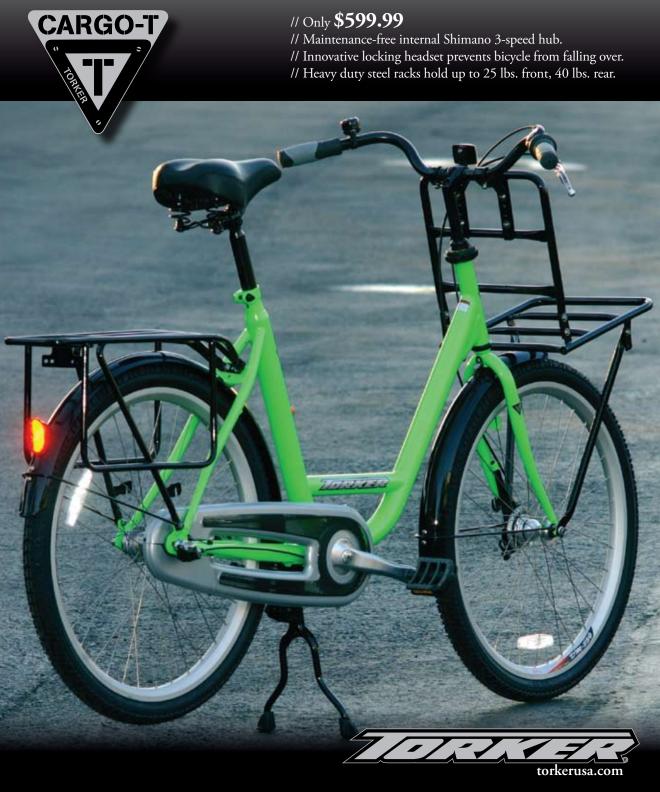


TIRBANYELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #13 • May 2009







Issue #13

May 2009





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On the cover: Ideal conditions in Denton, TX. Photo by David R. Munson, www.davidrmunson.com

Contents: Pedal Republik Cleveland polo tournament. Photo by Jeff Guerrero

Co-conspirators: Cecily Upton, Michael Green, Kevin Dillard, Alex Hansen, David Hoffman, Jon Pratt, Erok Boerer, Jason Montano, Roger Lootine, Terry Crock, Josh Boley, Johnny Cumlately, Devin Tucker and Andy Singer

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Urban Velo is a reflection of the cycling culture in current day cities. Our readers are encouraged to contribute their words and art.

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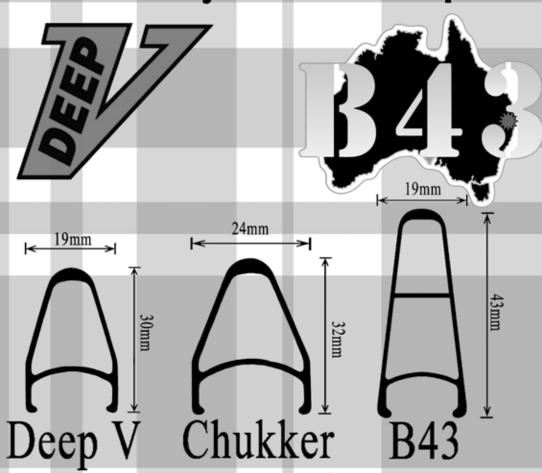


W W W . V E L O C I T Y U S A . C O M



W W W . V E L O C I T Y U S A . C O M

Three ways to roll Deep...









Editor's Statement By Brad Quartuccio

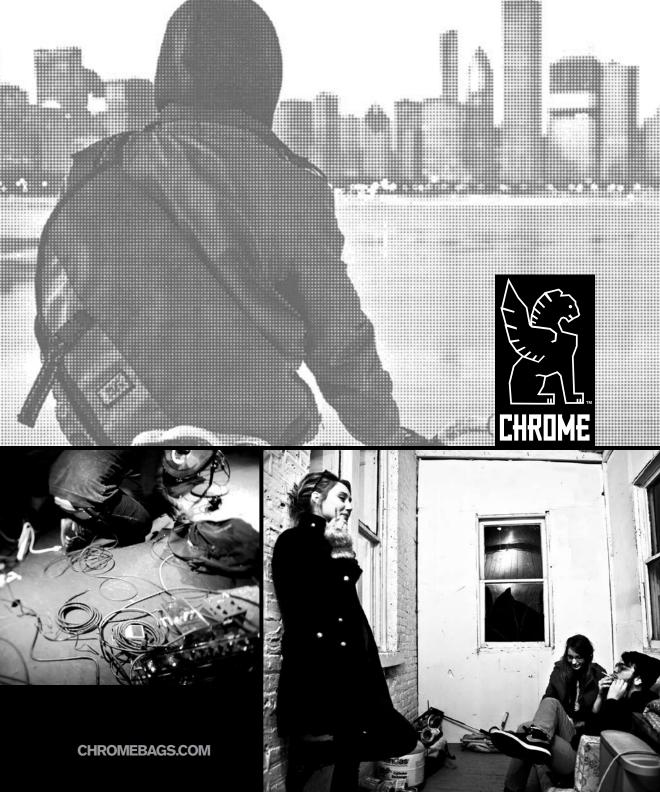


hen writing this issue's tech articles I was reminded of a story my grandfather enjoyed sharing with me whenever bicycles came up, one that serves me well every time I find myself cursing over yet another flat tire. Growing up poor just outside of Pittsburgh in the Slovak-haven of Braddock PA, my grandfather honed his skills at what has become a time honored family tradition—garbage picking. Piecing together and passing down bicycles was commonplace, as were streetcar tracks and solid rubber tires held together with a wire core. At some point in the 1920's he pointed his cobbled together bicycle with an old tire downhill, met some streetcar tracks and with a spectacular thwap! the wire core of the rear tire snapped, smacking my grand-

father square in the back and sending him tumbling over the bars to a halt. I don't believe he ever fully trusted a bicycle again, and was always skeptical yet supportive of my cycling pursuits much later in life.

Cycling technology is spurred on by stories like these, and has reached the point where people are riding ultra light machines to remarkable ends. Not every ride is worth writing home about, but each one can be an adventure. As we roll into our third year of this particular adventure a common theme comes to mind: Thanks. Thanks to those who've supported us and to the great history of cycling that came before. And thank you for reading and sharing your stories; keep them coming. This is prime time for urban cycling and you've got a front row seat.

We want your words. Send your editorial contributions to brad@urbanvelo.org



Publisher's Statement By Jeff Guerrero

hirteen—the dreaded unlucky number. For some it's a harbinger of misfortune, for others it's the epitome of cool. For Urban Velo it marks the beginning of our third year in business. We've certainly been lucky. Lucky enough to have readers all over the world. Lucky to have friends back home to support us. And lucky to have enough advertisers to make our biggest issue to date. But the very notion of luck is worth examining.

I've heard it said, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." With some exceptions, I think it's safe to say we've all been there-whether it means winning the local alleycat because you knew the shortcut around the construction zone, or surviving a nearly catastrophic crash by virtue of wearing a helmet.

So what, then, is the definition of bad luck? Certainly we've all had our share. But what does preparation and opportunity have to do with getting t-boned by a careless driver running a red light? You can usually mitigate the danger of being assaulted by steering clear of strange or unfriendly neighborhoods, but you never know when some common street thugs might jump you on your ride home from work. Perhaps the best definition of bad luck comes from the 1994 classic, Forrest Gump. As Forrest puts it, "Shit happens."

Sure, it may not be the most highbrow explanation, but for me the simple, pragmatic statement goes a long way when it comes to explaining certain things. Like why two more of my friends died in the past month. Or anytime bad things happen to good people. It's sad, and it sucks, but it's a part of life and it's bound to happen eventually.

Thankfully I've got a bike, a helmet, a lock and some good friends I can call on when times get tough. Thanks for reading, and keep the rubber side down.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Joe Bungo and Peppi Barberra. Rest in peace.

Urban Velo issue #13, May 2009. Dead tree print run: 5000 copies. Issue #12 online readership: 45,000+



Billy "Souphorse" Sinkford

<u>San francisco</u>

Souphorse with his SF Giants hatstyle lid







New York City

Squid with his custom painted Cyclehawk lid







NAME: Pamela LOCATION: Atlanta, GA

OCCUPATION: Computer Science Student, Barista

I hated they way they rode. I hated how every time we went riding together, I got left behind.

It's funny how time passes though, and how things change. It took a summer to realize that I wasn't getting left behind anymore, that I was keeping up with the boys and their fancy bikes. That my own bike and I went faster and seemed prettier every day, and that boy (with the pretty eyes and lopsided smile) stopped being what I thought about at the end of the day, but instead I went to sleep thinking of the feeling of the wind blowing in my hair as I wove

in and out of traffic, passing idling car after idling car, and how inviting and free the road ahead of me looked. I was living for the moments when I would catch a yellow light and soar on through to a series of greens.

I've long since left that boy and his friends behind me. It took a dysfunctional relationship and an open road to deal with the fact that relationships are hard when you're young and in school and not yet settled down... but the real ones that will and should always last are easy. My relationship with my bike has always been an easy one. In our years together, it has always been there, and I have never felt as though I am alone when I am riding my bike. It is my companion to school, to work, to home, and to adventure-even when I would wonder how much fun I was really having choking through the car exhaust in the blisteringly hot or intolerably humid Atlanta weather, I would always realize that even when I hated riding, I would hate the idea of not riding even more.

My bike and I share many of the highlights of my life: the grueling 24-hour urban relay races through the streets of Atlanta, the reckless antics that bored students with no obligations and all the city before them can get into, endlessly inclining loops at the Dick Lane Velodrome, and even further, all the way to Chicago for NACCC's. I've changed how I look at the world these days-I look at it in terms of riding. I look for hills and routes; I look for others like myself. I identify strangers by the bikes they ride and consider the apparent social life my bike shares with others each day at the bike rack. When I graduate this May, I will ride my bike to the ceremony, and when I leave this place to see what else is out there, I will take my bike with me.







Name: Rangga Panji Location: Jakarta, Indonesia Occupation: Architect, bike mechanic, proud father

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Jakarta, one of the cities in the world that has terrible traffic. Believe me, here, mountain biking is a lot safer than urban biking! The streets are clogged up with motorcycles, and nearly all of them can't tell the difference between red lights and green lights. Their handling skills are horrible, too. It's amazing if you have a car that doesn't suffer from scratched doors or mirrors.

We have no bike lanes here, and I never expect the government to build them. It's hopeless. Soon, those pesky motorcyclists will take over. Having no bike lanes does mean that I can ride my bike everywhere, including the fast lanes (where motorcycles are forbidden).

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I've been to Denpasar for a couple of months. It's nice

to ride there, but I just can't stand the sun—it's much hotter than Jakarta.

Despite the traffic, Jakarta is still my favorite city to ride in. Imagine the sheer happiness of being the only person that can still dodge around in such speed, while anyone else is stuck in traffic jam. Ah, you catch my drift?

