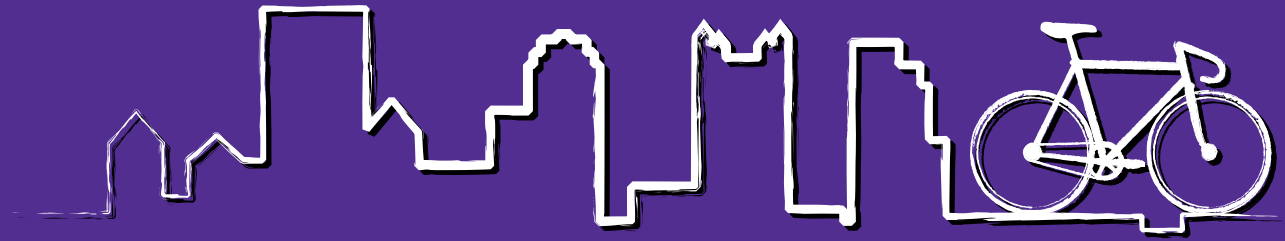


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Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #22 • November 2010



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URBAN VELO

Issue #22

November 2010



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Editor

brad@urbanvelo.org



Jeff Guerrero

Publisher

jeff@urbanvelo.org

On the cover: Birthday boy Will Gibbons goes no handed in Detroit. Photo by Tim Kainu, www.timkainu.com

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Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

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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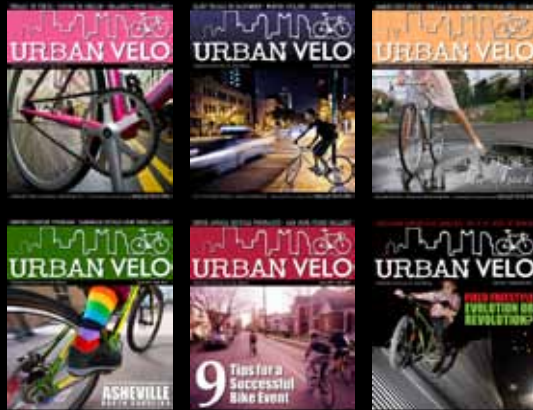
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Features



38 **Holeshot**

Dan Powell

Cycle Speedway, a short track bicycle racing format, has been popular overseas for years. Now that the high-energy event has found its way to Portland, will it spread to the rest of the United States?



48 **Mountain Bike Philadelphia**

John Cameron

Believe it or not, there are bona fide mountain bike trails just a short ride from Center City, Fishtown and Manayunk. We're talking genuine singletrack, complete with steep hills, roots, rocks and all.



74 **Return of the Scorcher**

Nathan Congdon

Get a glimpse of cycling in modern day China through the eyes of an American ex-patriot who commutes year round in Guangzhou.

Parking garage polo during the Bluegrass Boondoggle in Louisville, KY. Good while it lasted, the fuzz eventually forced the tournament to move along to a third location for the final game. Photo by Brad Quartuccio



- 10 **Editor's Statement**
Brad Quartuccio
- 12 **Publisher's Statement**
Jeff Guerrero
- 14 **I Love Riding in the City**
Readers share their tales of city cycling.
- 54 **E-Z Money**
David Hoffman
Throwing a house party is a great advocacy fundraiser.
- 58 **Beantown Builders**
Brad Quartuccio
A trip to Boston results in visits with three framebuilders.
- 66 **Gallery: Still Passing By**
John Harris
1999 was an especially tough year for NYC cyclists.
- 72 **Residue**
Roger Lootine
- 86 **Winter Tire Considerations**
Brad Quartuccio
When the weather turns foul, your tire choice is crucial for keeping the rubber side down.
- 90 **Antique Tech: Crankset**
Brad Quartuccio
Engineering and manufacturing has come a long way in the past hundred years, but the basic crankset design hasn't changed much.
- 92 **Why Cable Locks Suck**
Brad Quartuccio
Cable locks are a good secondary deterrent—good for locking up your wheels—but they just don't compare to a u-lock.
- 94 **No Exit**
Andy Singer



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Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



Coney Island Boardwalk, August 2010. Photo by Brad Quartuccio

It happens so frequently to have become routine. The local messageboard and any number of blogs regularly blow up with siren calls of a stolen bicycle, and the masses stop to ask about what sort of lock was used and where the bike disappeared. All too often the bike was left unlocked for *just a minute* or tied up overnight where anything goes, but in far too many cases it ends up that someone was using a light duty cable lock and now finds themselves walking home. It's a crime of opportunity that nearly anyone with a pair of pliers can accomplish, so why do riders insist on continuing to provide the opportunity in the first place? A bit of knowledge and common sense can go a long way in maintaining ownership of your bicycle. Before the criticism comes rolling in over the tech piece on page 92 showing just how easy it is to cut a cable lock consider this—the thieves already know how.

The photo on page 68 is also unfortunately something that happens all too often—we're all familiar in one way or another with cyclists being struck down by automotive traffic. Publishing the photo was not done easily, as it's a graphic reminder of both our own mortality and perhaps people we've each personally known. I had a high school mountain biking friend struck and killed back in '96 and I can't say that the nearly 15 years since have made the impact of the news any less real. Ride safe, drive safe.



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



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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero



Tragically, the scene depicted above is one we're all quite familiar with. Many of us have taken part in a Ghostbike lockup ceremony, and most of us have seen our fair share of these ghastly white roadside memorials. Ghostbikes are a somber reminder that the streets still aren't safe for cyclists, and that perhaps they never will be.

The scene depicted on page 68 in the photo entitled "Death of a Cyclist" is one that only a handful of people have ever seen firsthand. It's horrifying, intensely saddening, and most people will want to turn the page as soon as they're confronted with such an image.

I sincerely apologize to anyone who is offended by the image, and I acknowledge that most people are reading this magazine for inspiration and enjoyment, not to be con-

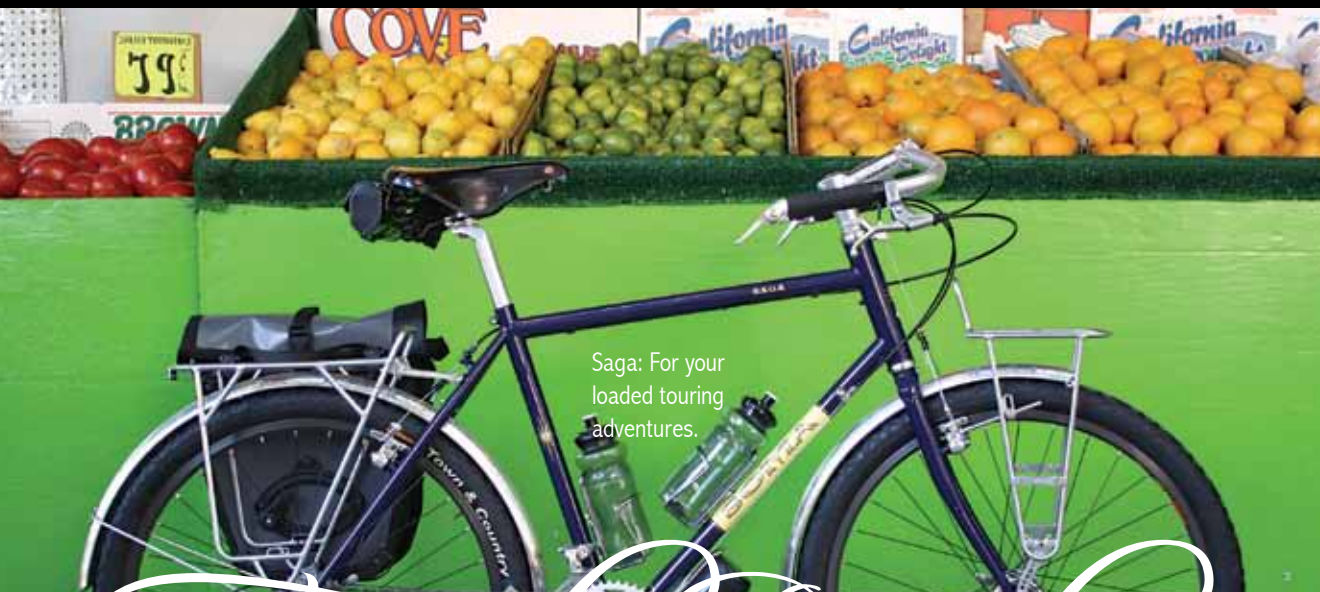
fronted with macabre photography. But I maintain that the decision to run the photo was not made lightly.

