant relative, the Touring Cyclist, the Road Racer does not get fat consuming its ample diet, at least until he or she retires and metamorphoses into either a Touring Cyclist or a Couch Potato.

UNIQUE QUALITIES: Various subspecies exist. Subspecies Category 4 and 5 can usually be identified by black grease marks on the inside of the right leg. This is usually combined with a propensity to smash headlong into the rest of the flock, particularly at high speed. The highest categories – the strongest and fastest of the species – can be identified by their conspicuously cleaner appearance, prominent display of corporate advertising, and an absence of hair on their legs.

DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS: From a speed and style perspective, road racers are at the top of the food chain. Since they appear relaxed, smooth and fluid, even in full flight, their speed is deceptive. A category I or 2 of the species usually looks so relaxed that street racers are often tempted to challenge them. This is a mistake, as the street racers almost always end up with their asses on a platter, especially when the road goes uphill.

Road racers need to be approached cautiously and offers of food are recommended.

STATUS: Population appeared to be on the upswing between 1999 and 2005 due to successful summertime species displays in France. But revelations of use of illicit performance-enhancing drugs at the highest levels during the past year appear to have dampened species expansion, at least temporarily.



2. WEEKEND RECREATION RIDERS

Scientific Name: "Ambulo septimanus"

By Terry Lowe

CAN BE SEEN: Usually can be found along Vancouver's Seawall, a multi-use pathway that circles the city from Kitsilano Beach to Stanley Park. The best time to spot such riders is between April and October. A subspecies known as "Tourist" was also often found within Stanley Park until recently. Storm damage to that habitat has us worried that these visitors may not return this year. Spring plumage is casual and sporty – mainly Mountain Equipment Coop. Once summer arrives and their numbers grow more numerous, they moult into Lululemon and/or spandex shorts.

DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS: Despite the fact that the Seawall is built at sea level, and thus has no elevation anywhere, these riders use mountain bikes, of varying quality. Some are content with no-name generic bikes from big box stores, others ride Norcos and Giants, and some Kuwaharas and Nishikis have been spotted. Occasional, but rare, Rocky sightings have also been reported. These bikes are usually bright and shiny, and show no dust or dirt whatsoever.

UNIQUE QUALITIES: These riders favour unadorned bikes: most have no fenders, and few have lights or racks. Most riders are helmeted but few carry water, and even fewer carry locks.

3.



3. FIXIE RIDER

Scientific Name: "Difigus-apparatus hipsterati"

By Lyle Vallie

CAN BE SEEN: Claiming the entire roadway in dense urban areas, splitting lanes, and skidding through corners. Most notably spotted standing off the seat, diving forward, and locking the rear wheel moments before entering an intersection, in an attempt to scrub off speed and have others take note of their presence.

Often can be identified by simplistic elegant track bicycles, tight denim pants rolled calf high, tattoos, facial hair (male), creative hats, handkerchiefs around the neck or bicycle. They can also be recognized by their lower appendages. Many will have chequered skate shoes, bound in double toe straps and retro-style chrome clips, but a few may have the same type of moon shoes worn by road racers. Unlike the roadie, the Fixie rider's feet will not stop pedalling, unless they actually stop for a red light.

LIKES TO HANG OUT: Though usually a blur, the Fixie rider can occasionally be spotted at a lesser velocity, walking their steed down the sidewalk to the nearest coffee bar. They'll often remain seemingly motionless when congregated in packs, balancing on their bicycles. Some will perch atop their frame to deftly "man up" a challenger. A change in pack momentum is very hard to initiate; getting them moving once stopped, or getting them stopped once moving, is equally difficult.

LIKES TO EAT: Often found devouring the cheapest vegetarian or ethnic food possible, and quickly.

UNIQUE QUALITIES: Fixie riders are excellent climbers and will scramble up the most daunting hill in an unwisely large gear, in order to skid on the way down. Despite their Neo-Luddite inspired machines, they often get along with road racers and can be seen frolicking in the hills together in playful interspecies competition.

DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS: A bizarre mating ritual of the Difigus-apparatus hipsterati is to skid past their potential fixed mate, while yelling "HEY FIXIE!" This is followed by MP3 playlist-fuelled dance parties and gratuitous making out. Often fixie riders will display their bicycles prominently in front of a house party, rock show, or gallery opening in order to attract others to the gathering.

STATUS: Many of the other cyclists found in this field guide are (d)evolving into the difigus-apparatus category each day. Similar to a viral infection or some zombie horror, their numbers are increasing at an exponential rate. If the population does not implode on itself, there is a chance that the Difigus-apparatus hipsterati may take over the cycling kingdom.

2.



LIKES TO HANG OUT: They are amiable and gregarious and can usually be found congregating at Starbucks or at Stanley Park hot dog stands with their young.

STATUS: Their primary characteristic is disposable income. This gives us confidence that their population is robust and will continue to thrive.

Continued On Next Page



4. RECUMBENT RIDERS

Scientific name: "Mobilius Reclinus"

By Ron Richings

CAN BE SEEN: Occasionally seen on most bike routes, but particularly where the route is flat, e.g. False Creek. Recumbent riders frequently have an aversion to hills (unless they're going down, of course). Usually seen smiling since their hands and butts don't hurt, although recumbutt* can strike without warning.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Odd sunburn patterns, notably on the knees. Particularly virile, since the blood flow to important organs and appendages has not been reduced, unlike riders on those funny upright bikes.

UNIQUE QUALITIES: Mostly male, beards not mandatory but preferred. Most often in their 40s or older. Younger riders usually don't have the money or the experience to understand that these bikes are the future, despite the catcalls from upright cyclists. "Laid back" personalities. Mirrors? Yes, whether on helmet or multiples on handlebars.

RELIGIOUS ICON: St. Thomas Reclinus, the patron saint for people who do things lying down.

TRANSIT WISH: TransLink will install racks on buses that can hold a seven-foot-long recumbent.

CHRISTMAS WISH: Front fairing (wind screen) to let them ride just a little bit faster (and keep the bugs off).

BIKE STORE QUESTION: "Do you have an eleven foot chain?"

CLOTHING QUESTION: "Where do I get a cycling jersey with three pockets on the front?"

FAQs: What is that thing? Did you make it yourself?