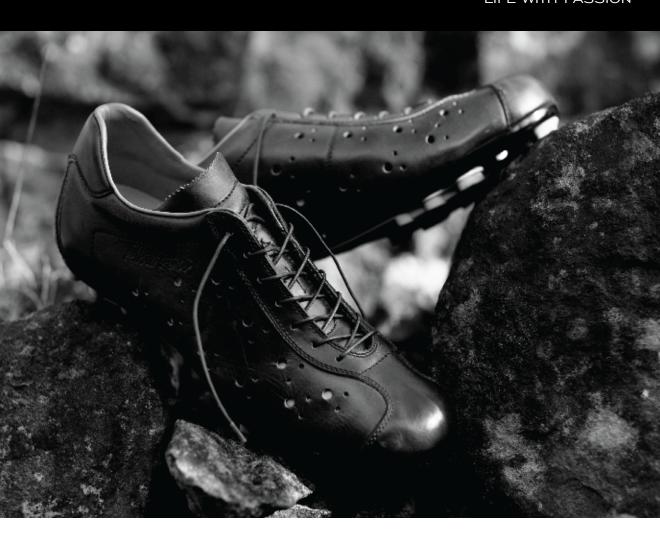
I also like to ride in Jogjakarta, where time passes by so slowly...

Why do you love riding in the city?

I ride every day, whether to work or to go anywhere else, as long as I have to go alone. Just like I said, in Jakarta urban biking is more dangerous than mountain biking, but it's just as fun. Besides, can you impress anyone on the traffic light by pulling endos if you're driving cars or riding motorcycles? It's my chance to mock them.

Sometimes my job can be so depressing, so for me, riding bicycles is a safe alternative to crack.

And by riding bicycles, I've met a lot of friends with similar interests and lunacy...



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NAME: Luna Jester LOCATION: Pensacola, FL OCCUPATION: Student, Musician

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I just so happen to live in small town Pensacola. The bike scene isn't too big but it's decent.

It's pretty nifty riding here, you've got the Beach Cats, downtown, End of the Line and other cafe's, and the infamous Sluggo's. If you're in for hills and come to P-cola, you ride across a couple of bumps, but other than that, our small town is pretty chill and okay. We're starting to see more fixies and road bikes everywhere. Keep em' coming!

What is your favorite city to ride in and why?

Well, I'm only 14, so unfortunately my wheels aren't taking me out of Florida anytime soon. One day I plan on riding in Chicago, California, New York, and London. Hold on one second, I have to see how Sesame Street ends...

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because I can get away from everything else around me, or things that screwed up my day. I can go on adventures and discover secret spots or things that only I know about, I can let my senses go wild with smells, sights, sounds, and feels. I can also enjoy amazing days with my friends, tearing up the streets.

Soaring past buildings, beaches, moons, and suns.

Poetry anyone?

My wheels will take me anywhere that's fun.
Chilling with my friends, riding everywhere.
Speed up! Watch out! We dodge a dog here and there.
Something in our brain triggers a sprint to the light.
POP! Off we go in a group oh so tight.
We have our spills and thrills and we lose a little blood.
But we hop back on the saddle and continue with our fun.
Sometimes we pretend we're messengers but we're not.
Even on sweltering days where it gets unbearably hot.
So all in all it's been a great day, but riding in the city swipes energy away.

Today I'll retire, but wake up with new fire and ride even better the next day.





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NAME: Brad Senstock LOCATION: Orlando, FL OCCUPATION: Full Sail Student

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in diverse Orlando, FL. It is either constantly raining or constantly sunny so either way it can be a great experience riding in the city. While there are some bike paths most bike lanes are scattered throughout sections of the city including about half of the Baldwin Park area, half of the route to the airport, and split up sections downtown. It makes for a pretty intense ride. Some drivers are courteous but for the most part people feel the need to lean out their windows and slur some form of expression that lets you know they are in a car and you are not (most of which just ends up sounding like "heyaaahhhhgsjfdg"). Overall you can find some beautiful sections near all of the lakes and back lots of downtown buildings. So far I have been hit by one car and have had countless near-death experiences from drivers turning in front of me while I have had green lights.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

While I have not ridden in many cities one of my favorites was Lincoln, NE. Yes, that's right: Lincoln, NE.

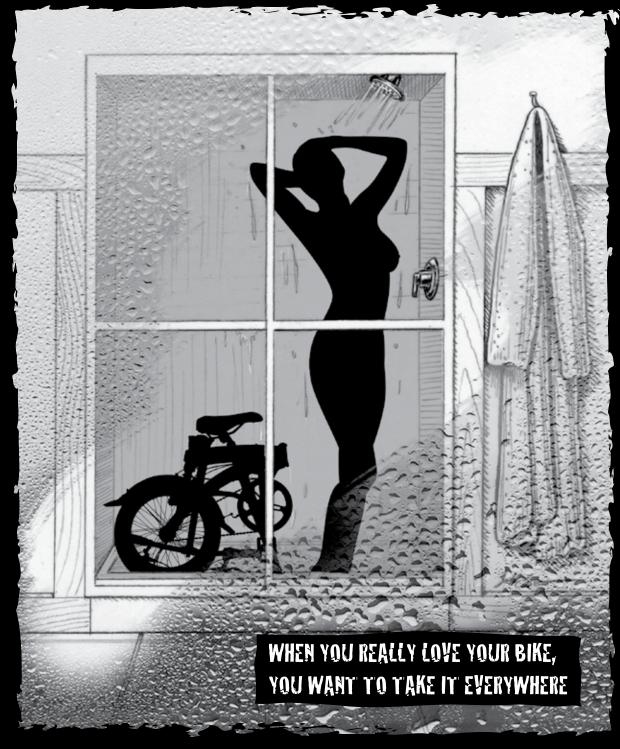
Cornhusker capitol. There is big scene of urban college students in the downtown area and very little bike lanes, but it does have a great little town feel. With light traffic and a middle turning lane on almost every street it's easy to get across the entire city in about 30 minutes. All the traffic is courteous and the spring is the best time to ride.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It offers me the chance to soak in the tropical sun in Orlando and get to explore unknown sections of the city. Everyday we find some new place to pedal to and sit in the shade. I love riding with my group of friends. Once we get out of class it gives us the chance to be care free for the rest of the day and keep myself from missing my girlfriend back in Lincoln too much.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city...

If you don't have a horn, then yell "Hey!" You may feel awkward honking or yelling, but it's better to be embarrassed than to get hit.





LOCATION: San Francisco, CA

OCCUPATION: Trackstand.com founder

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in the City By the Bay. The riding is awesome. Steep hills, dangerous MUNI train tracks, the Wiggle and Marin County riding just north. The terrain changes every city block, which makes it all the more important for you to explore and learn about different routes. Drivers are pretty responsive to cyclists; I attribute much of this to the SF Bicycle Coalition. You can start at Ocean Beach, wind your way up Highway I to the Legion of Honor and end up in the Mission. There is so much variety that you can never get bored.

What was your favorite city for riding and why?

Copenhagen really has their stuff together for biking. Very few people drive cars, instead most people opt for two-wheeled transportation solutions. Even my 65-70 year old relatives bike everywhere (work, grocery store, etc.). They have separate lanes for pedestrians, cyclists and

cars side-by-side. As Americans we should strive to learn from countries like much of Northern Europe who have pioneered sustainable and safe transportation solutions. Gasoline is not the solution.

For the pure adrenaline rush of cycling I would have to say riding in Manhattan during rush hour is hard to beat. You have a beautiful mix of careless drivers, wandering souls and broken asphalt all rolled into one eclectic rolling canvas.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It must be the traffic, the speed and the simple utility of a bicycle that make city biking awesome. In a city you can park wherever you want, cruise through traffic and be healthy at the same time. Riding fixed keeps you in the moment. Cabs, doors swinging open, asshole drivers and people keep you on your toes. There are no dull moments on a fixed gear riding around the city.

mos.AZUidansid.www Phoebe Wong 2009 PIST

PASSIONE CELESTE

TECNOLOGIA VINCENTE

Bianchi

NOMBRE: Alvaro "Pelao" UBICACION: Santiago, \$hile

OCUPACION: Por ahora serigrafista y en adelante, lo

que kiera.

Donde vives y como es montar en tu ciudad?

Vivo en Santiago y andar en Stgo es bastante adrenalinico, es una constante lucha con las micros (transporte publico), los autos, los peatones y las ciclovias que son espacios estrechos con arboles y postes en el medio de la vía y por donde camina la gente, por esto ultimo la verdad que es mas efectivo viajar por la calle que por las "Ciclovias."

Cual es tu ciudad favorita para andar y por que?

Me gusta mucho andar en Stgo y siempre que sea acompañado viajar de stgo a valparaiso, que es una ciudad en la costa de chile (115 km), Buenos Aires tambien es agradable andar en cleta, sus calles son bien amplias, pero me quedo con Santiasco que es mi referente mas constante, es una ciudad comoda no es tan grande y casi plana con muy pocas subidas.

Por que te gusta andar en la ciudad?

Me gusta decidir por donde ir, cuando y con quien. Los medios de transporte masivo me ponen mal, ademas ya tengo un ritmo para andar con el cual me demoro lo mismo o menos que viajar en el transporte publico. Rapides, tranquilidad y los mas importante la AUTONOMIA por eso me gusta andar en la ciudad.





NAME: QBArawk LOCATION: Colorado Springs, CO OCCUPATION: Artist, Student

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I'm currently residing out in cold, windy Colorado Springs, CO. It's cool to ride out here compared to the flatlands of El Paso, TX and the hills are way different than those of San Antonio. You have a mixture of settings to let your mind flow while riding. You can be in the inner city and head toward the mountains and BAM! Here's some calm country type land for you to relax and pedal in.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

My favorite city to ride in has to be El Paso Texas. Hell Paso has a bit of it all as far as landscape. The only downside is when it's windy and dusty due to the desert land. I love the hills and the flats go on, and on, and on... The sun sets are hella different than all other places I have been and they are so peaceful.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I really dig the city riding 'cause it gets me focused and my head is always on a swivel. You have to make sure you are focused or you'll be banged up on the side of the road. It's always dope to see the city folk walking and driving around. I like to observe the diversity around the city and how the people interact. Not to mention the fights are sometimes odd to see. I also have been a graff artist for a while now and the city is where it's at. I really do love to see how the peeps think of how or where to position the illegal canvases.







NAME: Leonard Greis

LOCATION: New South Wales, Australia

OCCUPATION: Managing Director at Apres Velo

On March 4th, 2009 my driver's license was suspended for 6 months due to a number of minor speeding infringements—one of 600 people losing their drivers license in NSW, Australia on a daily basis. Thank goodness the laws have now been changed, albeit too late for this sucker.

My initial reaction was *8%**@... My independence was in jeopardy... My freedom was under threat. Cranky I was!

As a bike fixated obsessive, I figured I could negotiate my way to and from work each day on a new set of wheels I had purchased—a retro looking Soma Juice steel mountain bike.

However, and herein lies the real problem, I have a six year old King Charles Cavalier Spaniel, whom I've taken to work with me every working day since he was a pup. I have a very close bond with my spaniel, Milo, and being the neurotic love sponge that he is, he would fret to have

to now learn the virtues of staying "home alone" for eight hours each day.

Being the over indulgent obsessive nutcase I am, I was determined to find a solution and one I found...

A Chariot for a King (Charles Cavalier) now takes to the roads every day, with Milo sticking his head out of the chariot's sunroof, filled with a mix of trepidation, anguish and nervous excitement, whilst I work up a sweat lugging 30kg behind me (chariot, Milo, briefcase).