In 1972, when the Associated Press released the photo of nine-year-old Kim Phúc* running naked down the street in Vietnam, screaming in pain from the burns suffered in a napalm attack, millions of people took notice. No longer was napalm just a tactical defoliant that people read about in the Sunday paper—it became real. It was something horrible that mangled children.

Human life is fragile, and we, as urban cyclists, are in danger even when we ride safely and wear a helmet. It's not that we need to dwell on the subject, but it's worth remembering that the people working to make the streets safe for cyclists have undertaken an immensely important job, and they deserve our support.



Urban Velo issue #22, November 2010. Dead tree print run: 5000 copies. Issue #21 online readership: 55,000+



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Ioanna

LOCATION: London, UK

OCCUPATION: Speech and Language Pathologist,
National Health Service

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

I live in London, UK. Riding in London can be manic—taxi drivers, zillions of pedestrians crossing the streets without looking and crazy double-decker bus drivers. At the same time though, riding in London can be magical especially when riding along the river at night and along the historical buildings, yes even in the rain!

Why do you love riding in the city?

When I ride I know that I'll reach my destination on time (unlike when I'm on public transport). But the main reason why I love riding in the city is that amazing feeling of freedom and discovering the city's hidden gems. I also love to overtake the lycra men and racing strangers on the way to work, and feeling the morning's crisp air on my face.

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NAME: Coolassmike
LOCATION: LA / NYC
OCCUPATION: Giver of Bikes

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

I live in Los Angeles and the Bronx. I ride both cities but prefer NYC. LA is newly populated with a lot of cyclists so it's suffering from growing pains right now. Police don't like the cyclists. Drivers don't like the cyclists. Cyclists don't like either one. And nobody is used to sharing the road. It's fun for me, but dangerous for most.

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

NYC is like a virtual video game. Your senses are on

high alert at all times. There is a rhythm to the city that you can become a part of. Once you do, it's like flowing water down the Nile!

Why do you love riding in the city?

It's like a metaphor for life.

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

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NAME: Adrienne Johnson

LOCATION: San Francisco, CA

OCCUPATION: Physical Therapist Assistant

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

San Francisco is where I live, which makes me very lucky, indeed! Riding here is a little bit of everything—calm and idyllic in Golden Gate Park, wild and urban on Market Street, cool and fast on the Waterfront, steep and challenging in the Presidio... there is a little bit of everything.

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

San Francisco, for sure. It is the perfect place to start a ride. You can use your bike to start in SF and end in Marin, or Berkeley, or Vallejo, or Hayward...

Why do you love riding in the city?

In 30 minutes I can be almost anywhere—North Beach or Downtown or the Mission or Ocean Beach or Daly City. Going anywhere I see people I know riding along. Best of all, despite living here since I was 2, there is always something new for me to discover (while trying to find the “flatter” way to where I am going).

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

My kids are getting the opportunity to learn their city first hand. There is no filter between them and where they live and the best gift you can give a child is the ability to feel like the world is their own.

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: David Brock

LOCATION: Washington DC

OCCUPATION: Customer Service Representative

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

I live in Martinsburg, WV a rural city on the outskirts of the Washington, DC region. When I moved to Martinsburg in 2005, the existing structure did not support bicycles in anyway. Many county roads were narrow with fast moving traffic that was very discouraging for anything less than an experienced roadie. However, there has recently been an explosion of population growth and cycling in the area, which has resulted in two new local bicycle shops, and a new century race in nearby Shepherdstown. Hagerstown MD, our larger neighbor 30 minutes to the north, has an established bicycle lane in its downtown section and a more established bicycle shop that I visit as often as I am able.

With either a short drive or a fast road bike, Martinsburg is minutes from several treasures that connect it directly to the Nation's capital. The clay and rock C&O

towpath connects the area to both growing Frederick County, MD and DC.

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

I have ridden locally all of my life in the Washington-Baltimore region. Some cities I would like to try out are Houston, Atlanta, and Madrid, Spain. While DC is noted frequently as a bike friendly city, it interests me to explore the sunbelt cities that may be less bike friendly and how the fledgling bike movements continue to take hold down there. Spain's narrow streets and warmer temperatures also are of interest to me.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love being able to get from point A to point B without having to wait 30 minutes for a bus or pay some deadbeat parking jockey ten dollars for a public parking space. At the same time this wonderful machine can be used to create a one-day escape from the hustle and bustle through the surrounding greenways, connecting trails, and waterways.

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NAME: Rebecca Jacquez

LOCATION: Berkeley, CA

OCCUPATION: Lifeguard/Student

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

I live in Berkeley CA and everyday is a new adventure. When I wake up I can smell the crisp morning air and know it's perfect whether to smash on the streets. With the truck honking behind me and the construction on campus I feel like a bird flying on Bancroft St. I love everything about the city of Berkeley. I can ride from my house to the gym, to the football stadium, to Cheeseboard. Berkeley is one city that watches out for local bikers. Every Tuesday I go to the Farmers Market and to my surprise there is a bike valet.

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

I have two favorite cities to ride in. I love riding back home in Bakersfield with the Ride Fast Crew. My favorite city of all time though is right across the bay in San Francisco. The critical mass is off the charts. Every Friday at the end of the month is when we stop traffic!

Why do you love riding in the city?

Riding in the city is like that ultimate high on life. When I'm on my bike I feel invincible. I feel like nothing can touch me. Saying "Hi," to the other riders as I pass them is something that makes me feel like Berkeley is lifting the bike community. Berkeley is one of a kind.

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i ♥ riding in the city



Name: Brandie Tan

Location: Makati City, Philippines

Occupation: Advertising Creative Director

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

I live in Makati City. It's the business district of metro Manila in the Philippines. Riding here is like riding for your life. The cars usually don't follow the traffic rules, which makes it exciting and dangerous at the same time. My co-workers, friends and I look forward to weekends when there are much fewer cars and trucks on the roads.

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

Bonifacio City, next to Makati, is a good place to ride

on most days. It has less car traffic since it's a new city with less buildings—just open roads.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Riding in the city gives me the right amount of daily rush. There are many riders here and most of them are encouraging and helpful when they see you on the street with them. There are four riders in our office, that's me on the right.



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NAME: Rick Scarlet

LOCATION: Springfield, MO

OCCUPATION: Urban Farmer

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

Springfield is a great bicycle town and getting better all the time. There are greenways, trails, and bike paths around much of the city, plus mountain bike trails not far out. We live really close to downtown where there are great bicycle friendly shops and coffee houses. There are a lot of bicycles in town, especially when the college students are in town.