WEBSITE OF CHOICE: Benrideronline.com

*Short form of "recumbent butt": Pain in the *gluteous maximus* muscles caused by riding certain recumbent bicycles at fast speeds.

5. BICYCLE MESSENGER

Scientific Name: "Messengerus kryptolocki"

By Red Gundam

CAN BE SEEN: Throughout the downtown core, Downtown Eastside, and the South Side (i.e. across the Cambie, Burrard and Granville bridges).

LIKES TO HANG OUT: HSBC building, Vancouver Art Gallery lawn, Pub 340, Crab Park.

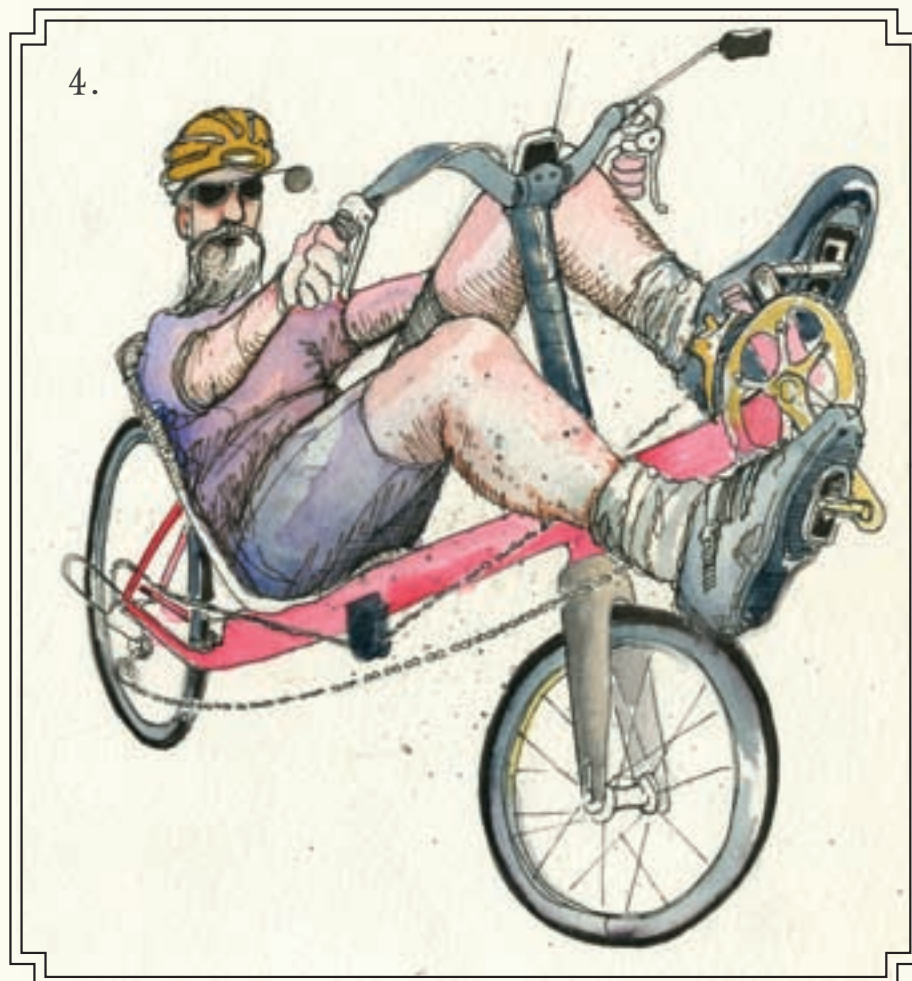
LIKES TO EAT: Beer, crossword puzzles, cola, coffee, cookies, any kind of free food, and cigarettes.

UNIQUE QUALITIES: It has been postulated that the messenger is a distant relative of the marsupial, as both are mammals with pouches. Unlike marsupials, the messenger's enormous pouch is most often mounted on the back and can be swung to the front for quick access of its contents. There are no documented cases of messengers carrying their young in these pouches, although they transport nearly

everything else in them, from envelopes to human organs.

DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS: The messenger commands an encyclopaedic knowledge of its surroundings. As it gains experience, not only knowledge of streets and building numbers, but every entryway, every receptionist, and every elevator become part of the messenger's understanding. It is thus able to dart to and fro with great agility through streets and alleyways. Messengers are for the most part unshaken by aggressive drivers, as they are accustomed to dealing with downtown traffic. However, messengers can still be seriously injured by cars – dexterity and intelligence are no match for carelessness from enormous powerful masses of steel.

STATUS: There is a persistent and growing cult of admirers who seek to emulate the fashion and attitude of the messenger. The subject of much fiction and many documentaries, they remain a romantic image of freedom and tough urbanity.





6. COMMON COMMUTER

Scientific Name: "*Commuter velocitus*"

By Bonnie Fenton

CAN BE SEEN: Common commuters can be seen on roads and bike routes in the early mornings and late afternoons. Although usually found in more densely populated areas, commuters tend to travel alone. They congregate in the downtown core in the mornings and return to their nests at the end of the day.

LIKES TO HANG OUT: Common commuters can often be seen at Mountain Equipment Co-op stores on Saturdays.

LIKES TO EAT: The eating habits of common commuters are unclear, although they appear to store food in the large bags they carry.

UNIQUE QUALITIES: Interestingly, there are very few differences in appearance between the male and the female of the species. Indeed, the sexes can be difficult to distinguish from afar, although both are visible from great distances due to their brightly coloured plumage (most often yellow or red) and hard-shelled heads.

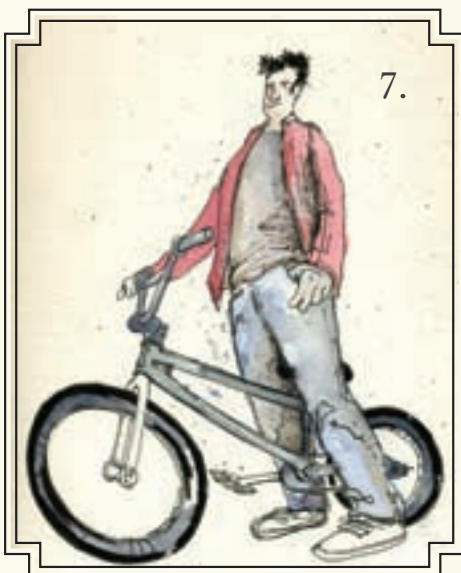
One of the most notable features of the common commuter is its ability to disguise itself during daytime hours. Its twice-daily change in plumage renders it virtually indistinguishable from *commuter automobilii* or *commuter omnibus* until it takes flight.

DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS: The common commuter typically rides in straight lines, rarely veering from its pre-established path.

STATUS: The status of the common commuter in the Vancouver area is currently a puzzle to researchers, requiring further study of its breeding habits. While overall numbers appear to be rising, population studies have found that 75 per cent of *commuter velocitus* are male, drawing into question the long term viability of the species. The female population needs to grow significantly to keep the species from extinction.

Remarkably, it has been discovered that *commuter automobilii* and *commuter omnibus* are actually able to transmute into *commuter velocitus*, a process which, it is believed, has the potential to help increase the female population.

[Editor's note: A Lower Mainland-based society dedicated to the support of "*commuter velocitus*" facilitates this transmutation process, thus helping to improve the viability of the species locally, through an initiative known as The Commuter Cycling Skills Program. Learn more at: www.uacc.bc.ca/bikeskills]



7. BMX RIDER

Scientific name: "*Ascensor exulto*"

By Jeff Chan

BMX riders stand out from typical transportation-oriented cyclists because of their unorthodox approach to terrain.

BMX riders fall into a number of subcategories, characterized by their choice of terrain. (Note: These categories, created to simplify observation, are by no means exhaustive. Many BMX riders exhibit traits of multiple categories.)

"Blastus Maximus" – **DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS:** This most visually impressive variety of BMX rider exhibits an addiction to adrenaline and an uncompromising mindset, which translates into lofty airs and smooth landings on concrete, dirt, and wood surfaces alike. Can be seen in a variety of locations, including the Hastings/PNE skatepark and a number of secret and semi-secret dirt tracks.

"Technicari Wizardus" – **DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS:** Recognized for their amazing feats of agility and bike control, these masters of the flatlands frequent the asphalt plains bounded by Expo Boulevard, the Plaza of Nations, and the Seawall.

"Assaultarius Urbanae" – **DISTINCT BEHAVIOURS:** Interpreting the city landscape in a fashion similar to skateboarders, these urban denizens can be seen launching themselves down stairs and performing hair-raising stunts on ledges and handrails throughout the city.

STATUS: Intermittent reports of hostility between skateboarders and BMX riders are largely exaggerated, as the two species often demonstrate a cooperative, symbiotic relationship. While respect is commanded by the subspecies mentioned above, it is "*Kookus Disrespectus*," known to mark its territory with steel antlers and undercarriage, who is unwelcome at skateparks.





COOKBOOKS for a summer of touring

BY DENISE WRATHALL
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIN GIBBS

SINCE BIKE TOURING SEASON is truly upon us, it is time to think about food for the trips. Here are six of the most recently published camping cookbooks. Before getting down to the reviews, a note on what kind of cookbook works well for cycle touring. If you aren't worried about

weight, you can take regular food that you would cook at home. If you are worried about weight, backcountry cookbooks offer the best options. They also assume that you don't have access to refrigeration.

[Editor's note: For those unfamiliar with the terms, "gorp" is a synonym for trail mix, and "schmeers" refers to spreads.]

BEYOND GORP: FAVORITE FOODS FROM OUTDOOR EXPERTS

by Yvonne Prater, Ruth Dyar Mendenhall and Kerry I.

Smith, Mountaineers Books, 2005. \$19.95 USD

This book includes the usual sections (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks), plus sections on ethnic foods and wild food feasting. Stories are included with most of the recipes. This book looks ordinary, but has character. One notable recipe is the Mouse Soup; It's a serious recipe from an outdoor survival expert.

The Apricot Nut Loaf is tasty. It's not too sweet, so you can use it for sandwiches, or for a sweeter snack, just add some honey or jam. The loaf is pretty solid and will transport well on a bike.



SIMPLE FOODS FOR THE PACK: MORE THAN 200 ALL-NATURAL, TRAIL-TESTED RECIPES

by Claudia Axcell, Vikki Kinmount Kath and Diana Cooke, Sierra Club Books, 2004. \$14.95 USD

Here you'll find several new ideas, including soup with dumplings, journey cakes (aka Johnny cakes), and suggestions for steaming breads and puddings. The chocolate fudge and pumpkin pie cakes are popular, too.



MORE BACKCOUNTRY COOKING: MOVEABLE FEASTS FROM THE EXPERTS

by Dorcas S. Miller, Mountaineers Books, 2004. \$16.95 USD

This is a sequel to *Backcountry Cooking: From Pack to Plate in 10 Minutes*, and is just as good, if not better. The recipes are creative, but the best part is the hot topics section; about 40 per cent of the book. If you are new to cycle touring, you will find these tips indispensable. If you are an old hand, there are lots of great new ideas and fresh inspiration.

Ginger Tofu Jerky is tasty and substantial, but a bit salty. Use low salt soy sauce or skip the salt.



THE LEAVE-NO CRUMBS CAMPING COOKBOOK: 150 DELIGHTFUL, DELICIOUS AND DARN-NEAR FOOLPROOF RECIPES FROM TWO TOP WILDERNESS CHEFS

by Rick Greenspan and Hal Kahn, Storey Publishing, 2004. \$19.95 CAD

This is an in-depth book, with basic breakfast, lunch, and dinner sections, as well as a full section on trout, one on sauces and schmeers, and even one on pancakes, crepes, and soufflés. These guys are serious cooks. The recipes are inspirational and fairly ambitious; the majority of them require a food dryer. The only disappointment is that they use a Sierra cup instead of regular measuring cups. If you don't want to buy an extra piece of gear, just know that a Sierra cup is 9 ounces – a bit more than a regular cup. Most of the recipes are flexible enough to allow a bit of winging it.

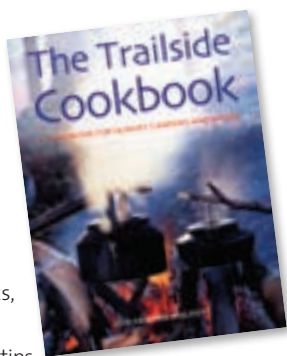
I tried the risotto, which you cook at home and dehydrate for use on the trail. The risotto itself wasn't much different from what I usually make at home, but the idea of tossing risotto in the dryer is revolutionary. It was great the first night fresh at home, and just as tasty after rehydrating it.