Not the quickest mode of transport, but one that I have begun to look forward to every morning, with each journey revealing a myriad of facial expressions glimpsed in the traffic, with motorists, passengers and pedestrians wide eyed at this surreal sight. The number of smiles and laughs I raise each journey from the "passers-by" more than justifies the sweat that I raise each journey, and what's more... Milo still puts in a day's work at the office.





NAME: Anne Rock LOCATION: Philadelphia, PA OCCUPATION: Teacher

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia, five minutes from the Wissahickon section of Fairmount Park. It's a 40 minute ride to center city, with bike lanes, trails and paths. All in all, a fairly bike-friendly city.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Philadelphia because it's where I live.

Why do you love riding in the city?

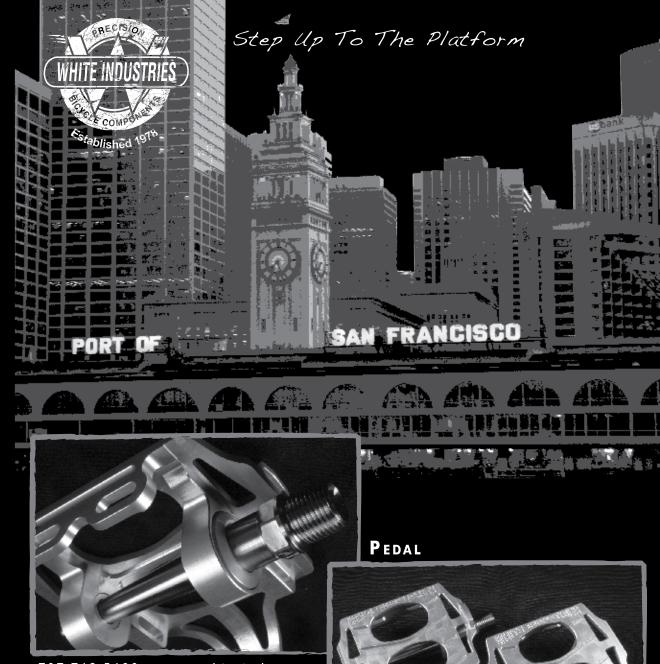
I love the freedom. It's faster than 4 wheeled transit, easier to park, and better for my health.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city...

True story: I won a *Cyclocross Magazine* essay contest. The prize was a Conquest Pro frameset but I wanted the 925. The awesome folks at Redline agreed to the switch and sent me the complete bike with a bunch of extra swag (stickers, gloves, hat).

My son, age 10, and I have been commuting to school since he was in a Burley, then a trail-a-bike, 20" wheel bike and now 24" wheel bike. It's pretty cool. We love passing the giant SUVs on the way into the school. He remarks, "Cars are coffins, Mommy."

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Do you love riding in the city?

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NAME:

LOCATION:

OCCUPATION:

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Why do you love riding in the city?

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city. Poetry anyone?

Email your responses to jeff@urbanvelo.org



NAME: Benedict San Juan (Bikeroo) LOCATION: Toronto, Canada **OCCUPATION: Urban Planning Student**

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Toronto, often referred to as the Big Smog of Canada. Toronto may not be the most bike friendly city but that has been changing with the help of volunteers, organizations and groups like the Toronto Cyclists Union. It's actually a lot of fun riding in the city, even during the winter.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I've gone biking in a few cities in the US and Canada, but riding in Toronto is still my favourite. There's a great community of cyclists here made up of various types of cyclists from commuters to roadies. There is always something to do in the city anytime of the year; from races on ice-rinks in the winter, to mountain biking in the city's network of ravines.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Riding in the city is the most practical means for me, it's cheaper and faster than using the TTC (our over-priced transit system) or driving. I love riding around waving at people and having a quick chat with friends and acquaintances I see on the street, that's something I can't do in a car or in the subway.

"...the Vittoria
Randonneur is the
most consistantly
wearing, flat
resistant, even
skidding tire on
the market. We
would not use
anything else."



- MashSF





NAME: Doug D LOCATION: New York, NY

OCCUPATION: Part time messenger, part

time food delivery

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. In my neighborhood I feel safer riding my bike than I would if I were to be walking all the time. In Bed-Stuy I ride past the Marcy Houses every day and once I was punched in the head as I was riding just two blocks from my house. But my street has a bike lane so that's good, and they just made it better by making it begin about ten blocks sooner. I do most of my riding in Manhattan or North Brooklyn while I'm working.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

NYC is good and evil at the same time, lots of different areas, surprising how much can be found here. In Manhattan the congestion is good, drivers don't have tons of space to get stupid. But some of the streets are in bad repair so it's not always a smooth ride. But the city has repayed a lot in the last couple years so it's much better than when I moved here. I'm from Dayton. There the streets are smooth but the drivers suck really bad. In NYC riding is great, I see lots of friends on bikes all the time.

My favorite place to ride isn't a city at all, it's the mountain passes throughout the Eastern Sierra Nevada's. Sonora Pass is my favorite road I've ever ridden, it's like a roller coaster through the mountains. Tioga Pass, so fast, I've hit 70+ mph it's 12 miles to the top-Ih:15m up, turn around, 14 minutes down. There are so many great roads out there. Monitor, Ebbetts, Kingsbury, Mt. Rose highway. Westgard pass starts at 4000ft and goes up to 10,000ft. Smooth, quiet, clean and beautiful, almost no traffic.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It's where I live. I roll my bike out the door in the morning and ride all day till I get home at night. And NYC is the best place for bike polo.



MONSTER TRACK



WORDS BY MICHAEL GREEN - WWW.BIKEBLOGNYC.COM

PHOTOS BY KEVIN DILLARD - WWW.DEMONCATS.COM







he biggest controversy surrounding this year's famous outlaw messenger race was that brunch somehow made it on the schedule. This caused quite a stir and got the Bikesnob all worked up, questioning the legitimacy of underground bike culture. It turned out that brunch was just a tongue in cheek way to get everybody together at Trackstar's new food spot in Brooklyn, Boneshakers. Fear not, the world famous alleycat race has not gone all soft and yuppie like a meal served between breakfast and lunch. The original NYC alleycat race has maintained its integrity and continues to attract racers and urban riders from all over the planet. Ten years is an impressive milestone for something that started small as a way for couriers to blow off steam and has now become an international destination. The race happens in the cold chill of winter, one of the first events of the year and it has one distinct rule in a sport known for having none... No handbrakes allowed. This truly separates the latest fixed gear converts from the urban street racers who must possess the skills to handle a track bike in unpredictable NYC traffic and often with patches of ice and snow on the ground. Monster Track may not be for messengers only, but you have to know how to handle a bike and have the unique athletic ability that couriers gain when the streets of NYC are their office.

I have been covering this race since 2005. Monster Track 5 highlights included legendary NYC couriers such as Kevin "Squid" Bolger, Alfred Bobe Jr. and Filipe Robayo battling it out for supremacy and street cred—all coming in with harrowing tales of switching out bikes and skitching cabs across bridges. Famous videographer Lucas Brunelle caught great footage from his twin mounted helmet cams to provide some unique insight to these high-risk maneuvers.

In 2007 I made a short film called Track Kaiju (Monster) about two Japanese bike messengers who flew in from Tokyo to race in Monster Track. We spent the week with Sino and his buddy Hal as they prepared for the race. This was a fascinating window into the courier lifestyle, which has an unwritten policy of hospitality where there's always an open couch and a good time to be had when traveling.

Things got dicey in 2008 when tragedy struck a few weeks before the race. Thirty-year old Matthew Manger-Lynch was struck and killed by an SUV during an alleycat series in Chicago. This unfortunate incident gave alleycat races some unwanted attention, spooked the community and brought up issues about who should be participating in these races. Should alleycats only be for messengers as









they originally were? Should the organizing move back to the underground, away from the web publicity that has come about to surround them? As a result, Monster Track organizers canceled the race last minute fearing safety issues with so many people, both messengers and non-messengers, coming out to race. A smaller secret-hand-shake Monster Track went on unannounced in the safe confines of a massive downpour.

Before this year's Monster Track Ten I had a brief conversation with two of its veterans, NYC couriers Mike Dee and the aforementioned Squid Bolger. They reminisced about the first Monster Track back in 2000, organized during informal meetings at Sophie's bar and Tompkins Square park, two hangouts of the courier crowd. Alleycat races had been going on strong since the first Cycle Messenger World Championships kicked off in Berlin. 1992, but there wasn't one exclusive to the brakeless fixed gear crowd. Two couriers, Vlad and Snake, decided to throw the first race dedicated to this small group of riders and the first Monster Track was born. According to Squid there were about 30 riders who came out. "The brakeless crew was a proud bunch but definitely a minority. Most other messengers considered us crazy and maybe for good reason." He mentioned the attraction to the brakeless fixed gear in those early days was about bikes with less maintenance and better control, especially in wet/snowy conditions, which also had to be why Monster Track takes place in the dead of winter. "The pride I felt when I mastered brakeless in NYC traffic... It is something that has to be experienced to be understood."

This year, for Monster Track 10, I decided to cover the race from the perspective of individual participants to find out their thoughts on this famous race.

The Rookie: Pavel Marosin, 22-years old, from Jackson Heights, Queens. Pavel represents the new generation of alleycat racers, he is not a messenger, but is envious and respectful of the courier lifestyle. "I mean, who doesn't want to ride their bike around all day for a living?" He got into alleycat racing for its competitive nature and was excited to remove his brake for this race. Monster Track will be his third race but his first without brakes. Pavel is part of a new breed, the internet social networking crowd, who is attracted to the track bike for its simplicity and speed but also to the races for the interaction with a community of skilled outlaw bike riders.

The Out of Towner: Andrew Franciosa, 20-years old, from Albany. Andrew is involved in the scene and started www.bikealbany.com. He is a student up at this state capital and organizes races and events to unite the small but growing biker community. We talked a bit about safety



san marco

MASH



issues, particularly that of throwing unsanctioned events. Andrew thinks that, "People know what they're getting into." This will be his first Monster Track, although he has traveled to NYC for other bike events. He is used to riding a fixed gear brakeless, and only rides with a brake when he is late for class and knows that he is riding half asleep from an all night cram session. When Andrew isn't riding his fixed gear, he rides a homemade tallbike.

The Fast Female: Heather Muller, 24-years old, is the resident "fast girl" in NYC and has been tearing it up at alleycats for a few years now. She came in 5th in Monster Track 2006, third in 2007 and won in the rain soaked 2008. Unlike the new crowd of fixed gear forum readers, Heather is a working messenger who started out with Breakaway and now works for the messenger-owned and operated cooperative, Mess Kollective. As a woman, Heather has never felt excluded from the alleycat scene... probably because she is as fast as many of the men and

because there are a good number of other women couriers. Heather says that alleycat racing has opened up a new community for her and overall, "It's been a really positive experience."

The Fast Male: Christian Thormann, 25-years old, is a messenger for NY Minute and a strong competitor. This will be his 4th Monster Track, the first was 2006 where he had never raced brakeless before. At the start of that race, he was doing well and was able to keep up with the top pack of riders that included Andy White, Alfred and Felipe. Then he got squeezed in on the double yellow with an MTA bus. A woman pedestrian popped out of nowhere and sent Chris tumbling over the bars and totaling his ride. The pedestrian was fine and Chris walked the rest of the way, finishing 135th. But he was hooked on racing and went into this year's race wanting to win.