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

I grew up in Columbia MO where I didn't have a car. It is a really progressive town with some great bike paths. I used to ride the MKT trail out to the Katy trail so I could ride along the Missouri River. There is a great winery in

Rocheport MO that we used to ride to and sit and drink with friends.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I have a cargo bike with some upgrades. It is a comfortable ride. If I need to haul something big I just hook my trailer on. Bicycling is for everyone, not just skinny lycra wearing people. I shop with my bike, ride to work in the garden, and ride to the coffee shop to socialize.

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

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NAME: Nikki Luo

LOCATION: Pittsburgh, PA

OCCUPATION: Student

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

I was living in China, but I just moved to Pittsburgh. There's a lot of car traffic on the road so we just ride fast.

我居住在中国，广西南宁。一个月前刚搬到匹兹堡。

在南宁路况非常不好而且堵车，我可以骑车自由的穿梭在车道上然后练习各种skid。

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

I love riding in Shenzhen, it's a beautiful city.

我喜爱在深圳夜骑，深圳是一个车水马龙，人声鼎沸的城市，热闹的人们成了一道奇特的风景线。

入夜的深圳，没有了白天的烦躁和嘈杂。只有一群fixed

gear爱好者聚集在这里，夜幕笼罩下的青蛙灯闪烁的像是夏天的萤火虫般密集。

Why do you love riding in the city?

I feel alive in the city.

我喜欢感受市区的热闹，灵巧的穿梭于汽车中，少一辆汽车，多一份自由！

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

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NAME: Matt Littler

LOCATION: London, UK

OCCUPATION: TV Presenter

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

I live in North London; I started riding again about 2 years ago for a charity event and got bitten by the bug. Riding in London is great—as long as you own a drivers license, I have friends who don't and following them round on rides is scary.

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

I've not ridden in many other cities. I've ridden a lot in Liverpool and that's fine—much more courteous drivers than London. But although I feel the hate down here, I can handle it. I know when to pull back and let the cars go... and also when to take the piss.

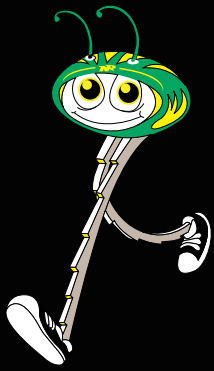
Why do you love riding in the city?

I love beating cars and busses, I love the seeing the city

differently. I enjoy the feeling of getting fit and the ease of commuting by bike. There are also environmental factors.

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

People are never happy in London. The mayor is trying his best to promote cycling and introduce more people to our amazing sport and it's the cyclists who are shouting him down. We now have big wide bike lanes, a bike hire scheme (that everyone seems to want to fail...) safety mirrors on lights for HGV drivers and signage up all over the place. It's a lot better than it was a few years back. Just enjoy it, you could get hit by a bus tomorrow... Although not on one of London's new bike safe cycling superhighways.



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NAME: Melanie Marsh
LOCATION: Key West, FL
OCCUPATION: Pedicab Driver

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

I live in Key West, which is an island city. It isn't big but it's dense. Here most people sit up nice and tall on their bicycles. We ride slow and easy so as not to spill our cafe con leches.

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

Longtan, Taiwan. I had a 26km round trip ride to work every day. There was so much going on during that ride — steep long climbs, delivery trucks running me off the road, six way intersections, bike hating dogs chasing, and then suddenly I'd be riding through a beautiful rice paddy or a tea field—all in the same ride!

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

I love being outside, using the breeze rather than the air conditioner to stay cool. I love that my mood is always cheerier after a bicycle ride. I love that my son believes going everywhere on a bicycle is normal. I love that I never have to look for or pay for parking.

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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?

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NAME: John Sloan

LOCATION: Cincinnati, OH

OCCUPATION: Barista and Bagel and Beer Bike Delivery Boy

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

Currently I reside in Cincinnati OH. Living here in the city is great, it's easy to get from one side of the city to the next on the bike without any problems, except if you run red lights. The cops will get you for that, believe me, a \$114 ticket later and I still haven't learned my lesson. All in all drivers are somewhat understandable and considerate of your rights on the road. I would say it is a great city to ride in

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

My favorite city would have to be Nashville TN. Just being able to go all out and bomb hills there is a blast.

Why do you love riding in the city?

You feel like a straight up badass. Being able to pass cars and get to the place you need to go faster than them is one of the greatest feelings in the world!



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NAME: Matheus Haris Suban Kuya

LOCATION: Yogyakarta, Indonesia

OCCUPATION: Student

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

I live in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a place that's full of tradition. It's the city of culture in Indonesia. I like riding in this city because it isn't too large, and isn't too small. We can express our passion for riding here, and because this city is so full of culture, you can visit hundreds of interesting and exotic places, like temples for example.

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

Absolutely Yogyakarta, because the people are very friendly here. We feel safe riding in this city. The drivers respect each other, especially for bike rider. And last but

not least, in Yogyakarta there are hundreds of shortcuts, so a bike rider gets spoiled!

Why do you love riding in the city?

I feel good when I'm riding in the city... I can throw away my problems for a little while.

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

I love riding in the city so much... I will do this as long as I can!

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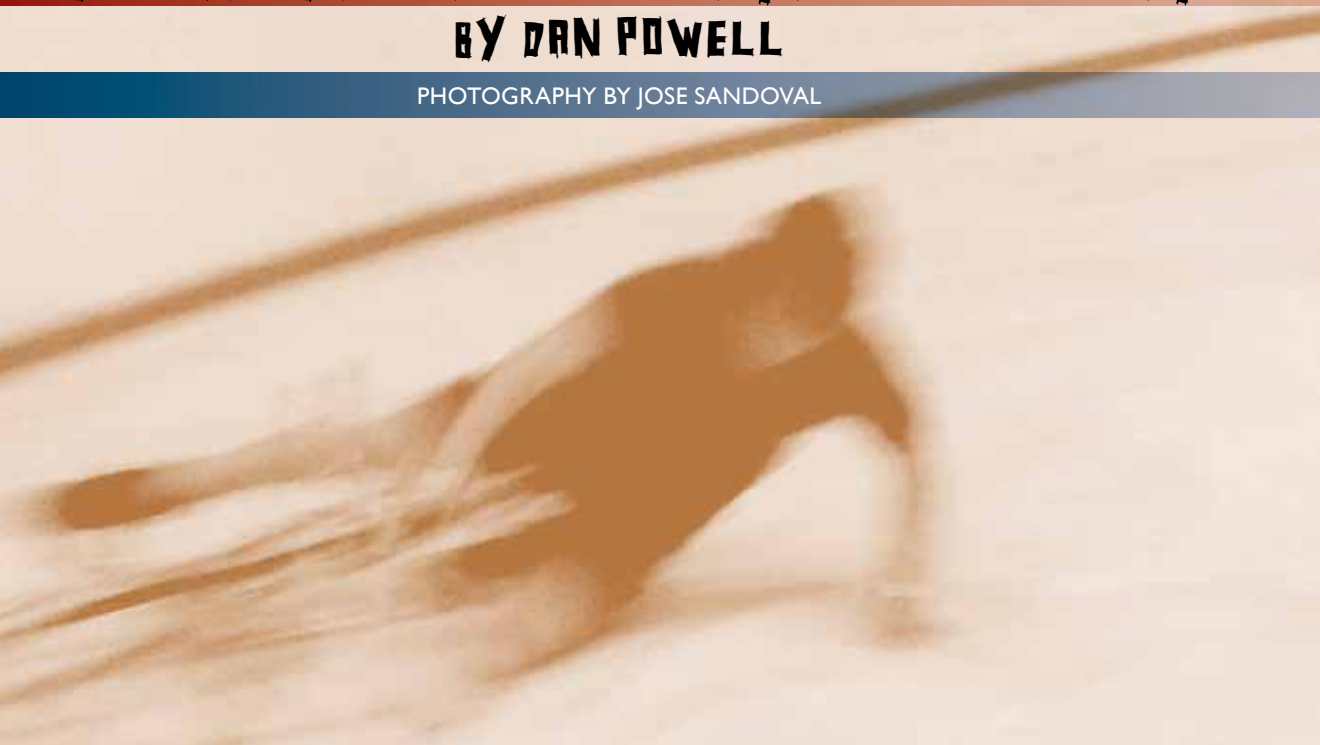
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HOLESHOT