THE TRAILSIDE COOKBOOK: A HANDBOOK FOR HUNGRY CAMPERS AND HIKERS

by Don and Pam Philpott, Firefly Books, 2005. \$19.95 CAD

The information and tips sections of this book are particularly valuable. It's the only book to include weather forecasting, and includes a tip on how to make cheese last longer by coating it with paraffin. The breads and baking section has a few recipes that I might try on the road sometime, even though I'm biased against baking on the road. I did try the Nutty Oatmeal Cookies, which are no-bake. They were a hit – fast, easy and substantial. This book contains a mix of fresh and lightweight food, and is thus appropriate for most cyclists.

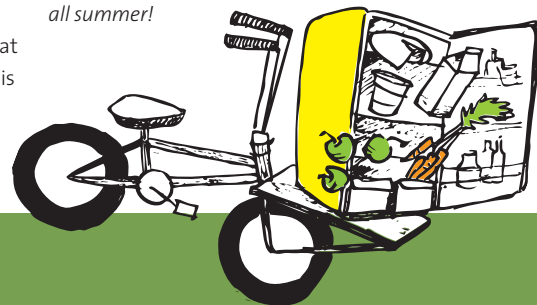


LIP SMACKIN' VEGETARIAN BACKPACKIN': LIGHTWEIGHT TRAIL-TESTED RECIPES FOR BACKCOUNTRY TRIPS

by Christine and Tim Conners, Globe Pequot Press, 2004. \$23.95 CAD

It's exciting to see a camping cookbook devoted to vegetarian food, and this book lived up to expectations. There is a small section of tips and recommendations, but the real focus is on the recipes. The Chewonki Morning Bulgur is good. It's a nice change from instant oatmeal, and leftovers are good for lunch. Using string cheese sticks instead of trying to grate cheese on the road is innovative, but the long strings in the food were messy. Next time I'll 'string' my cheese first, then cut all the strings into short pieces.

Denise Wrathall plans to keep trying out new recipes all summer!





COMING
TO GROUND
ROBIN WHEELER

THOUGHTS FOR A *winding highway*

I WAS SITTING on my deck as night fell over the forest, nursing a beer with the Bike Traveller as he spoke of his recent cycling adventures around the BC coast, and it made me happy to think of the new wave of tourism that includes the whisper-quiet bike visitor and the snake thin footprint it entails.

For many Sunshine Coast residents, tourism is a mixed blessing. We know that the artisans and bed and breakfasts are finally making some money, and our homes are full of happy relatives and news from “away.” But we can’t get across the highway for the traffic, the ferries are full to the brim, and ... there’s all that noise, noise, noise... Engines revving, crowded parking lots, exhaust smells lingering in the laneways ... it sure does make a “Coaster” appreciate bicycle tourists! And we’re starting to see more and more of them – lean bums hunched, panniers full to bursting, helmets pointed like arrows, heading up the highway, silent as angels.

HOW COASTERS CAN HELP BICYCLE TOURISM

I would like to see a recognition system started whereby cycling-friendly households who appreciate these low impact travelers could put out a message of greeting. Maybe this would be an old bike tire wired to the front fence; it could even turn into an icon like Neighbourhood Watch. This icon would mean, “Hey, cyclists! Are you thirsty? Need to use a phone? Want to patch that tire in a safe place? Pitch your tent and crash for the night? Come on by, you are welcome here.” We would meet each other over cool glasses of water and crisp apples, and talk about bears and beaches, and where to get a good cup of coffee.

HOW CYCLISTS CAN SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AGENDAS WHILE THEY ARE HERE

Since you’ll be spending some dough, you can help change the world while you’re at it. The Bike Traveller mentioned asking a local where to get the best coffee, and getting the good advice to head to Wheatberries, who support organics with their coffee and tea selections. His comment reminded me that chatting with the locals about places to see and eat is a great bonding point for overcoming the isolation of any travel. So ask us where we eat and hang out! And please drop your money at the lowest end of the consumer scale you can find – we need your help to support the mom and pop operations, restaurants who are trying to make a difference, farmers’ stalls and artisan studios.

TO EAT YOUR WAY UP THE HIGHWAY

See the first Wheatberries at the Langdale ferry terminal. There are four of these on the coast. They supply organic teas and coffees, use only organic flours in their products, and buy from local farms

whenever they can. There is a Wheatberries on either side of the highway in Upper Gibsons so you never have to cross the street.

Saturday mornings, look for the sign for the Fiddlehead Market to pick up some goodies from small local farms that focus on organic products.

ROBERTS CREEK – Head down to the waterfront from the highway and as you pass the cluster of commercial buildings on your right called the Heart of the Creek, you will see the Roberts Creek Health Food Store. Load up on organic nuts, trail mix, fresh and dried fruit, cold drinks, teas, and chocolate. There is a bike rack right outside of Elements Local Arts & Eco-Wares, just down the walkway.

For the main meal, carry on to the next set of buildings - the sweet Gumboots! Both the Café and the Bistro make a point of using organic, free run, and/or non-medicated goods – in short, the healthiest choice among the products they can find. And

they go one better – between the two Gumboots,

you will see the back garden being converted to veggie patches, as the owners have decided to grow their own. Say hello to Farmer Dave (and sidekick Deb) over the hedge, and you will also see the homemade wooden bike racks thoughtfully tucked out of sight of the main parking lot.

As you head back up the highway to Wilson Creek, you will see the small mall on your right at the traffic lights. Look for Strait Coffee Limited, a little coffee shop, sadly without a bike rack, but worth promoting because they were the first on the coast to support Fair Trade organic coffees.

They do their own roasting right across the street. Strait Coffee uses all organic flours in their take-out muffins.

SECHLT – Take the left turn at the traffic lights, and at the end of that first block you will see two good choices for a rest and some good food.