The Organizer: This year's torch got passed to the Mighty Chin, a film producer, event organizer and when

NEW & VINTAGE CUSTOM BUILD-UPS

"...even our beaters are bling".



NYC

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he's not too involved with the bike, a NY professional. When asked how old he is he says, "Too old to still be doing this shit." In 2007, he organized the 5 Boro Generals race series, which held an alleycat in each of the 5 NYC boroughs. We talked about this year's Monster Track and what made it special to be at the 10-year mark, "Monster Track is the scariest, most competitive alleycat on the calendar. It is restricted to fixed gear bikes and it brings out the best of the best."

The Race: Game day came with the usual time frame late. Roughly one hundred racers registered on a day that became increasingly cold as the time got closer to the start. The usual cities had come out, Boston, Philadelphia, Connecticut... Providence. On the international side, Tokyo was there with Hal coming back to try his luck once again. Unfortunately, the world's fastest courier, Hiroyuki Shinozuka (otherwise know as Sino), winner of the '08 Cycle Messenger World Championships in Toronto didn't make it—just weeks before the race he was hit by a car while on the job and broke both legs.

Many of the fastest messengers were not racing this year, opening things wide for new young riders. One of those was Dan Chabanov, 21, a courier who has come a long way in competitive cycling in a very short time. He was a popular favorite to win this year's Monster Track. Some other favorites were Craig Roth from Boston and Jumbo who traveled all the way from Copenhagen. Jumbo took third place in Toronto's World Messenger championship and did well in Monster Track '06 despite finishing the race with only one crank arm on his bike.

The Mighty Chin arrived at the gathering point around 4:45pm with the manifests. In true alleycat style, everyone was told to put their bikes off to one side and gather against a wall or "they weren't getting nothing." Reluctantly, people obliged and then in a frenzy of helmets and cycling caps, Mike Dee and Chin distributed the manifests listing the checkpoints. Chin wanted Monster Track 10 to represent its messenger origins so the checkpoints were based on where couriers were currently delivering. This made for an authentic manifest complete with common courier destinations throughout Manhattan. Riders got about 10 minutes to look it over and decide their route and then it was back up against the wall. Without much of an announcement, around 5:00pm, in frigid weather and with darkness knocking, the race was on.

I headed over to Continuum Cycles to wait with owner Jeff Underwood and Chin who were busy coordinating with checkpoints and matching those racing with their spoke cards. About an hour had passed and the first riders came in to get their next manifest, copies of which only 20

racers actually received. One rider from DC was seriously shaken up after witnessing a hit and run of a pedestrian by a car. Not related to Monster Track, just an unfortunate reality of NYC traffic, it nonetheless ended a few out-oftowners' race day when they stopped to help.

Another hour passed, making for a grueling two-hour race for the top contenders as they rolled into Brooklyn. The winner was Crihs, closely followed by Jumbo, battling it out together throughout as the field was narrowed down. Only the top five racers got "overtime" direct rush routes, guiding them to the ultimate finish. They told a hair-raising tale of skitching across the Manhattan Bridge three-deep at 30 miles per hour—Crihs holding on to the car, Jumbo to him and Lucas Brunelle right behind video taping the whole affair. Somehow they managed to hang on and make it across to Brooklyn alive without crossing wheels or going down. With the finish came celebration and talk of future conquests with sights set on this year's Cycle Messenger World Championships in Tokyo.

Whether Monster Track 10 "kept it real" is always up for debate, but I think NYC courier Dagga describes it best... "Regardless of what goes on, it's our track bike holiday."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



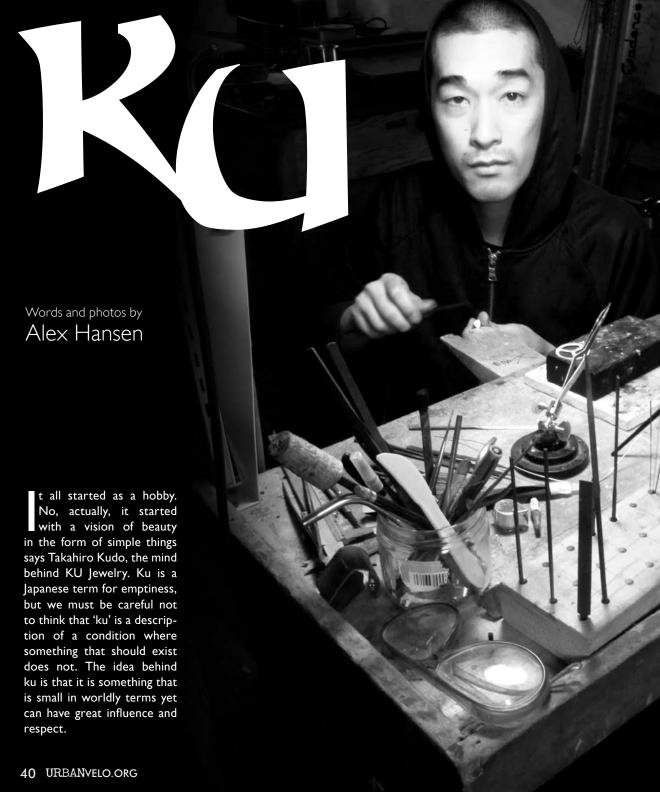
Michael Green lives and rides in New York City. He's the author of the popular cycling blog, bikeblognyc.com, and a noteworthy bicycle filmmaker. In addition to being an avid cyclist and staunch bicycle activist, Michael is a proud father.



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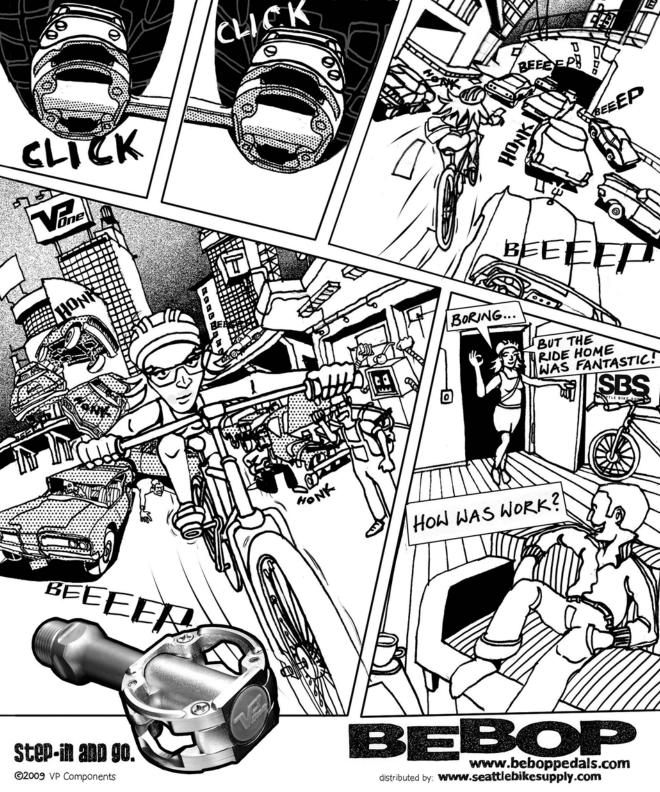




For Spec and Color Info Go To: www.FBMFIXED.com The idea may not have been the first time bike jewelry has been done, but Takahiro believes that you can do something innovative by performing the ordinary, in an extraordinary manner. That's exactly what this Bushwick Brooklyn artist/cyclist has done. "Biking has always been a big part of my daily life here in New York. It was a no brainer to take something that I love doing and see how far it takes me," says Takahiro. Studying product design at KIDI, a renowned global design school in Japan, he learned traditional jewelry making techniques using chain nose pliers, coiling tools, bur cups and files.

KU Jewelry came about when Takahiro acquired a loft space in Bushwick that allowed him to set up an impressive workspace. There he honed his skills in product development through computer modeling programs and further instruction. "My teacher Chie is an instructor of FIT in NY. I learned metal sawing, soldering, filing, stone setting and basic jewelry techniques from him."







When he first came to the United States, Takahiro didn't receive much response on his other artistic pursuits, but when his friends started asking him to make bike jewelry, he knew what he wanted to put his energy towards. With summer on the way, KU is making its debut at jewelry bike industry tradeshows. With excellent craftsmanship and acute attention to detail, this DIY project is taking off with distribution through Chari and CO in Manhattan and various bike shops in Japan.

"It is not like very expensive fine jewelry, and it's not like Chinese mass-produced, not like copy cat things. When I started to bike, I realized bike components are so beautiful. They are designed by technology that is

for speed, weight or durability. I tried to translate the beauty of bike components to jewelry. When someone who does not care about bikes sees my bike jewelry and feels that is nice, my hope is that someone will learn [about bike component design] and start to be interested in bikes," says Takahiro.

Check out www.kujewelry.com KU Jewelry 413 Vandervoort Ave. 2nd FL. Brooklyn, NY, 11222



WHAT'S THE MUSS ABOUT MASS? By David Hoffman



"What do you think of Critical Mass?" Over the years, I've been asked this question hundreds of times.

My introduction to Critical Mass was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania sometime in 2002. At that time I was busy building the local bicycle advocacy coalition, Bike Pittsburgh. Most of the work that I was doing to promote bicycling within the City was being done in partnership with local government agencies such as the Port Authority (transit), the Mayor's Office and members of City Council, and the local Metropolitan Planning Agency. I desperately wanted to have Bike Pittsburgh recognized as a legitimate organization that could and would work with local government to make Pittsburgh a better place for bicyclists. Everyone kept asking me what I thought about Critical Mass, and if Bike Pittsburgh supported it. The naked agenda behind this question was simple: was I willing to work within the "system," or was I one of



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those lawless radicals that took to the streets in anarchy? Initially, I think I mumbled my answers, or somehow managed to change the subject.

The truth was, I didn't really know much about Critical Mass. I started asking around.

heighten awareness of bicycle traffic and one that could be used by advocates to open and move conversations about the bicyclists that were using the streets every day.

As Bike Pittsburgh grew and our accomplishments became more

THE NAKED AGENDA BEHIND THIS QUESTION WAS SIMPLE: WAS I WILLING TO WORK WITHIN THE "SYSTEM," OR WAS I ONE OF THOSE LAW-LESS RADICALS THAT TOOK TO THE STREETS IN ANARCHY?

At the time, Pittsburgh's Critical Mass was a moderately sized affair. Many of the people who participated in the monthly celebration on two wheels were also connected with the local community bike shop, Free Ride!. For the most part these were intelligent, resourceful, and passionate people. True, there was a healthy distrust of authority and some people had a very earthy funk about them. But most of all, these were simply people that wanted to ride their bike. The monthly Critical Mass was a way to band together, celebrate and ride in relative safety on some seriously hostile streets. I could see where people in government would think that Critical Mass participants were somehow cut from the same cloth that would eventually clothe inmates instead of responsible, law-abiding citizens.