THE BASTARD CHILD OF CYCLE SPEEDWAY

BY DAN POWELL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSE SANDOVAL





PROLOGUE

It is 3am on Sunday August 29th. I'm drunk, alone and standing next to three empty kegs on a bicycle flat track in a darkened warehouse in North Portland. A few hours ago hundreds of fans lined the boards surrounding the track. They pounded their u-locks on the boards and shrieked for blood. Over the course of the evening 50 racers went elbow to elbow in Backyard Blam's Holeshoot race. There were crashes. Blood was spilled. The penultimate moto. Victory. It was awesome. Now I'm left here to clean up the mess, but that is the last thing on my mind. All I can think of is how did we get here, and do we do this again? This was truly the bastard child of Cycle Speedway.



IN THE BEGINNING

The roots of Speedway racing grew from beneath the rubble piles of post war England, where youths formed cycle clubs and literally raced around bomb craters on otherwise unfit bicycles. Much like with the birth of BMX racing in the States, English kids mimicked motorcycle racers on their bikes. With post war gas shortages leading to an idle period of motorcycle flat track racing, folks made due with the bicycle speedway races. Fans and participant interest grew steadily in the sport and by the 1950s hundreds, sometimes thousands of spectators turned up for races.

The racing format is about as simple as can be: four racers, four laps, bikes with freewheels and no brakes. Usually races are contested outdoors on a gravel track typically 70-90 meters in length. For most of its existence, Cycle Speedway has remained firmly on the “other side of the pond.” However, in recent years it has gained popularity in other countries; most notably Poland and Australia.



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THE BACKYARD BLAM EFFECT

As strong as European Cycle Speedways' influence was on Holeshot, the event never would have gone off if weren't for the efforts of event promoter Amanda Sundover, the brains behind Backyard Blam. Starting in early '09, Sundover began throwing bike events with a twist. "Some kids on the (Portland Fixed Gear) forum were griping about there not being any sprints in town," she said about the birth of Blam. "In Chicago I knew a guy, Evan Farrar (OpenSprints.org), so I called him and asked him what I would have to do to make this bike dream a reality. He hooked me up with a friend of his and we hacked together a plan. I got my hands on an extra bike and put my own up for sprints. I got a projector, put up a sheet in my backyard, hooked up the Open Sprints system. BIM BLAM BOOM! Backyard Blam was born." Riding the success of the sprints event, Blam followed up with a Pump Track Jam and then a two day art show/freestyle comp/sprints/downhill celebration, Bridgetown Hustle.

Almost immediately, folks around the bike community in Portland took notice of the eclectic, well attended events. I saw them as being the first real co-mingling of the "tribes" (art folks, frame builders, road racers, mountain bikers, polo players, fixed gear freestyle riders, etc.) at any event I'd ever thrown or been to. Portland Design Works

(PDW) sponsored the events with product, but because I always had a blast, I wanted to get more involved. In the spring of 2010 we started scheming as to what the next Blam would be.

Sundover remembers how the seeds for cycle speedway were planted, "Kyle Von Hoetendorff, my boss (at 21st Avenue Bikes in Portland) showed me a YouTube video of cycle speedway in the UK and he kept saying I should do that for my next event."

Planning for a speedway race commenced, but the outdoor venue never materialized. With the summer starting to tick away the building that PDW will be moving into opened up, and I approached Sundover about moving the event indoors. We realized we probably wouldn't be able to construct a full size track looking at the space we had to work with. The comment was made the race would be all about your start. And with that comment, "Hole-shot" was in motion. The size restrictions and location of the boards also caused us to decide to only put three racers out at a time. A small tweak to the norm, but one we were okay with.

Leading up to race day things fell into place, sponsorship was secured, and interest was palpable. The real break thru for the event though happened when Sundo-

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ver was able to connect with a representative of Globe Bikes who was looking to promote a “Bike In” screening of The Disposable Film Festival. The event became a double bill. Globe’s involvement meant a small budget to work with and more importantly, matching bikes to race. The bikes ended up being Globe Lives that 21st Avenue Bikes stripped down and built back up as the perfect modified stock speedway race machine. The bikes would have no brakes, flat pedals, a freewheel and an upright rider position. This was an equalizer as we drew racers from just about every cycling discipline imaginable. No one would have a distinct advantage, because no one had raced a bike like these.

After a week of cleaning out the space, building the boards (to keep the racers out of the fans, and the fans away from the racers, while still allowing a close proximity for both parties) and painting everything, Hole-shot was a go. Aside from a bicycle sponsor, Blam was able to secure a 3-keg beer sponsorship, portable stadium lighting and a DJ. We started the evening off with a bicycle tractor pull featuring a green 1970’s John Deere brand bike to get folks warmed up, and moved right into the open track practice and getting people signed up to race.

With brackets for motos drawn up, racers wasted no time throwing elbows and hanging outriggers into the turns. It was pretty apparent everyone was there to have a good time, but some were there to also take a shot at winning. Aside from a noise complaint at 7pm, the night went as well as we could have hoped: Lots of folks raced, (both men and women) cycled through, had a drink, a few laughs and saw some great racing action. Quite a few folks hung out in the space for hours after the racing was complete, and the after party may have been even more fun than the race itself. It was great to just wander around and see some people from the polo scene mixing and swapping stories with mountain bikers who were talking with some members of the Dead Baby Bike Club who had come down from Seattle, WA to check things out.

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THE FUTURE: IS CYCLE SPEEDWAY THE NEW GOLD SPRINTS?

Judging by some comments and the high fives from racers, I think there is real interest in a future of Cycle speedway in Portland. "It was what I wanted to be. It was rough, rowdy, and super fun," said Sundover about the turn out. "People got hurt, but none severely injured. Except my boss Kyle, he separated his collar bone during his moto, but sometimes that's the price you pay for leading by example."

During the event I was approached by several folks who wondered if we were going to keep the track for a race series. Other bike companies in the area have since expressed interest in sponsoring subsequent races. "After the event, I received an email from Tim Metcalfe, who does some work for the British Cycling's Cycle Speedway Commission, asking me about the event and asking me if I plan to do more." Sundover added, "It is something that I am really interested I think that is something that would take off here."

Beyond Portland, I expect awareness of the sport in the States to grow in the coming year. From April 16th-25th of 2011, the World Championships of Cycle Speedway will make their way to the US soil, when Edenton, North Carolina will host several days of racing, including the first ever women's World Championship race. From a race organizers perspective I'd like to find a permanent outdoor venue and run a more traditional race.