On your right you’ll see the new Café Santé. The owners are making a big push to do good environmental work on the coast. Father and daughter team Mikal and Sophia are planning meetings with farmers, working on their composting and recycling systems, and hope to add new organic products as they meet suppliers. They offer take-out, so a cyclist can phone ahead and pick up lunch on the way through town. Breakfast and lunch only, and you can bring your bike up with you onto the deck.

Across the street is another Wheatberries, with lots of room to sit down. They serve excellent snacks and baked goods, and the same organic choices as the other branches.

Have fun everyone, and be safe, welcomed, and well fed! Blessings on your silent passage.

Robin Wheeler lives a little off the beaten track for a bike tire icon, but has nursed a few weary cyclists at her tiny bush farm in Roberts Creek.

“...chatting with the locals about places to see and eat is a great bonding point for overcoming the isolation of any travel.”

THE DEVINCI melbourne

BY WENDELL CHALLENGER



DEVINCI'S MELBOURNE top-of-the-line hybrid bike model aims at taking its rider from point A to B with style, speed, and a lighter pocket book. This bike comes with an array of high zoot components such as hydraulic disc brakes, a carbon front fork, wheels with the racy double spoke pattern, and clipless pedals.

The carbon fork may imply that this bike has a strong road bike heritage with some mountain bike add-ons (such as the disc brakes), however, throwing a leg over the bike dispels this impression. The Melbourne's handling is closer to a mountain bike (cross-country, not a downhill) than a road bike. At first this left me puzzled, but the more I rode it in its natural habitat, the city, the more I enjoyed the bike.

The stiff aluminium frame gives it a spirited feel, with geometry and design that produce responsive slow speed handling, as well as ample front wheel/pedal clearance for tight cornering. Its 27 gears provide ratios much more appropriate to road riding than what is usually found on a mountain bike.

One feature that first appeared to be overkill, but later won me over, was the hydraulic disc brakes. Once the exclusive territory of mountain bikes, disc brakes have progressively been making their way into the world of city bikes. Advantages include strong all-weather braking, better modulation, and longer wheel life (the braking surface, the disc, is easily replaceable).

The focus on city riding comes at the cost of high-speed handling. At speeds over 60 km/h (e.g. down hills) the Melbourne felt "nervous," especially when pedalled (there is gearing to pedal at these speeds). Standing on the pedals and shifting one's weight back can remedy this issue, but at the same time it does belie the Melbourne's mountain bike heritage. While not a deal-breaker, it should be considered if you are looking for a very sporty asphalt bike. That said, the Melbourne was a joy to ride over gravel trails as well as asphalt, something that cannot be done with a high-speed road bike.

The Melbourne also has nice design touches. It has three water bottle mounts, two in the front triangle (the classic setup), and a third on the underside of the top tube. This can be a great feature for touring or commuting as it allows you to carry lots of water, and/or lots of gear. For example, you could carry a battery for a high performance light system, a compressed air horn, and a water bottle, all on one frame. Finally, the rear disc brake is mounted farther aft than most, which leaves plenty of room to mount fenders and a rear rack.

All this city bike goodness comes at a price: roughly \$1,600 CAD. Right there, a lot of potential buyers may be discouraged, then again maybe not. If you recently retired a car, these savings alone could easily finance such a ride. If the price is an

impediment, then you may wish to give Devinci's less-expensive hybrids a look. From my impromptu bike route survey, Devinci hybrid owners, on the whole, are very satisfied with their bikes.

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

THE NIGGLES

- The rear brake came from the factory with an air bubble in the line. This caused the rear brake to cut out sporadically in the two-month period I rode it. This can be easily fixed by re-bleeding the brake, but come on!
- The wheels use a fancy double spoke pattern. Usually the domain of racing bikes, these require very strong rims to be robust. The pattern also makes it difficult to true the wheel.
- When I took the front tire off, the tire casing tore away from the wire bead, rendering the tire useless! I have never seen this with a new tire.

TENTS FOR BIKE TOURING

BY MIRANDA HURON

WHEN IT COMES to tents and cycle touring, there are three truly important factors: Is it lightweight and compactable? Does it have room to get all your gear inside as well as yourself? Is there a vestibule?

You do not want a tent that you cannot quickly squish into a small bag in the morning and strap to your bike. You *do* want a tent that is going to leave you enough room for a comfortable sleep after you've shoved all of your gear inside. And the vestibule: it covers most of your bike during the night and gives you a fighting chance at grabbing it should a nefarious ne'er-do-well try to pilfer it while you sleep.

I have always used my North Face tent for my trips, and have had it repaired countless times over the years since they stopped making it, but now I have another option.

The Mountain Equipment Co-op Tarn 2 is essentially the same design, with a few new perks. While having the same three-pole simplicity, the window in the vestibule is great to get you off to a sunny start. The use of clips is an improvement over having to thread the pole through the body. It means that, should a pole break in the middle of Nowheresville, you can be very experimental with your makeshift repairs and not worry about having to stuff a tent pole wrapped in eight pounds of tape and a supporting twig through a hole the size of your pinkie. This tent runs at \$182, and weighs in at 2.8 kilograms.



The closest North Face now carries to my trusty old tent is their Dyad 22. Though you'll be doing macramé with its myriad of poles, there's still that handy vestibule and a good weigh-in at 1.4 kilograms. This may or may not be worth it to you, with the price jumping to \$270.

And then there's the paragon of bicycle tents: I once slept in the MSR Velo tent (an earlier version of this year's model) in the middle of a field in Russia, having just run into a traveller who was obviously on a bigger budget than my own. Two entrances, a vestibule that you can park your

entire bike in, a second vestibule to cook in, and space, glorious space! The downfall? It weighs in at 4.3 kilograms.

But this might be all right considering the weight you will have lost in your wallet: this tent costs \$450, but you'll never have to buy another one again!

As we go to press, the MSR Velo tent has been discontinued. It is still available at local retailers but is no longer in production.

Miranda has a shiny red two-wheeled trusty steed, who, in exchange for a little oil and TLC, has carried her over 40,000 kilometres.

CYCLING SANDALS FOR LIBERATED FEET

TEXT AND PHOTO BY MARGO MACTAGGART

IF YOUR FEET enjoy the freedom of sandals when you're off your bike and you love the efficiency of a clipless pedal system, you may want to give this versatile cycling footwear a try. Add socks for cooler weather, cover them with booties for rain, or just enjoy the splashing as you ride in warmer wet weather.