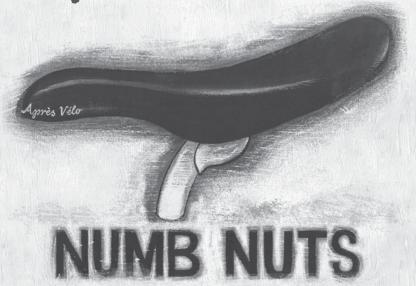
My attitude towards Critical Mass began to change. I was working and riding with people who participated in Pittsburgh's Critical Mass. I began to meet advocates from all over the country, many of whom also participated in their local Mass. I started to visit other communities and took the opportunity to ride in the local Masses if I was in town at the right time. I began to see Critical Mass as both a tool used by the locals to

visible, my phone started to ring. The media wanted to ask the local "establishment" about Critical Mass, as there had been a sharp increase in the number of participants taking to the streets every month as urban bike culture began to flourish. When Bike Pittsburgh was first getting its legs, local Critical Mass participation was in the low dozens of riders. Less than four years later there could be as many as 200 or more participants, especially during the busy summer months.

Could I comment on Critical Mass? What did Bike Pittsburgh think about the lawless riders that participated in Critical Mass? Did I think that Critical Mass was legal? What was the point of it all? Why did Bike Pittsburgh organize this event every month? (We didn't, but this was typical of the under-informed media questions that I would get.)

The majority of questions from the media were slanted toward writing unsympathetic articles about Critical Mass, and while Bike Pittsburgh was careful never to directly endorse the ride (we would gladly advertise it as an event in our newsletter and on our website, however), I never felt like I wanted to assist the media in bashing Critical Mass or portraying it in a

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I quickly developed a great line that I knew would either be directly quoted, or would mean that the reporter would have to go elsewhere to dig for dirt. Simply, just as bike advocates choose to work with local municipalities and decision makers as their chosen form of advocacy, participants in Critical Mass have chosen to make a highly visible statement that they are also traffic. Both are forms of advocacy, and neither is right or wrong. If Critical Mass riders weren't effectively getting people's attention, the media wouldn't be contacting me for a quote.

Critical Mass got its start in San Francisco when advocates distributed flyers and arranged a ride on September 25th, 1992. Several dozen riders participated; the event was first publicized as "Commute Clot." After the event, some riders went to a local bicycle shop for a screening of "Return of the Scorcher," a documentary film by Ted White about bicycle culture overseas. In the film, George Bliss, a human-powered vehicle and pedicab designer, talked about how in places like China where some intersections were not controlled, bicyclists, motorcyclists and motorists would all gather until a "critical mass" was reached, and one group would proceed through the intersection before another group reached mass. The term was picked up by the moviegoers and applied to the next ride. The rest is history.

These days, Critical Mass takes place in nearly 400 cities around the world, usually on the last Friday of each month. Some bicyclists that have been put off by the sometimes in-your-face tactics of the ride have started less controversial rides dubbed "Critical Manners," wherein the participants are encouraged to ride with traffic to the letter of the law. Met with derision by some, these groups aim to raise awareness of bicycling through a public demonstration - just like conventional Massers. Other variants include "Critical Tits," a lighthearted version of the traditional Mass that takes place at Burning Man every year. Critical Tits features thousands of mostly topless women riding around Black Rock City in a spectacular celebration of both the bicycle and femininity. I've been to Burning Man and have witnessed Critical Tits. "Decency laws" notwithstanding, I'll bet most drivers would be much less frustrated (well, at least sitting in traffic) if they had to endure several thousand clothing optional riders once a month. They might even think about participating...

Still, tension exists between some Critical Mass participants and traditional non-profit bike advocates. I love telling this story, as it demonstrates how all kinds of bike advocates can work together:

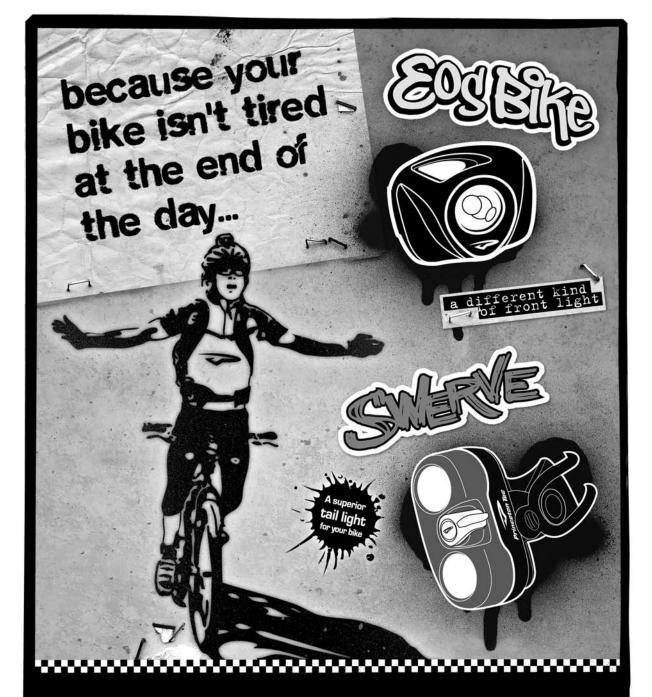
During Bike Pittsburgh's first-annual BikeFest! I made an appearance on the local cable TV station talking about the organization and the upcoming series of BikeFest! events. I wore an expensive suit to the interview in an attempt to both look professional and avoid the stereotype of being a lycra-clad warrior. Coincidentally, that was the same day of Critical Mass. The ride was planned to end at Free Ride! where there would be screenings of bike movies. I had access to a projector and laptop, and agreed to meet the group at Free Ride! after the Mass was over. Just as the group was pulling in to Free Ride!, I was walking in still dressed in my suit with a projector in one hand and a laptop in the other. Once participant yelled out, "Hey, who's the dude in the fucking suit?" To which another Masser replied, "He's the guy that makes this all possible." (Referring to the fact that Bike Pittsburgh helped Free Ride! acquire their shop space and was acting as fiscal sponsor.) I didn't have to say a thing. I just smiled, and continued to set up the movies.

I find it interesting that some of the best advocates that I know are also avid Critical Mass participants. For example, Dave Snyder, former Executive Director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (www.sfbike.org) and fellow colleague with me when we worked for the Thunderhead Alliance (now the Alliance for Biking and Walking -www.peoplepoweredmovement.org) still rides regularly. It was the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition that was able to leverage the pressure that Critical Mass was putting on San Francisco back in the mid-nineties to negotiate a truce of sorts between the City and Critical Mass. Part of the negotiations resulted in the designing and building of San Francisco's bicycle network. Other advocates from Chicago, New York, Marin, Portland, Minneapolis, Madison, and Los Angeles to name just a few have embraced and celebrate the power that Critical Mass brings to bicyclists.

Yes, there have been, and will continue to be problems during a Mass. Sometimes with riders, sometimes with drivers, and often times with the police. These unfortunate incidents are often the ones that make the news. Many articles could be written on this subject alone, but this is just one facet of the Critical Mass phenomenon. And it deserves to be examined, too.

So what do I think of Critical Mass?

I think it is a healthy and necessary component of bike advocacy. It helps to generate the sort of attention that non-profit organizations are often unwilling to do by themselves. And it can be an empowering, exhilarating expression of freedom. All bike advocates should try it at least once. It may help to strengthen ties between us all.



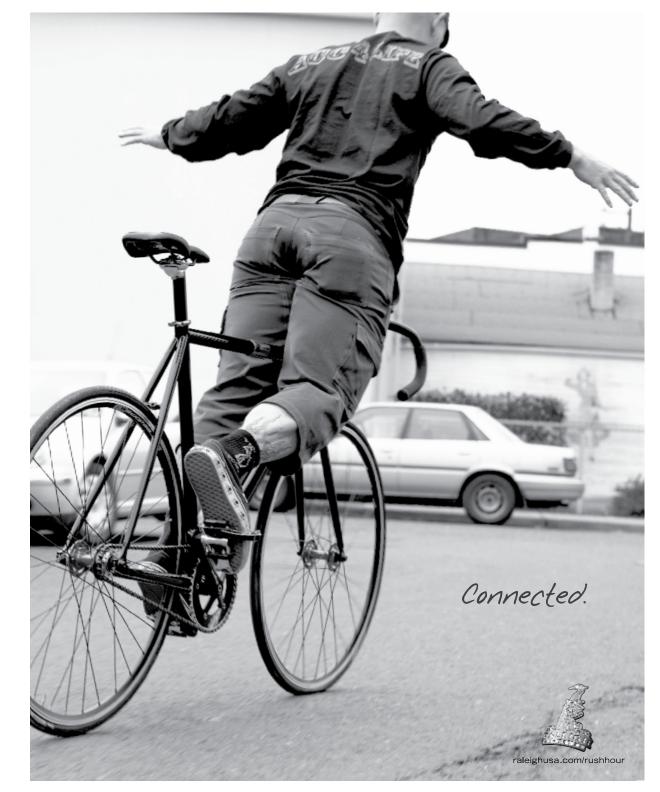


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he 17 year-old Crass-shirt-wearing me is wanting to kick the crap out of the 31 year-old me. It's not because I stopped listening to Crass. On the contrary I listen to them with all the piss and a little less vinegar of yore. Rather, for the first time in my adult life I'm finding myself not only trying to work with government, but also agreeing with them (on a few things). I am still trying to digest the Obama administration's complete

about-face from the Bush years on things that I care deeply about: transportation, urbanism, and of course, cycling. Reconciling this shift leaves me wondering whether I'm agreeing with the new administration only because it is completely different than Bush's suburban sprawl policies, or if they actually mean what they say and aren't just blowing smoke up our saddles. Must...resist...but... This is an existential dilemma of the highest order.



Take the recent League of American Bicyclist's National Bike Summit in Washington DC this past March. This year about 600 biking and walking advocates from 47 states converged for a few days of networking and strategizing, leading up to the final day of lobbying in the halls of the Capitol. We managed to put on our Sunday best to educate Congress about national issues and bills that are important to cyclists. For the most part we met with the staff in charge of formulating their policies, as the actual politicians are out doing whatever it is politicians do all day.

The whole time we were there we kept hearing that "ears have never been so open" and that this is "the year of the bicycle." Earlier this year, Congress passed the Bicycle Commuter Act to help defray the costs associated with

commuting by bike, but more importantly, it symbolically raised cycling to the level of transportation in the minds of government. transporta-House tion and Infrastructure Committee chair, Congressman James Ober-(D-MN), spoke at the opening reception of the Summit and promised to pass Climate Change legislation, called CLEAN TEA, that through cap

and trade measures would provide much-needed money for bicycling, walking and transit projects. He confidently proclaimed there would be money for bikes because he's "the chairman of the Committee." Ray LaHood, Obama's Secretary of Transportation, has gained some surprising praises in the transportation world. Addressing the Summit one morning, he assured us that we "have a full partner at the US DOT in working toward livable communities." He promised that he and Obama "will work toward an America where bikes are recognized to coexist with other modes and to safely share our roads and bridges." He even blogs about it.

Just before the Summit, Obama himself talked about how the days of "building sprawl forever" are over as well as fulfilling his promise to open a White House Office of Urban Affairs. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), the cycling congressman who is the movement's strongest insider ally, had a budget meeting with Obama the day before the Summit. According to Blumenauer as

they talked about transportation, Obama asked, "You mean, there's not enough money for bikes?" Blumenauer paused and assured us with a smile that, "The big guy's on message."

Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA) and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced a bill to coincide with the Summit that seemed unthinkable only a few years ago. The Complete Streets Act of 2009 would require states to adopt a "fix it first" policy where all new and rehabilitated streets must accommodate all users including bikes, transit, cars, the handicapped and pedestrians. Basically, we all pay taxes so we shouldn't limit public thru-ways to only those with automobiles. The bill, intended to level the playing field by making sure our public spaces are distrib-

uted more equitably, is a major challenge to our auto-centric way of designing cities and towns.

So did the most recent changing of the guard suddenly make the stars align for our cause? Have the high gas prices and impending doom of global climate change caused a eureka-moment where politicians all of the sudden get it? I personally think we

Great online resource for meeting a eureka-moment where politicians all of the sudden get it? I personally think we shouldn't sit around and see what happens. The stakes are too high. On one end of the spectrum of inaction we have the expansion of car choked cities and suburban sprawl. On the other end, the extinction of the human race. On the local level, livable streets advocates are still screaming at a wall to people that believe highways can save a dying city. We're still having to deal with a Stimulus package that, despite Obama's promise of an end to sprawl, requires "shovel ready" projects that were designed in the pro-sprawl years. Governments have never been known to make serious changes without the backing of large grassroots social movements, or piles of money.

Don't worry Penny, I still haven't put my trust in the government and I still wear a Crass shirt. I just don't wear it to meetings anymore.

Our movement still can't buy off politicians with swimming pools full of cash, but what we do have are ranks

that are swelling faster than anytime since the invention

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- If you don't have one, start one.
- The Alliance for Biking and Walking: Full of resources and advice on how to start your own.
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Fight Back

Steel Bridge, Portland, OR 2008



Untitled

Five Ten Studios, Oakland, CA 2008



Untitled

Hanging out on the Las Vegas strip 2008

Jason Montano gallery



Road Bike

Broakland Art Bike Jam. Oakland, CA 2008



Untitled
Nevada desert 2008



About Jason Montano

Owning and running Montano Velo bicycles in Oakland California, as well as Broakland Bicycles, Jason devotes what little time he has left to photography. He is dedicated to telling stories through images that capture the spirit of not only the cycling community, but the spirit of our humanity in the context of moment and environment.

Yoshiro YAMADA of PEDAL SPEED photographing Jason Montano at the 2009 NAHBS. Photo by Brad Quartuccio











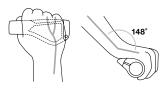






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The Running of the CLAS CHAS By Terry Crock

t was my mother's fault. On summer vacation from elementary school (or as my blood-brother Willy put it, "out of the joint") between the fourth and fifth grades, I was hanging around the house drawing designs in the dust on the woodwork when mother suggested I go outside and play. "Get out of this house. You're driving me nuts," was the way she put it.

Realizing the potential danger I would place myself in should I dally around, I dashed from the house, my pace quickened by a broom slapping wildly about my backside. Thus forced from my own home, I aimed my walking feet toward my friend Willy's house where the whole episode concerning the chickens would come to pass. So as anyone can plainly see, it was my mother's fault.

This part of the state was farm country, and although Willy's parents were not farmers, they were not wealthy either and so kept a coop full of chickens as a cheap source of eggs and feather meat, which was quite necessary to feed the abundant Willy household: the 10-year-old Willy plus five brothers and sisters betwixt the ages of two and six years.

As I walked up the drive to Willy's house, his father Tom passed me going the other way in his car. Tom was the minister at the local Baptist church. I waved, but when Tom recognized me, his eyes went a bit wide, his mouth dropped open, and he shook his head. Then he stopped the car and began praying. I was going to go over and say "Howdy," but I spotted Willy out feeding the chickens so I moved on.

Actually, Willy was not just feeding the chickens. He would throw down some feed, and when a chicken would bend over to peck it up, Willy would shoot the chicken in the butt with a water gun. The startled chicken would leap straight up into the air, spin around, and, upon land-

ing, run off squawking back into the coop—a nifty show of acrobatics that the giggling, sharp-shooting Willy seemed to enjoy immensely.

"Hey, Willy," I said, thumbing back toward the direction of the driveway. "What's with your dad? He seems to spend a lot of time praying anymore."

"Not really," answered Willy, "Just when you come over."

"Oh," I said.

"It's hot out here," said Willy, sucking on the end of his water gun. "Let's go in the house."

We entered the house through the kitchen door. Willy's mother was washing dishes. When she saw Willy and me, she rolled her eyes, looked skyward, and said, "Oh, Lordy." A very religious family, I thought—although the religion thing hadn't seemed to rub off on Willy yet.

Willy and I went into the living room and settled down to what we had originally planned to be a leisurely afternoon of soda pop swigging and television watching. Our peaceful plans quickly changed however—National Geographic could not have known their weekly television special, watched that day by two impressionable young lads, would lead to an event which would change the serene Willy household into one besieged with mayhem and terror. The subject of the show, "The Running of the Bulls," so affected Willy and me with scenes of bulls chasing foolhardy men through the streets of Pamplona, Spain that we could think of but one thing: chickens... Yes, chickens.

"Chickens!" Willy and I shouted in unison, as I slapped my knee in glee just at the thought of our intended use of the feathered critters.

"What about chickens?" questioned Willy's mom as she leaned at an angle through the living room doorway, one eyebrow raised, head cocked, wiping her hands dry on

65

Illustrations by Josh Boley URBANVELO.ORG



a red-and-white checkered dishcloth. "I told you before about messin' with the chickens. Now you leave them chickens alone or I'll tan both your hides. And don't be scarin' your brothers and sisters with 'em. You hear me?"

"Yes, mom," answered Willy in a sarcastic voice as he crossed his arms and slid down and slumped in his chair so as to irritate his mother with a show of bad posture—his head resting against the chair back, his back sitting on the chair seat, his butt hanging over the edge of the chair, his legs splaying out onto the floor.

"Sit up straight William Allen!" said Willy's mom through clenched teeth and with exaggerated lip movements as she quickly rolled up the dishcloth she was holding by grabbing opposite corners in each hand and spinning it around; then she let fly and snapped Willy's butt with it.

"Eeee-ooouch!" responded Willy as he hurriedly resumed a better posture.

"Ooooooh," I said, astonished with the woman's skill in wielding the cloth, "Good wrist action."

Willy's mom shot a look at me that made it clear I should shut up, and so I did.

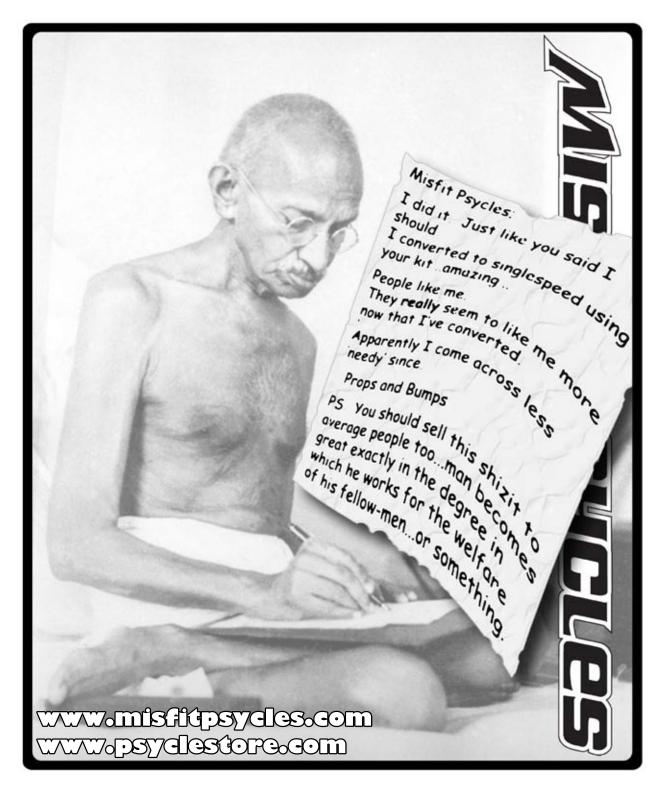
"Remember what I told you," said Willy's mom as she went back into the kitchen, "Don't be messin' with the chickens. I'm just about fed up with your shenanigans."

"Okay, okay," said Willy.

Then Willy and I went outside to mess with the chickens. We had an ingenious plan that was based on two items. First, Willy's brothers and sisters were deathly afraid of the chickens (which, by the way, may have possibly been due to a story we had told them about chickens killing young children as they slept during the night as revenge for humans eating their eggs). Secondly, based on past experiments Willy and I had conducted, we knew the chickens to be terrified of the machine-gun-like BLAP-BLAP-BLAP-BLAP sound produced by the spokes of a bicycle's spinning front wheel slapping several playing cards taped onto the bicycle's front forks and extending into the spoke's path. Riding said bicycle within the vicinity of the chickens would send them into a wild, stampeding frenzy.

We dubbed our wondrous scheme "The Running of the Chickens." Although the memory of a tanned hide pains me to recall, I will recount the events as I remember them, keeping the facts as close to the truth as I care to make them.

Willy's young (compared to us mature 10-year-olds) siblings were playing in the backyard near the house. Most of the chickens were milling about peacefully approximately fifty feet away, near the chicken coop. The remainder of



the chickens were roosted in the safety of their coop taking a mid-afternoon nap. Willy, a sinister smirk on his face and a red towel tied around his waist in imitation of the garb worn by the participants in the Running of the Bulls, sat behind the chicken coop on his bicycle—one foot on a pedal ready for action, other foot down for balance rocking gently back and forth, a full dozen brand-new, crisp playing cards taped securely to the bicycle's front forks. We had been sure to arrange those cards quite carefully in order to produce the most racket when they would engage the spokes of the soon to be spinning front wheel. Thus the stage was set. And the play was about to begin.

With squinting eyes, I cast my gaze back and forth over Willy's and my own personal Pamplona. I eyed the children. I eyed the chickens. No parents in sight—all looked well. I looked at Willy; he nodded. I began pounding on the side wall of the chicken coop. As expected, all chickens still in the coop hurriedly exited the building, joining their fellow sisters in the yard. Fearful curiosity, caused by the coop pounding, soon spread to all the chickens, who were now on red alert, stretching their necks up high, jerking their heads alternately right and left with the stupid ratcheting motion chickens use when looking about. A few feeble, questioning "clucks" were heard. The questions were soon to be answered.

The pounding of the chicken coop wall had been Willy's signal. After allowing the birds a few seconds to exit the coop, Willy pushed back his bike, then heaved forward with all his might and broke loose in a crazed pedaling frenzy head down, elbows out, legs pumping, hair flying, clothes flapping, freckles stretching, wind-induced tears streaming back his cheeks, screaming for all he was worth, playing cards in the spokes working to perfection: BLAP-BLAP-BLAP-BLAP-BLAP! The already on-alert chickens instantly stampeded—necks stretched out, wings spread wide, feet kicking them into overdrive, squawking for all they were worth-headed straight toward our intended victims.

The victims—hearing the awesome racket produced by the combination of several dozen berserk chickens; a furiously pedaled playing-cards-in-the-spoke bicycle; and two wildly screaming ten-year-old boys-looked up, the expressions on their faces showing reverence, fear and wonder, obviously thinking themselves under attack by crazed, child-killing chickens. As an added encouragement I waved my arms, jumped up and down, and yelled, "The chickens are going to eat you! The chickens are going to eat you!"