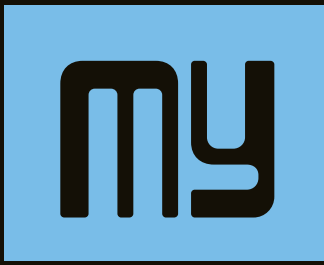
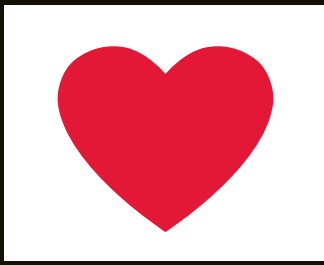
In the days and weeks after the event the question I was asked more than once "Is cycle speedway the new gold sprints?" Like gold sprints, speedway racing appeals to a

broad spectrum of participants and is a sure crowd pleaser. The track is pretty small, and the feel is intimate. But there is also speed, bike handling and contact, in addition to the all out effort of short sprints. It must be said though I'm a fan of riding my bike, and actually moving in space. I find it tough to sit on a trainer for any length of time, and though I've never gotten into gold sprints as a participant, I have enjoyed a good time at every one I've attended. The fact that you can set up a comp anywhere, and draw a good crowd, can make for a pretty fun evening. The chance that you'll find an indoor venue on a Friday night for some speedway racing is pretty rare. But I do see a future of the sport, because like bike polo and gold sprints, it is accessible to all types and skill levels of riders.



Dan Powell talked his way into a job in building bikes at his local shop 1997, and he's never looked back. Since then he's worked at 7 different shops, lived in a 1964 Ford Econoline van in the parking lot of Bike Magazine where he was an intern, and most recently co-founded Portland Design Works in 2008. You'll find him anywhere beer, bikes and good times converge.

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MOUNTAIN BIKE

BY JOHN CAMERON

PHILADELPHIA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC SISON, WWW.ERICSISON.COM

Philadelphia may not be known as a mountain bike destination, but it should be. Within the city limits lies a 1800 acre park of dense wooded singletrack, long climbs, fast descents, and miles of flow induced mountain bike hammering. Naturally, being in Philadelphia, it has a long and amusing history and nowhere else is such an extensive mountain bike system within reach of the urban dweller.



An 8-mile multi-use path is all that separates the potholed streets and tired row houses that surround Center City Philadelphia and the front step of the Wissahickon valley. Within minutes of dodging bumpers and gutters belching steam a rider can be bombing meticulously maintained singletrack in the nation's oldest municipal park. Situated northwest of downtown, the Wissahickon valley was acquired by the city of Philadelphia in 1868 for use as a public space. The fast moving waters of the creek had sustained mills and industry prompting the city to take control of the creek in order to preserve quality of the water as it flowed into the city below.

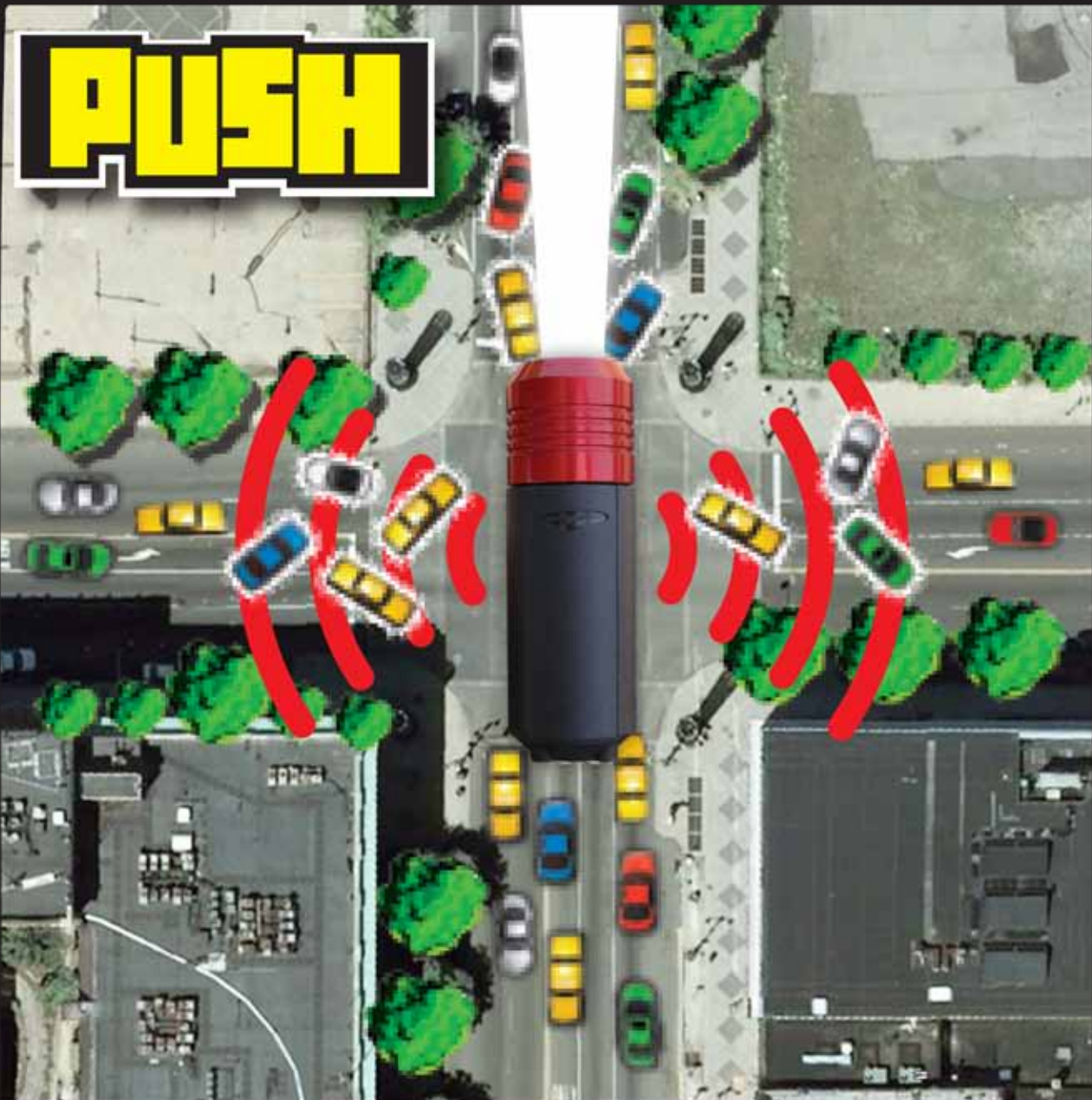
Soon after the acquisition the buildings were demolished, the taverns taken down and 140 years later those efforts have left undeveloped woodlands within the major metropolitan city. Artists have long reflected on the gorge's beauty, including a group of self proclaimed mys-

tics who settled into the valley walls in preparation for the expected end of the world in 1694. The end never came. Today, some foundations remain, bridges and dams too, but all have faded softly into the landscape as if there were built generations before solely for the purpose of making the valley more conducive to mountain biking.

A road running creek side was converted to a crushed gravel path after motor traffic was forbidden sometime in the 1920's. "Forbidden Road" serves as the main artery for the 15 mile singletrack loop that tucks high on the valley walls. The path provides multiple access points to the loop and is a fast and rolling stomp for cyclocross riders. It crosses the creek several times as it rolls up the gorge from the confluence with the Schuylkill River.

On the first official day of Fall I went to rediscover the park and it's after summer beauty. The entire Northeast had sweltered through an epic summer but the end was in

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sight. I allied with the cyclocrossers that day and rode my steel cyclocross, road bike conversion up to the valley. As I left Center City the scenery changed quickly and so did the other cyclists around me. On the path I biked alongside commuters on geared urban rigs with racks, panniers and lights. Bikers pedaled with helmets and the occasional business casual dress. The flannel clad riders weighted down by R.E.load bags on Deep V's and fixed gears were gone with the city. I was on the business biker highway, until at least, the path started to climb.