Combining their amphibious capabilities with the elimination of sweaty socks, cycling sandals are more multi-functional than cycling shoes. They make a lot of sense on a tour and they're comfy in town in all but the coolest months. Some cyclists wear them year-round with neoprene socks in winter.

Shimano's newest sandals have three mesh-padded straps instead of two, these are compatible with SPD cleats and can easily



be used with other low-profile cleats such as Crankbrothers. Lake sandals have two straps, a protective toe guard, and thicker soles. Some Shimano users complain that the cleats' mounting screws create a ridge that can be felt through the soles. Apparently Lake's design eliminates that problem. SPD-compatible sandals

are also made by Exustar and by Nashbar. Both of these are two-strap models and are less expensive than Shimano or Lake. Each brand has a different fit and range of sizes.

Tempted? Be aware that they're not for everyone. Their advantages aren't often well known even in the larger bike stores that carry them. But if your feet like to feel the wind and the rain, or if you and your bike are heading to a warm climate, you may want to try a pair.

Margo doesn't like washing sweaty socks or taking off her shoes to cross a river. She loves her cycling sandals.

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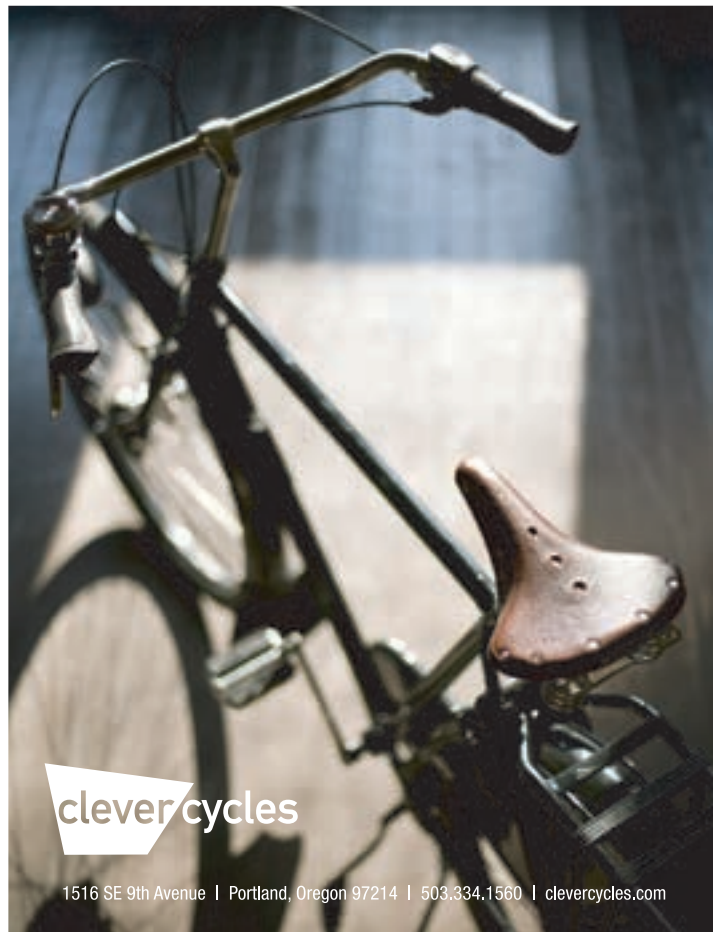


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LEARNING TO LOVE your front brake

POP QUIZ: Which lever on your bicycle controls your front brake, right or left?

If you live in North America, it's almost certainly your left brake lever. And if you ride any bicycle in a country where they drive on the right-hand side of the road, chances are it will be the same.

The best explanation for this relates to popular perceptions about the relative merits of front and rear brakes. The consensus seems to be that the rear brake is the safer, more important of the two. So the right lever/rear brake correlation goes like this: while riding in traffic, when you remove one hand from the bars to signal, you want to be able to control your more important brake so you can slow or stop as necessary. Since cyclists are supposed to ride with traffic and as close to the curb as possible, you use your left hand to signal if you're riding on the right-hand side of the road. Your right hand stays on the bars and in control of the lever that controls your rear brake.

I want to challenge one axiom in this equation, and that is the relative superiority of the rear brake to its often misunderstood front counterpart.

Stopping a bicycle takes work: a certain amount of force must be used in order to halt the bicycle's forward momentum. This force is frictional, and is of two sorts: friction between brake pad and rim, which slows the rotation of the bicycle's wheel; and friction between the wheel and the road, which translates the slowing of the wheel's rotation into the slowing of the bicycle. This second sort of friction is the type we're concerned with here, and it relates to the force and the grip between the bicycle's wheels/tires and the road.

The force between the bicycle's wheels and the road is determined by the weight of the bicycle and rider or, more accurately, by the gravitational force being exerted downwards by the total mass of the bicycle and rider. The grip of a bicycle's tire depends on several factors, such as the composition of the tire and the condition of the

road. The technical name for the force that is a function of these two factors is "traction": the force used to achieve and arrest motion.

To further make my point about front brakes, I'm going to use a hypothetical bicycle and rider with a combined weight of 200 pounds, and

I'm going to presume that the bicycle's tires have perfect grip, so they do not influence the force exerted on the road. So the force between the bicycle's wheels and the road is 200 pounds of force.

Suppose that our bicycle and rider are riding at a constant speed. The bicycle is a standard road bike, and the rider is seated, so the rider's weight is balanced mostly over the rear wheel. If the force between the wheel and the road is a function of the bicycle and rider's weight, then there is more force between the road and the bicycle's rear wheel than there is between the road and the front wheel. Until you try to stop.

During braking, when calculating the force between the bicycle's wheels and the road, another factor comes into play – the force used to slow the bicycle down. Let's say that the braking force used by the rider is half the force of gravity. This force, all 100 pounds of it, is frictional: it is created as the road's grip on the tires slows the bicycle, and it is acting along the surface of the road. This new frictional force alters the distribution of force between the wheels and the road because instead of being exerted downwards (like gravity), it is being exerted in the same direction that the bicycle is moving: forwards.