The children leapt straight up into the air (amazingly like chickens being shot in the butt with a water gun), and landed running, sprinting for the safety of their homeheads back, hair flying, arms pumping, legs spinning like whirligigs in a hurricane, tears of fear streaking back across their innocent faces—but the devious Willy herded several chickens around into their path, blocking their retreat, and the panicked children ran wildly back in the direction from whence they had just come.

Willy, grinning alike a fox in a hen house, zipped around the yard on the BLAP-BLAP-BLAPing bicycle, continuously circling, thwarting all escape attempts by child or chicken. Children ran every which way, they screamed—a shrill, pathetic cry rose above the din, "I didn't eat none of them eggs!"—they climbed trees, they fell from trees, they bounced off fenceposts, fear-blinded chickens bounced off children, children bounced off each other, grass flew, dirt flew, feathers flew, chickens flew, It was a virtual tornado of children and chickens. Several fallen children were chickentrampled in the melee. Several eggs somehow made their way onto the field of play. Several pairs of child's trousers were wetted. It was like a cartoon come to life.

Seemingly, we had executed our scheme to perfection. I stomped my foot, slapped my knee, and fell to the ground doubled over laughing in hysterical delight. Tears of merriment streamed down Willy's cheeks as he sped about the yard. But then from behind me I heard the distinct sound of the slamming of a kitchen's screen door; and I looked over and saw Willy's mother...she wasn't laughing. The one mistake in our planning, I realized too late, had been our failure to account for the racket of the combo chicken/children pandemonium alerting the children's overprotective mother. Maybe, I wistfully imagined for a split second, the seemingly angry mother would grow to appreciate our merry circus. But this quickly proved to be a false hope. She just stood there—hickory switch in hand, hands on hips, stern look on face-obviously seeing no humor whatsoever in our chicken exploits. Then she chased Willy down like an owl swoops down upon a mouse, nabbing the unsuspecting lad by the back of his shirt collar and lifting him from the speeding bicycle. The riderless bicycle continued on, BLAP-BLAP-BLAP-BLAP-BLAP, until crashing into a rose bush and falling on its side, the wheels slowly spinning to a stop, BLAP-BLAP-BLAP-Blap...blap...bla...b...b. And then the bike lay still, a sad memento to National Geographic's unintended effect on the minds of impressionable young lads not yet having the wisdom to consider the consequences of their own actions.

The hysterical, blubbering children, sensing their mother to be the only calm in a sea of storms, ran to her. Willy, beginning to blubber himself, dangled from the



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outstretched arm and tightly clenched fist of his mother. Willy's arms were still extended as if he continued to hold the bike's handlebars in his grips; and his feet, raised high off the ground, still moved slowly around and around in a pathetic pedaling motion; but without a bicycle under him, the pedaling was for naught, and looked fairly stupid besides. Their tormentor now vanquished, the googlyeyed chickens ran for the safety of their coop. The surrounding cacophony of noise and action quickly collapsed in upon itself, and the resultant silence was so eerie and complete that one could hear with a deafening crash the final few chicken feathers falling upon the ground as they floated down out of the sky. And then all was calm. Willy's legs finally quit moving, and his arms dropped to his side. The children's fearful screams subsided into quiet, heaving sobs, and the chickens quit clucking. Seemingly, the wind itself was stilled. The final curtain had just fallen.

Only I, of all the human beings remaining on the battlefield, was either not clutching or being clutched by Willy's mother. I stood alone. Soon, all eyes turned to me-the dull, pitiful eyes of the helpless Willy; the moist, red eyes of still sobbing children; the angry, flashing eyes of an infuriated mother seeking revenge for the turmoil of those same children; the little beady eyes of a multitude of stupid chickens peaking out from their chicken coop door. With only two eyes of my own to look back upon the numerous eyes that stared upon me, I knew the battle was lost. Willy's mother's mouth began to open as if to speak, but my own internal defense mechanisms began to function, and my body on its own accord, apparently without any conscious thought required, decided that exact moment would be as good as time as any to run as fast as I possibly could in any direction whatsoever so long as it led away from Willy's house, and so I headed home at a pace that I would have thought quite impossible only moments before.

By the time I arrived home I was fairly calm, and I was determined to put the whole unsettling chicken episode behind me. But as I entered the front door, I was met by an irritated-looking woman whom I knew as "Mom." Hmmm, I thought, an unsettling look, but maybe she doesn't know anything specific—moms typically look irritated. Yet, as I moved on into the house, she continued to eyeball me as if I had done wrong. Which, in fact, I had, but I didn't really like her attitude about it.

"Hi, mom," I said cheerfully, in an attempt to break her icy glare.

"I just got a call from Willy's mother—" she began, not very cheerfully at all—ice not broken.

"I don't know nothin' 'bout no chickens," I inter-

rupted.

"No need to start swimmin' 'till you hit water, boy," said my mother.

"Willy's mom exaggerates things," I said, realizing too late that I had somehow just entangled myself in my own words.

"And just what is it she is exaggerating?" my mom asked, devious in her questioning.

"Nothing," I said, finally figuring out that the less I said now, the better off I would be. But my mom still stood there looking at me. I could not meet her eyes. Thinking quickly, I spouted out, "Sometimes the best laid plans of mice and men go awry," hoping to impress my mom with my show of literary knowledge.

"Sometimes the best laid plans of boys and chickens don't work out so well either," said my mother.

"But we were just out ridin' bikes and them chickens went crazy," I said.

"You should be more concerned with crazy mothers than crazy chickens," said my mother.

I was not quite sure what that meant, but I was quickly becoming aware that all my verbal attempts at negotiation were being skillfully rebutted, and the situation was beginning to look mighty bleak for the welfare of my backside. So I quit talking and began to slowly ease back out of the house whilst trying to act innocent: I crossed my arms, began to whistle, and gazed about in the air—an absurd ploy that never fooled anyone, but, what the heck, I was desperate. Besides, it was my word against Willy's mom's; her accusations wouldn't hold up in a court of law, I thought.

But my mother, showing no concern whatsoever for the court system, the U.S. Constitution, or the Bill of Rights, dispensed with the legalities and convicted me right then and there without benefit of either a trial or a jury of my peers. Thinking back on it now, it was rather un-American.

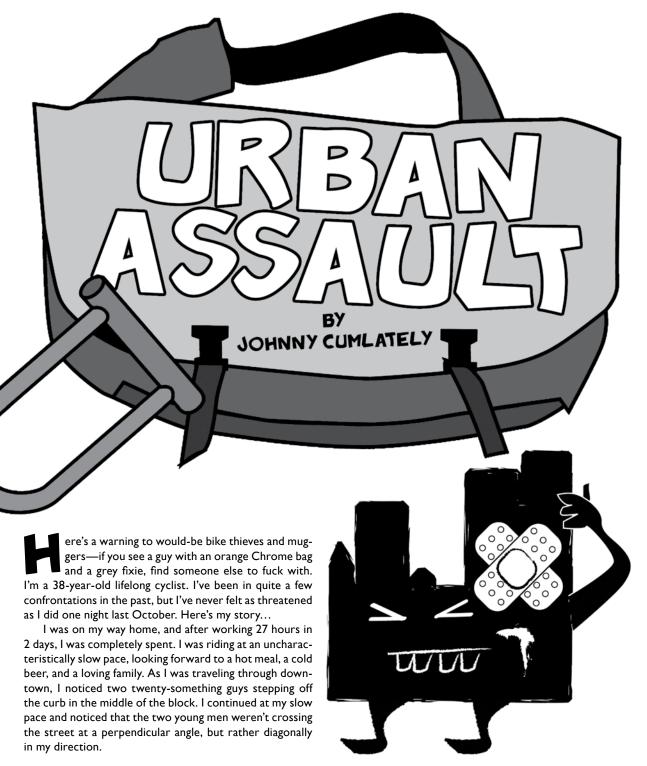
"You know," said my mother, grabbing my ear, leading me back into the house, and bending me over her knee, "This is going to hurt you more than it does me."

Before I had time to contemplate that strange twist of words, my sentence was passed down and carried out. Luckily, for the benefit of both my and Willy's hides, the new school year soon began, limiting the time we had for injuring ourselves or others. Ironically, my first assignment of the new school year was to write about something exciting that happened during the past summer.

And so began my essay, "It was my mother's fault..."







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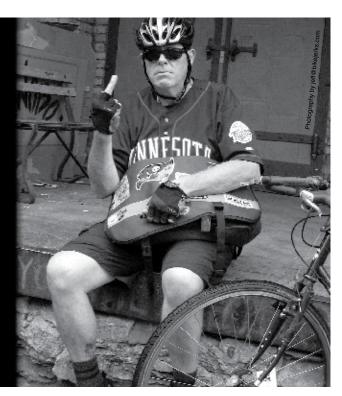
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Now, had this been late at night I would have poured on the speed so that I was safely past them before they even crossed the yellow line, but since it was only about 8:00p.m. I just gave them the "go ahead" wave as our paths began to intersect.

As I approached they stopped in their tracks and gave me the "go ahead" wave. I started to pass when one of them suddenly punched me in the left eye. I crashed to the curb and struggled to untangle myself from my bike. The two men put up their fists and told me to stay down or get more of the same.

I was in no mood to stay down, so I jumped up, grabbed my bike in my left hand and my messenger bag in my right and backed up a little bit. That's when a third young man arrived on the scene. The three of them began to threaten me, and threw numerous punches that missed.

I wasn't sure if they wanted to steal my bike, take my money, or just beat me up. Since there was really no way to defend myself from three dudes at the same time I wasn't taking any chances. I started to yell, "Stay away from me! I don't want to fight with you!" I knew I had to get away from them, and fast.

Directly across the street from where this was all taking place is a private club for the city's elite. I thought that if I could get over there and make enough noise that somebody might come to my rescue (or at least call the police). So, with bike and bag in hand, I backed up toward the club. Meanwhile, traffic had come

to halt and the blaring car horns were making a terrific amount of noise. At this point I noticed a car parked in front of the club's entrance with the windows rolled down. There was a man in a security guard uniform in the driver's seat and I thought, "What luck." I pleaded with the man to help me (as I was still dodging blows) but his response was just, "Hang tight man."

Hang tight? I could see I was going to get no help from this joker, so as a small crowd of bystanders gathered, I took out my U-lock. I dropped my bag and let my bike fall behind me. I warned them to leave me alone while someone from the crowd announced they had called the police. A bus pulled up across the street and at this point one of the three men ran towards it as if to escape the impending police while the other two continued to harass me. It turns out this was just a ruse—when the bus pulled away

the third man charged me. This was the moment of truth, I knew it was time to go on the offensive or they were going to overpower me before the police arrived.

As the attacker got within my arm's reach I swung the U-lock as hard as I could. It slammed into the side of his head and left him unconscious in a pool of blood.

Immediately the security guard jumped from the car and one of the two remaining men ran away. Instead of coming to my aid, the security guard snatched my lock and told me, "You didn't have to hit him like that." I told him that I was afraid for my life while the third attacker continued to verbally harass me. I thought, "I need to get out of here," so I made an attempt to get on my bike and take off. The security guard stopped me and said that I was going to jail.

The whole incident took less than fifteen minutes, and

finally the police arrived. Although I was afraid that I might be arrested, I calmly waited for them to check on the unconscious man before hearing my side of the story. As I explained what happened, the third attacker repeatedly interrupted. After the police warned him three or four times he was arrested. Apparently he had the right to remain silent but not the ability to do so.