The skinny gorge of green space offers options for any

skill level. The most technical sections of the singletrack loop on the eastern bank include a few mandatory drops and the most elevation gain. The same side of the park is where a rider can find “the bowl,” a hand built freeride area of kickers, landing zones, skinnies and structures. Trail design throughout the park provides enough slope for the tread to shed water quickly and leave it rideable shortly after a rain. The loop is typically ridden in a clockwise direction and knowing that Philly trail users are no more forgiving than Philly drivers should be a convincing enough reason to comply. Because of the roots and rocks in the steep sections the bike of choice at Wissahickon (locally known as “The Wiss”) is a 29er and while none of the climbs are sustained and can be mashed on a single speed the debate about their true efficiency over a geared bike never ends.

The trails are maintained, pruned, trimmed, smoothed, buffed and otherwise toiled over by volunteers of the Philadelphia Mountain Bike Association. They are often caught in the middle of the City's vision of a trail for every user and the mountain bike community that likes trails their way. They are often blamed for making trails too dangerous by building ramps over downed logs and cursed for making trails too safe by building ramps over down logs. Through their website (www.phillymtb.org) a rider new to the area can access trail maps, more info about the park and join the debate over trail safety on their forum. Most importantly, PMBA can show you where to send your mandatory \$20 yearly fee to obtain a trail tag. Much like a season lift-pass the tag is to be made visible to park authorities that issue fines for those on the trails without one.

Once in the valley the leaves and damp plants closed in around me and the city itself faded into the green, out of sight and sound. The gravel crushed under my tires and made a gentle *hussssh* as I mashed along, relaxed by the stillness that a city can never provide. The trail curved. I carved to meet it and climbed the valley wall. Given my ride I portaged many of the rocks and bigger roots until the trail leveled off near the top high in the valley where the narrow tread flowed out in front of me like cursive handwriting. Few other riders were around but the ones I encountered were focused. They were deep in concentration; close to meditation. Those moments where place and time combine remind me what riding a bike really is all about.



John Cameron writes and pays rent in Philadelphia where he moved in search of a real job. His art is inspired by travel and human motion and his bag is never unpacked.

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Cane Creek's 100 1" Classic pays respect to the rich history of cycling with its Italian inspired styling and flawless function. With the resurgence of fixed-gear bicycles and the growing numbers of classically-inspired bicycle designs available today, this is the perfect headset for anyone looking for a beautifully styled masterpiece with all the modern amenities built inside.





E-Z MONEY

One of the simplest and fastest ways to generate a few hundred to several thousand dollars in an evening is to hold a house party. It's easy money, and house parties can be just the thing to help your organization or worthy cause to get through a tight spot.

A house party is quite simple. You need just a few things: a common cause that people can rally around, a date and location for the event, a means of reaching out to people to invite them, and a speaker or speakers that will act as part entertainment, part educator, and part evangelist.

For this article, we'll use a fictional but entirely plausible cause to illustrate how to host a house party. Here's the setup: a section of town has a main road that runs through it, carrying thousands of cars per day. This community also has a large and active bicycling and walking population. Cyclists feel uncomfortable with the speed of passing traffic, and just the other month a child was injured when a motorist hit her while she was in the middle of a crosswalk in poor weather. The solution along this stretch of road has been determined to be a radar sign at the busiest portion of the road that indicates what the driver's speed is along with the posted speed limit. These signs cost \$5,000 each to purchase and install, and the city has approved one, but has little room in the budget. A community group calling for safer streets springs up amidst the anger and frustration around the speeding, agreeing to fundraise to pay for the signs. But how?

DEFINE YOUR CAUSE AND IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

This first part has practically been done for you. In this example case, the need is for \$5,000 to pay for the radar sign. The message is clear: something needs to be done, and we need your (the prospective donor's) help to implement a solution.

The audience for this house party is anyone that would benefit from a slower, saner street and has the means to donate towards the cause. Once you have your target audience, look within your ranks to find those who know people from the various audiences that you've identified. Set a goal of how much you want to raise per house party and a minimum "ask" per person that will attend. For example, if you want to raise \$1000 at a party with a minimum donation of \$50 per person, you would likely need 15-20 people attending, as some people will actually give more than the minimum. You may need multiple parties and events to reach the ultimate goal.

THE INVITATION

Many people who host house parties rely on an actual printed invitation instead of an electronic one. Printed invitations have the advantage of being charming in the age of electronics and standing out in a sea of junk mail if they have been hand addressed. The invitation should have the following information on it:



What if every bike rack looked like this?

At Planet Bike, we dream about the day when all cities and towns are safer and more convenient places for cyclists. Because we believe in the potential of the bicycle to improve the health of individuals, communities and the planet, we donate 25% of our profits to organizations that promote bicycle use.

better bicycle products for a **better** world.™

A circular graphic with a gear-like border is located in the bottom right corner. Inside the circle, the text "25%" is written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. Below it, the word "mission" is written in a smaller, white, lowercase sans-serif font.

25%
mission

- What the event is for,
- When and where the event is,
- Why it is important that they attend,
- An indication that this is a fundraising event and what the minimum ask is,
- An interesting speaker or speakers that they would get to see/meet,
- Information on how to RSVP or simply donate if they can't attend.

Two to three days prior to the event, follow up with a phone call or email to those who have RSVP'd to remind them of the party. Indicate that you're looking forward to meeting them and thank them for their interest in your cause.

DAY OF EVENT LOGISTICS

For each house party you'll need the following:

Food. You can usually get a local grocery store to donate food for a cause—especially if it is a worthy one, and if you acknowledge their donation at the event. Sometimes a local eatery will be willing to donate appetizers, or even cater the event as part of their donation to the cause.

Alcohol. It's true, people tend to part with their money easier if they've had a drink or two first.

A current list of people that are attending, along with their contact information.

At least one guest speaker and a person that we're calling an "evangelist" who will speak passionately and make the "ask."

THE EVENT

As people arrive, greet them and let them mingle for about an hour or so. Make sure that your guest speakers are present from the beginning of the event. Your guests will enjoy the chance to talk with them and feel as they are part of an inner circle of people who are helping to make a difference. Ply your guests with the food and drinks. Listen to what they have to say, and take notes. Some of these people may become converts during the course of the event for your cause and want to share their ideas with you. Let them. If they're talking, they're also likely to be donating.

Remember, some guests may not actually make a donation. And some guests may make a donation that is less than the requested minimum. Chances are, however, that this will be the exception rather than the rule as peer pressure tends to win out—especially if you keep your parties to less than 20 people.

THE "ASK"

About an hour into the event, assemble your guests. Turn off the music and get people settled. Line up at least two speakers, preferably three. The first one or two should be your guest speakers. They should speak for about 5 minutes on why your cause is so important, and why it is important to them. Guest speakers that are in politics, heads of organizations, or have some celebrity within the group will do.


Next, line up your evangelist. This is the person that will make the "ask." The "ask" is the moment where people are asked to reach in to their wallets or take out their checkbooks and make a donation. Right there. Right then. Asks that include a donation at a later time can be difficult to follow up on. It is OK for folks to indicate that they will be donating at a later time, but there is an amazing energy that develops when people are actually handing over cash or writing checks on the spot.

FOLLOW UP

The very next day, be sure to send a thank you letter or email to each and everyone who has attended, regardless if they've given or not. Follow up is critical, and can make the difference between parties. Word gets around if people don't feel appreciated, and future parties get harder to get people to. If your organization is a non-profit, be sure to include a letter indicating what their donation is for, and if it is tax-deductible.

THE TAKE-AWAY

House parties are an easy and effective way to generate funding for your cause in a relatively short amount of time. The first house party is always the hardest. Future parties get faster and easier to set up once you have a system in place. Don't be discouraged if you set a goal of raising \$1000 at your first party, but instead generate just \$600. Learn from what did and didn't work, and change your asking style, invitation lists, and message for each individual party. No single formula will work for all causes and asks. Use your intuition, and feel free to change things up even mid-party.