The 100 pounds of braking force is added (in an admittedly non-linear fashion) to the portion of the bicycle and rider's weight that is already balanced over the front wheel, the most "forward" point of contact between the bicycle and the road. Suddenly there's a great deal more frictional

force between the front wheel and the road than there is between the back wheel and the road. By the act of braking, the frictional force between the front wheel and the road becomes much higher – the front wheel gains more traction than the rear wheel – making it play a much more important role in the slowing of the bicycle. The more braking force you apply, the more traction, or stopping power, gets transferred to the front wheel; the faster you need to stop, the more important your front brake becomes.

If this is the case, then why have the powers that be decreed that our right hand (for 90 per cent of us our dominant hand) be positioned to control our rear brakes if they are less important for braking than our front ones? My guess is that many cyclists don't know how to use their front brakes properly. Grab your front brake suddenly while riding at speed and you could find yourself flying forward even as your bicycle comes to a complete stop.

So the right lever/rear brake correlation that most of us take for granted (usually without even being conscious of it) is a misguided attempt to keep cyclists safe. For the uninformed cyclist, the front brake can be dangerous because it can stop a bicycle too quickly or violently. But in an emergency, undue reliance on the rear brake can be a far greater hazard.

The solution to this dilemma, as the title suggests, is to learn to love your front brake. I'll explain how in the next issue of **MOMENTUM**.

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) teaching bicycle mechanics for adults and kids.



“THONS” RECONSIDERED

BY SHELDON BROWN

IN THE PAST few years, there has been a proliferation of pledge rides or “bike-a-thon,” in which cyclists help to raise money for charitable causes by asking their friends and neighbours to contribute a small sum for each mile they ride in an organized event. This approach has been used by many charitable groups, and even by the League of American Bicyclists, in its Pedal For Power program.

Conventional wisdom is that this is a win-win situation, encouraging cycling while simultaneously raising money for worthy causes.

I submit that this conventional wisdom is wrong, that these pledge rides are bad for cycling, and that they should not be encouraged by the League.

“Bike-a-thon” grew out of “walk-a-thon.” The idea of walk-a-thon is that the participants demonstrate their concern for the selected cause by undergoing the painful ordeal of a long walk, with the understanding that each mile they walk will enlarge the contribution given by the donors who they have signed up. The donors, in turn, get to feel that their contribution has been “earned” by the suffering of the participant who

has sacrificed time and comfort for the sake of the cause.

The problem with translating the “walk-a-thon” into the “bike-a-thon” is the application of the concepts of “sacrifice” and “suffering” from walking to cycling. Cycling shouldn’t be seen as a painful ordeal; cycling is fun! Could you imagine a “Cine-thon” where participants asked for pledges based on how many movies they watched? How about an “Ice-Cream-a-thon,” in which people would give contributions based on how many ice cream cones you ate?

Although “thons” do get people out on their bikes, and maybe even bring some people into cycling in a serious way, I believe that they send a message that cycling is a painful, unpleasant chore that you should do because it is good for you, or because it benefits some charitable organization. Too many well-meaning people sign up for a long pledge ride without an adequate mileage base, with substandard cycling skills and equipment. These people will “learn” that bicycling is about pain and exhaustion, saddle sores and sunburn, aching knees and stiff necks.

An experience like this can turn a potential cyclist off for life. They may still ride an occasional pledge ride, as a masochistic exercise, or because of dedication to a cause, or because they are so proud of surviving the ordeal. They will likely never discover the simple joy of going for a nice bike ride and not coming home a physical wreck.

The people who run most “thons” are good people, with good intentions. However, they have an agenda which does not necessarily include promotion of bicycling. While their use of bicyclists may promote a noble cause, the end does not justify the means.

Sheldon Brown is the webmaster for Harris Cyclery and an authority on all things bicycle-related. For much more bicycle wisdom, humour and a full glossary of bicycle terms, see www.SheldonBrown.com

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TRAVELLING SALESMAN

We were recently contacted by Steve Mitchell, a bike rider, artist, and sales rep for cycling products NRG, Sombrio, Electra, and Knolly about his wish to ride a bicycle though BC on his regular sales road trip. This is his story.



I decided for many reasons this ride was important. As much as I love riding my bike, I am also inspired by the dire situation we are in with our reliance on oil and the political repercussions (war).

Before I begin, you should know that I don't have a "one less car" sticker on my bike, I've never been on a critical mass ride. I am an adrenaline junkie who shuttles his 45 lb freeride bike, drives a 4x4 van (running now on bio-diesel), loves motorcycles, flies on a plane for business and pleasure, etc. I am, however, employed in the bicycle industry and I love my job and lifestyle. I have taken some comfort that if I'm going to be selling a product in our wasteful North American society it might as well be a bicycle, the most efficient machine ever created by man. So I have been known on occasion to ride to local bicycle accounts; any further and it comes down to a matter of time, convenience, and still looking (and smelling)

professional when I arrive. I have decided I want to change that. I have the luxury to make my own schedule and I'm going to take that extra time to do a few thousand kilometres on a bike. I hope I'll enjoy it and want to do more.

After the first leg of his journey, Steve checked in with MOMENTUM:

As I'm watching the Tour de France on TV in Penticton, I reminisce on the past five days of riding that brought me to the Okanagan.

The numb hands and sore ass are gone for the moment, and the first 450-odd kilometres are behind me. Three flats, one blown tire, a near miss with an RV, and a lightning storm have challenged me along the way, but I am having fun. I am riding faster than I'd hoped and am happy to finish early in the 37-

degree afternoon heat. I have visited almost 20 shop accounts along the way and, aside from the two days between the Lower Mainland and Okanagan, I have done as much work as I would have driving.

As the suburbs faded and my iPod paced me with blaring rock and roll, the race against myself was on. Whether pushing the big gears on the flats of the Fraser and Similkameen or grinding the climbs of the Hope-Princeton, my legs have avoided cramping and the food along the way has never tasted better.

My next week's plan is to ride north through the Okanagan to Kamloops, then cross over the Fraser again to the big climbs of the Duffy road to Pemberton/Whistler and stop at Crankworx, the greatest MTB show in the world!

to be continued...

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WHEELS FOR CHANGE

BY AMY WALKER

BETWEEN JUNE 30 AND JULY 22 three BC women led a cycling caravan from Nelson to Victoria BC called Wheels for Change. Mary Stockdale, Celia Auclair, Robin Genthon conceived the project in January as a positive, collective effort to demonstrate their concerns about climate change – and the need for political action to cut Canada’s harmful emissions.