After hearing my side of the story and interviewing several witnesses, including the security guard who was definitely not on my side, the police told me I had every right to defend myself. They asked me if I wanted to press charges, but I

declined, so they told me I was free to go.

Two blocks later I realized that the crash had broken several spokes in my rear wheel, so I called my lovely wife to come and pick me up in her car. On the drive home I wished all sorts of ill will upon the bastards who bruised my face and damaged my bike. It wasn't until later that I realized a new wheel, a little bruise, and some torn clothes is a small price to pay. The incident could have turned out a lot worse had I not kept my wits about me.

Suffice it to say, I never wanted to hurt anyone. I certainly don't go looking for trouble on my bike. I ride to have fun, stay in shape, and experience the world around me. I'm much more likely to buy you a beer at happy hour than smash your skull with a U-lock. But if you're a bike thief or a mugger and you see a guy with an orange Chrome bag and a grey fixie, find someone else to fuck with.

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Bikes on ti By Jeff Guerrero

Breaking Away

For many of us, Breaking Away was the movie that first introduced us to road bike culture. And while not many of us came away from the movie ready to shave our legs and start wearing cycling caps, the academy award winning film sure did make us want to go ride our bikes. Fast.

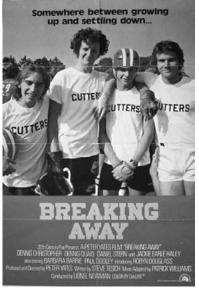
The basic premise of the movie is that Dave Stohler and his three best friends have graduated high-school and now face the daunting world of adulthood. Their general disdain for the local college kids sours them towards the notion of higher education, and the allure of an endless summer Julls all but Stohler into complacency.

Stohler dreams of becoming a professional cyclist, and his passion for Italian racing bikes (like his precious Masi) borders on obsessive behavior. In addition to training as though he was entering the Giro d'Italia, Stohler impersonates an Italian exchange student in an attempt to woo a beautiful co-ed named Katherine.

After numerous clashes with the college kids, including a fistfight at the local pizza joint, Stohler and his friends decide to challenge their advesaries in the university's annual Little 500 bicycle race. They dub themselves "Cutters" and enter the race with hopes of reestablishing their pride.

The 1979 film was written by Serbian-born screenwriter Steve Tesich. Tesich attended Indiana University and was an alternate rider for his fraternity's Little 500 bicycle racing team. His teammate, Dave Blase, rode 139 of the 200 laps to win the race in 1962, and served as Tesich's inspiration for the film's main character. Blase makes a cameo appearance in the film as the race announcer.

The character of Dave Stohler is played by Dennis Christopher, who also played a track star in Chariots of Fire. The other three Cutters were played



by Daniel Stern (narrator on The Wonder Years), Jackie Earle Haley (best known as Kelly from the Bad News Bears) and Dennis Quaid. Quaid's career highlights are too numerous to list here. Suffice it to say a few of us will be looking forward to seeing him play General Hawk in the upcoming G.I.loe movie.

Director and producer Peter Yates has four Oscar nominations to his credit, including one for Breaking Away. Yates may be best known for directing the 1968 thriller Bullitt, starring Steve McQueen. The film's climactic car chase through the streets of San Francisco is leg-

Breaking Away was followed

by a short-lived television series of the same name, and it inspired a 1992 Bollywood film entitled lo leeta Wohi Sikandar. Being that Breaking Away was such a huge success for 20th Century Fox, the film is readily available for rent or download.





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Everything You Never Wanted To Know About Valves By Brad Quartuccio

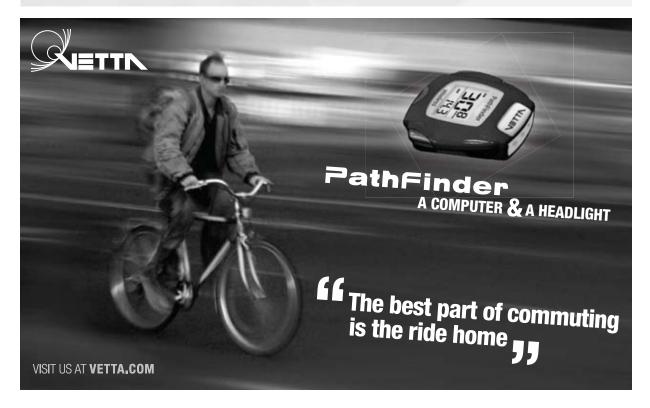
Piece of machinery. Without their air cushion and superior traction as compared to solid tires of old, the modern day bicycle would not be as comfortable or as reliable over a wide variety of surfaces as it is today. Invented and first patented in 1846 by Robert W Thomson, the first commercial application was in 1888 by John Dunlop in Dublin when he "discovered" pneumatic tires without prior knowledge of Thomson while searching for a way to smooth the ride of his son's tricycle. Shortly thereafter I'd imagine some bearded men in short pants began arguing the merits of Presta and Schrader...

There have been a number of valves used on bicycle tires through the years, but save for some places that still use the antiquated Dunlop valve, the majority of bicycles today use either the Schrader or Presta style valve stem. Each ultimately achieves the same thing – keeping air in and allowing easy inflation – and even use similar mechanical poppet valves at their core, but there are some important practical differences between the two.

Schrader valves are far more common on bikes and otherwise, in use for just about every sort of pneumatic valve aside from skinny bicycle racing tires where the Presta style is required due to its slender stem. Width is the defining difference between the two valve stem styles, with the desire for a smaller valve hole and the need for space for the clincher bead to engage on thin road rims being the deciding factor that has kept Presta valves in use. As one would expect from the larger diameter, Schrader valves are the sturdier of the two, rarely breaking off like the Presta style is known to do.



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Mechanically, the insides of the two valves are similar with the functional difference being that Schrader valves have a spring that keeps the valve closed unless the center pin is depressed whereas air pressure alone seals the Presta valve. This leads to another reason why Presta valves have flourished on road bikes-the pump head required to engage a Presta valve is far simpler than one incorporating a pin depressor and check valve required for a Schrader style.

This mechanical difference is also why one needs a valve cap on a Schrader valve stem where on a Presta it is completely optional. Without a cap, debris and water can collect in the concave opening of a Schrader stem, potentially clogging, corroding or otherwise damaging the seal or brass components of the valve. The shape of a Presta valve sheds contaminates better and precludes it from these problems. The biggest problem with Presta valves is user error-either breaking the delicate locknut or completely tearing off the valve stem during inflation.

Assuming your rim is wide enough, there is little rea-

son not to use a Schrader valve if for nothing else than for the ability to use gas-station air pumps in a pinch. The exception to this is deep-dish rims where the variety of Presta stem lengths is necessary to allow valve access. A 21/64" or 8mm drill bit makes quick work of an aluminum rim, and allows the larger Schrader valve to pass. While there are small washer adapters on the market, practically speaking, using a Presta tube in a rim with a larger Schrader valve hole poses few problems as air pressure is typically enough to keep everything in place: your tire and tube don't slide around on the rim very much at all. Adapters are available at most every bike shop that convert a Presta valve for use with Schrader-style pump heads and are worth keeping around.

Pneumatic tires are here to stay, and at this point it seems that both Presta and Schrader style valves are as well. Now if someone could only invent the truly puncture proof tire that maintained the ride quality and lightweight, easy to change nature of current models... Their name will be the next Goodyear, Michelin or Dunlop.



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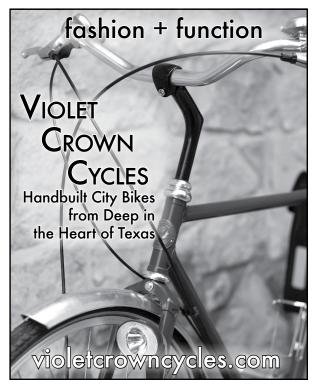


Thirteen is ok. The Outcast has stalled though. We did teenage angst and now the two dozen is taunting us with our incapacity and relevance. This is lucky for some and that makes sense. Unlucky in love if you're superstitious and par for the course if you're into long shots. Very long. Very gradual. Fair way to go. Singlespeed is the gulf of fashion. Gulp it down. Spots of bother and hormones raging. On your knees and spinning those tits. Tits spinning indeed. Adulthood beckons but for now let's enjoy the unbridled wanking and simple pleasures. A dull lesson, angst.

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Brake VS Shifter





LEFT TO RIGHT: Shift housing, brake housing and various ferrules.

able housing is an oft-overlooked yet quite important piece of the shift/brake puzzle. As the cable pulls, the housing pushes back. One is useless without the other.

Cables work fairly intuitively—in the case of an indexed shifting system the shifter pulls a predetermined amount of cable that moves the derailleur mechanism just enough to force the chain to the next cog. Even the slightest amount of slop or inconsistency will lead to the chain skipping between cogs. In the case of a brake cable, there is more tolerance for a bit of slop than in an indexed shifting system but the overall forces exerted on the cable and housing are far greater and must be addressed accordingly for a good feel at the lever.

Brake Housing – Brake housing consists of a spiral wound flat coil that is resistant to compression, even under the relatively strong forces put on it by a brake cable under load. Because of its spiral wound nature, brake housing changes in length slightly as it is bent, making it unsuitable for use with indexed shifting.

Shift Housing – Shift housing is made up of a bundle of rigid wires that run along the length of housing. This makes shift housing remain the same effective length throughout bends, allowing indexed shifting to remain precise as the bars are turned. It is not as strong as spiral wound housing and should never be used for brakes. Never.

Ferrules – Ferrules are small metal or plastic caps that finish a length of housing and are of particular importance for shift housing. They help to keep the housing flush with the cable stop it sits in and to guide the cable to a straight exit. Cable "stretch" is mostly attributed to the housing settling into the ferrules, not the actual cable stretching.

Housing should be trimmed to length with sharp diagonal cutters and the ends filed or ground flat before slipping the appropriate ferrule over the end. Sometimes the inner plastic sleeve of the housing will become crimped or the end of spiral housing pushed into the path of the cable. Some people place a sacrificial length of cable in the housing when it is cut to avoid this malady, others open up the end of the housing with an awl or finishing nail.







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hainline. People like to talk about it, but many have little idea of what it technically means. Informally, chainline refers to the relative straightness of the chain in a given gear combination. Singlespeed or geared, the informal use of chaineline is the same—"good" is when the chain makes a straight shot from the rear cog to the front ring, "bad" is when there is a visible bend in the chain due to the cogs not being in plane with one another. Chainlines falling into the latter "bad" category can contribute to excessive drivetrain wear and potential for chain throw, along with efficiency losses.

Technically chainline refers to the distance between the centerline of the bicycle frame and the center of the chain and can be measured directly with a ruler. For singlespeeds, simply measure to the center of the chainring; for doubles, measure halfway between the rings; and for triples, measure to the middle ring. Given crank and bottom bracket combinations have a chainline specified by the manufacturer, used to match it to the appropriate rear hub.

Chainline can be adjusted either at the bottom bracket with a different spindle length or at the hub by moving axle spacers from one side to the other. Some bottom brackets can be adjusted left to right with thin spacers behind the driveside cup, but consult a skilled mechanic to be sure. On a singlespeed, spacers may be used between the chainring and crank spider or behind the rear cog and in some cases the rear cog may be flipped over to yield two choices of chainline.

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