Finally, have fun. Fundraising is one of the most stressful and most difficult aspects of either running an organization or helping to move a cause forward. As Margaret Mead once said, "Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has." 

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BEAN TOWN BUILDERS





Words & Photos by Brad Quartuccio

The Boston Massachusetts area has a particular concentration of frame builders, certainly unprecedented otherwise in the eastern half of the country. Much of what has come to define east coast frame building has its roots in Boston, and much of that can one way or another be traced back to Fat City Cycles. Now remembered as a legendary frame shop and a pioneer in custom steel mountain bikes, the Fat City brand was sold and the factory doors shut back in 1994. Direct from the ashes rose Independent Fabrication, and in the years since any number of frame builders can one way or another trace some part of their development back to Fat City.

Three such area builders are featured here—Independent Fabrications at it stands today, Alternative Needs Fabrication and Geekhouse Bikes. Through bike shows and friends of friends I've known the people behind each for some time, and a late summer Boston trip made visits to the three shops a reality.



Independent Fabrication

Through the years Independent Fabrication has evolved from the original employee-owned start up to where it is today, earning a reputation along the way as one of the premier frame shops around. Custom steel and titanium bikes with a certain attention to detail put them on the map and continue to be their main production, but in recent years IF has branched out into hybrid titanium/carbon and full carbon frame construction.

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Alternative Needs Transportation

Today Mike Flanigan is the owner and sole employee of Alternative Needs Transportation, back in 1994 he was one of the founders of Independent Fabrication. His apartment phone number functioned as the office line back then, and still rings inside the IF offices. ANT Bike Mike is known for his steel utilitarian and light touring bikes with a nod to the designs of old.

www.antbikemike.com





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Geekhouse Bikes

The bespectacled Marty Walsh started Geekhouse in 2002, and at one point apprenticed under Mike Flanagan. His frames have been quick to gain popularity in the custom bike realm, with both a following amongst street track riders and cyclocross racers. All manner of custom is available through Geekhouse, from intricate machined bits to a segmented fork that gives away the New England builder pedigree.

www.geekhousebikes.com



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We were gonna party like it's...

These photos were shot in 1999, the year that NYC cycling fatalities spiked to a horrible count—40. My series was intended as a simple portrait of messengers and delivery guys, those who I considered the gutsiest and most interesting of the urban cyclers. Due, however, to the noted increase in deaths and the shots I had of accident scenes, the photos were used in newspapers and as part of a study by the NYPD. Looking back, I hope they played a small role in bringing about some of the positive changes we see in our cycling city, but I was mostly just interested in documenting a community of which I was a part. Certainly there have been many changes since 1999—check out those walkie-talkies—and while biking is becoming safer in the city and hardcore messengers more scarce, I hope the spirit of the outlaw, the pony express or whatever image you like, remains a part of cycling in the city forever.

—John Harris, Photographer





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Gallery: Still Passing By

Photos by John Harris



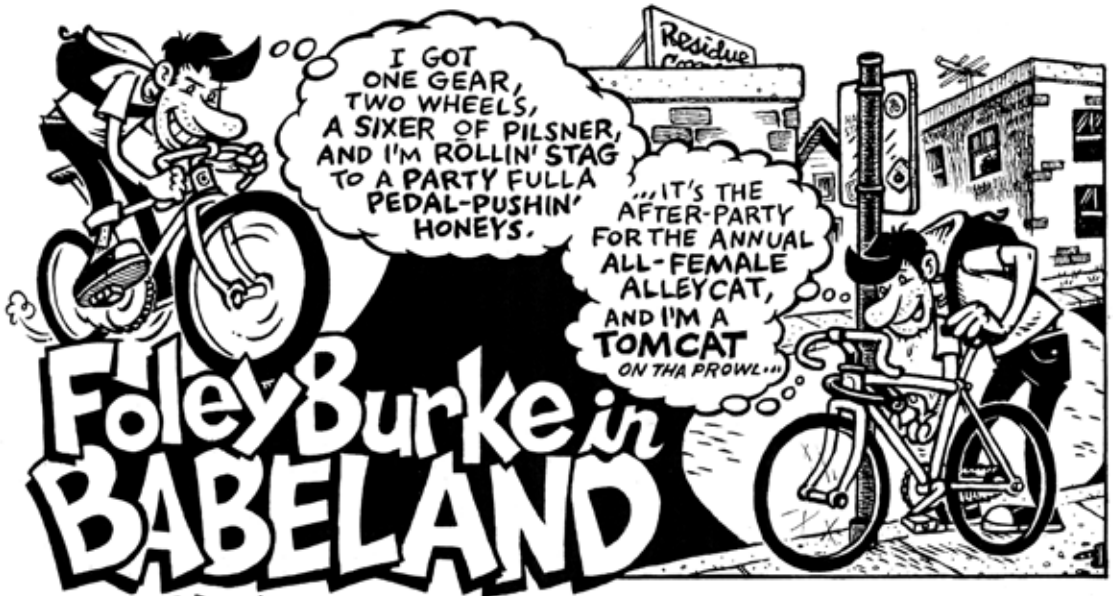


Gallery: Still Passing By

Photos by John Harris







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Return of the Scorcher



CHINA AS SEEN FROM A BICYCLE, THE BICYCLE AS SEEN FROM CHINA

By Nathan Congdon

Photography by Tyler Bowa, www.peoplesbike.com

Critical Mass

China holds a lofty spot in the iconography of modern urban bicycle culture. The monthly bicycle demonstration cum spectacle “Critical Mass,” a fixture in cities all over the world, takes its name from a scene in Ted White’s classic “The Return of the Scorcher.” The film describes how bicycles in China in the 1980s would negotiate the problem of un-regulated intersections, gathering in swarms until they reached a “critical mass” and could seize the right of way over larger vehicles by sheer force of numbers.

The iconic shots of Chinese bicycle rivers in White’s film pale before the real thing. During my first trip to Beijing in winter 1983, pedalling a rented bike in my anonymous blue coat surrounded by thousands of similarly-dressed comrades, I felt very much a part of the critical masses as we churned Chang An Jie into a rush hour Yangtze. Any major Chinese city in those days had dedicated bicycle parking areas as large as a shopping mall lot, Flying

Pigeons fender to fender as far as the eye could see. The few cars stood out as flag-decorated black islands in the blue-coated sea. Bicycles were near the top of the Chinese traffic food chain, their only natural predator being the city bus. Graphic, medically-detailed corpse shots of errant bicyclists and pedestrians protruding from beneath mammoth wheels were standard fare at bus-stops around the city, traffic safety propaganda that made up in persuasive power what it lacked in subtlety. Early settlers in America described flocks of Passenger Pigeons hundreds of miles long that would take hours to pass, barely seeming to notice the effects of salvos of buckshot. Similarly, the occasional depredations from bus tires failed to make headway against the torrent of 1980s Chinese bicyclists...

In Guangzhou 2010 where I ride these days, we bicyclists haven’t entirely gone the way of the Passenger Pigeon, but neither are we swashbuckling along near the



top of the food chain as we once did. In fact, if you asked most people living in China today about the current state of bicycling in major cities, they would probably tell you that we have disappeared altogether. This is far from true: we've just gone underground (literally in some cases: my favorite route passes at one point through an underground tunnel not yet open to cars). We gravitate towards roads that are less-heavily trafficked, wider, and not favored by our nemesis, the hated bus. If you patronize these routes (Linjiang Dadao is a great one in my adopted city), you will see a steady, heavy stream of bicycles, if not the hundred-mile-long flocks of the 1980s. And the seat of a bike remains an excellent vantage point from which to observe a changing China.