The group ranged from 17 to 25 riders on any given day, including about nine kids. The group’s age range was between 3 and 69 years of age.

Mary Stockdale described the group as ordinary people from diverse backgrounds that represent Canada (the three core organizers are an Aboriginal, a Francophone and an Anglophone). What they have in common is a deep concern about climate change and its impact on their children, their grandchildren and our planet.

The group measured its progress in kilometres cycled, thanks from people along the route, donated breakfasts and massages. Hundreds of people joined them for rides and events along the way.

So what can people do now?

“We say we need 80 to 90 per cent cuts in emissions. We’re inviting people to use their political power as voters to tell politicians that the most important issue in the next election is climate change.”



PHOTO FROM KATAKANADIAN'S WHEELS FOR CHANGE FLICKR PAGE

Wheels for Change is also inspiring many to be more regular bikers: “We’re environmentalists turning into rabid cycling advocates. Our kids are turning into these amazing bicyclists on this trip – and the adults too. We had a christening with rose petals at one of the workshops to name our bikes to celebrate our growing relationship with our bikes.

MOMENTUM asked Mary to describe the most beautiful thing she’d seen on the trip:

“I enjoyed when we went to Falkland. They have a rodeo every year and we were welcomed into their stampede ground by the families of their small community. They organized a bike rally around the stampede grounds for the kids. I explained to the kids about climate change and they had all these books and literature there for kids. I explained that we were going to do a kilometre around the stampede grounds and that it was for the climate and then I took the kids around one lap and I said, “OK kids, that was great.” because some of them were really small. But they just kept going. They went around 25 times – 25 kilometres. They didn’t want to stop. And I can’t say they were just doing it because of climate change, although they really do care. They really are worried about climate change but they also just enjoyed biking and it was this beautiful sight, these kids biking were a joy to watch.

Read stories from the Wheels for Change caravan at www.wheelsforchange.ca

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BABE IN *the woods*

STRANGELY AND SADLY, a disproportionate share of recent decisions involving cyclists from the British Columbia Supreme Court and Court of Appeal involve children. This is purely coincidental but serves as a reminder that society's most vulnerable and precious cyclists continue to be seriously injured by motor vehicles.

Two cases which bear looking into yielded opposite results. Let us examine the facts.

Trey Kerr, an 11-year-old boy, suffered serious injuries after being struck at the intersection of Mt. Seymour Road and the entrance to the Park Gate Shopping Centre in North Vancouver. As is often the case following serious cycling accidents, the boy suffered a head injury and had no memory of the accident. To complicate matters, there was no reliable independent evidence from witnesses.

The Defendant driver, 21 years old, was proceeding in the same direction on Mt. Seymour Road when, according to his allegation, the young cyclist left the cycling lane and crossed the street directly in front of the vehicle, resulting in the cyclist being struck and propelled over the car's hood into the windshield. The Defendant testified that he had seen the cyclist in the bike lane but had not seen him cross the street because his attention was focused on the next intersection. In fact, the Defendant slammed on his brakes for the first time only upon realizing that his windshield had been struck.

As is also too often the case, the Defendant suggested the cyclist came out of "nowhere." The Defendant also claimed that the cyclist was not crossing in the crosswalk and went as far as to include his parents in the action in a third party proceeding, claiming indemnity from the parents for failing to properly instruct the child on the rules of the road, including the use of crosswalks.

Mr. Justice Shaw, the Trial Judge, took a dim view of the Defendant's credibility. He stated: "In my view, it was largely self-serving reconstruction rather than accurate memory." Shaw J. rejected the Defendant's explanation for failing to see "what was there to be seen" and found that the cyclist was indeed crossing the road in the crosswalk. Interestingly, to make this finding, the Judge placed some weight on evidence as to the cyclist's usual habit of crossing in the crosswalk. The Defendant had objected to this evidence as inadmissible but Shaw J. characterized it as properly admissible circumstantial evidence which a court may consider.

Another interesting feature of this decision is the attempt by the Defendant to introduce expert evidence relating to speed based on a study showing that an 11 year old cyclists ride at an average speed of 13.8 kilometres per hour, plus or minus 3.7 kilometres per hour. His

Lordship indicated: "Statistics for average speeds of 11 year-old cyclists shed no light on the average speed of cyclists of any age riding across streets and crosswalks".

Ultimately, the Judge apportioned 85 per cent liability against the Defendant driver for failing to keep a proper lookout and 15 per cent liability against the cyclist for riding across a crosswalk.

Connor McIlvena, a six-year-old cyclist, did not fare as well at trial. He also remembered little of his accident in Delta at the Town Centre Mall. The Defendant suffered from Alzheimer's and did not testify. The reconstruction of the accident was pieced together using the evidence of two other young cyclists as well as an independent witness driving in a vehicle behind the Defendant. The accident occurred in an uncontrolled intersection and the cyclist alleged that he was struck, then fell off his bike and was then run over by the car. The Defendant alleged that the facts were equally consistent with the cyclist running into the car.

Unfortunately, no one could provide a clear account of what actually happened.

In the final analysis, Mr. Justice Kelleher found there was insufficient evidence upon which a finding of negligence against the Defendant could rest. In a civil case, the burden of proof does lie upon the Plaintiff. In this particular case, the Plaintiff was unable to discharge that burden of proof owing to a lack of evidence of actual events. Accordingly, and regrettably, the young cyclist's action was completely dismissed.

Both cases demonstrate that reliable evidence is fundamental to the verdicts. The provision of evidence can be particularly problematic in cases involving seriously injured cyclists as they often have no memory of the events. In contrast, the uninjured motorists enjoy full access to the attending police and are typically in a much better position to enroll anyone who will listen into their version of what happened. In my view, this is particularly troubling in cases involving children, whose recollections and ability to articulate those recollections are often seriously compromised. This underscores the need for a proper and thorough legal investigation of information about the accident from all possible sources right from the outset. In addition, proper expert reconstruction is often helpful. Leaving this investigation to insurance companies acting for the defendant driver is tantamount to leaving the babe in the woods.

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

"...evidence can be particularly problematic in cases involving seriously injured cyclists as they often have no memory of the events."

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