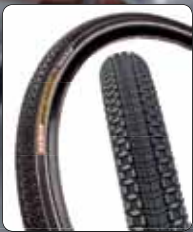
My Biking Comrades

In the first place, there are my fellow riders. For the most part, at least on my route, these are Guangzhou's newest citizens. I am surrounded by migrant workers for the first half of my morning ride, whether threading the

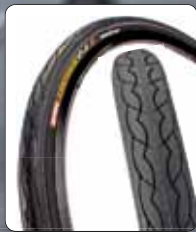
loop from dormitory to construction site, or folding up impromptu teepees in underpasses and bathing at leaking water mains. They pedal everywhere around me, exchanging morning pleasantries in the dialects of Sichuan, Anhui, Chaoshan and Hubei, their bikes festooned with full-length ladders, half-assembled scaffolding and recycled wood, metal and plastic of every description. Though perhaps unassuming in and of themselves, these fellow bicyclists represent the greatest population movement in recorded history, as 300,000,000 rural dwellers have flooded China's cities in a little over three decades, taking the urban share of the population from 15% to 40%. My new neighbors represent a common phenomenon in modern China: that which the government permits but cannot readily control. Not all of them are struggling for a foothold at the lowest rungs of the social ladder. Our college-educated Hubei nanny affords the bus, laughs at my bicycling, corrects my Chinese grammar and has proven herself notably more adept with a book than a broom. Like her poorer countrymen, though, she lacks a Guangzhou *hukou* (resi-

Life in Motion!

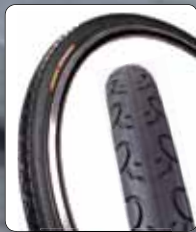
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dence); her son can never attend school here, nor can she readily avail herself of basic amenities such as public hospitals. The eventual fate of China's migrant workers, whether they stay or return to the village, integrate or are held at arm's length from urban life, will say much about China's direction in the coming decades.

Ethics of Chinese Traffic

The seat of a bike affords a panoramic view of another aspect of life in China. Let's call it "the Confucian approach to traffic control." Laws do exist governing one-way streets, red and green lights and the sanctity of the sidewalk from vehicular incursion, but their application is haphazard, to say the least. An American or European driver feels that if he or she is not exceeding the speed limit or otherwise in technical violation of the laws of the road, any grace shown to pedestrians, bicyclists or other motorists is strictly optional. Chinese drivers are much less concerned with the letter of the law, and seem to view driving more

as a continual process of negotiation, which will hopefully result in the satisfaction, more or less, of all parties. This extends to the occasional accident as well, conflicts which are often settled with a quick application of cash rather than an appeal to the police or judicial system. As haphazard as it all sounds, I have found Chinese drivers surprisingly gentle to cyclists. A frequent injunction to novice urban bikers in the US is to "pretend you're invisible." Chinese drivers seem much more inclined to yield to riders (at least big, sweaty white ones with helmets), and though I still find myself after several years riding in China entirely unprepared for what any given motorist is likely to do at any given moment, I feel safer and more generally deferred to as a bicyclist here than I ever did in the US or Hong Kong. Chinese motorists seem to suffer less than American ones from the sense of wounded outrage at discovering a bicycle sharing the road with them, perhaps because most people driving a car in China in 2010 were sitting five years ago where I am now, perched on the saddle of a bike.



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Chinese Roads

China is building new roads faster than any place in history, and has recently passed Japan as the country with the second-greatest total length of roadway after the US. China had 18.5 km of expressways in 1988, and now has 53,000 km. This has occasioned a great deal of tearing up and laying down. Guangzhou, preparing now for the Asia games at the end of this year, is in a particular frenzy of road-building, resurfacing and general traffic-cide. Nearly every section of the route I ride to work has been torn up and re-paved in the last several months, some abandoned in mid-demolition: littered with heaved-up chunks of asphalt and dotted with unexpected trenches, piles of rubble and open manhole covers. China's tortured roadways are a metaphor for a China that grows, changes and sheds its skin at a pace that is simply bewildering to its residents, let alone to foreign observers. I'm reminded of a recent essay by Peter Hessler, one of the finest foreign writers on modern China, about returning to rural America after a decade of living in Beijing. The pace of change was dizzy-

ingly, disorientingly slow by contrast: his neighbors would gather excitedly to discuss the installation of a new traffic light in town. In Guangzhou, I always ride slowly after I've been off the road for even 24 hours: nothing spoils your day quite like the appearance without warning of a meter-deep trench, freshly dug and tucked in for the night under a road-grey tarpaulin...

Who's Watching?

As a bicyclist, or any participant in Chinese urban traffic, one is unavoidably aware of being... monitored. Traffic police, white-gloved, leather-booted, equipped with slogan-bearing red flags and appropriately-menacing dark glasses, are at nearly every major intersection during rush hour, and they are quite active participants in the traffic dance. I have been pulled off my bike by them on a few occasions. As with the application of any Chinese laws, however, the process of adjudication is highly negotiable: bicyclists speeding across a road in the middle of a walkway



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are usually only chided with a sharp whistle, and the last wave of cars barreling through a red light rarely receives more than a stern glance. Guangzhou, like many Chinese cities, is schizophrenic in its views on the proper place of bicycles on 21st century urban roads. Bikes are banned on many downtown streets as a hindrance to the darling of modern transport, the private car; at the same time, there is much official puffing about the value of bicycle travel as a potential antidote to crushing urban gridlock. The traffic cops have honed a balanced and thoughtful response to this apparent contradiction: as long as the illegal bicyclist wheels a tactful 2-3 meters beyond the borders of the policeman's crosswalk kingdom, s/he can mount up and cycle away unmolested.

More inscrutable and ubiquitous are the new arbiters of the Chinese street, the increasingly numerous traffic cameras, of which 2.75 million have been installed in recent years, one million in Guangdong province alone. I pass them on nearly every corner. As in the United States, they

survey the street for infractions both traffic-related and otherwise. In China, though, they are joined by cameras in hotels, guesthouses, hospitals, buses, libraries, museum, schools, internet cafes, galleries and newsstands. As the technology for monitoring public places grows increasingly seamless and the islands of unsupervised space melt away, one wonders about the impact on history's most closely-watched generation. Products of the one-child policy, China's only children are observed anxiously at home, proctored closely in schools and kept secure by a technology which insures they are playing safely, whether on the internet, bus or playground.

China And The Car

To the urban bicyclist, one aspect of the modern Chinese traffic landscape predominates: cars. Sitting at the crosswalk waiting for my turn, I carry out an informal survey of the endless flow of automotive traffic: about one car in three is an enormous American-style SUV. I don't see

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more than a handful of cars out of several dozen with more than a single passenger. Subtract the deadly-silent electric mopeds, the bright orange three-wheeled scooters issued by the government to the disabled (who turn them into an informal taxi service) and other disparate elements that make up perhaps 20% of traffic in downtown Guangzhou and you have a fleet of roomy private cars that would be generally quite familiar to any resident of downtown Dallas or Phoenix. China is now the world's largest auto market, with car sales growing at an annual 30% clip in recent years. It is sobering though to remember that China in 2005 had 8 vehicles per 1000 population, compared to 950 for the US. Looking at the line of vehicles inching forward in front of me, the idea that China's car ownership rates could somehow rise ten or a hundred-fold simply boggles the imagination. Urban roadways are already stretched to the limits. Poor air quality threatens the health of residents in many of China's largest cities, and tailpipe emissions were estimated to account for 80% of urban air pollution as of 2005. (Incidentally, though, the oft-quoted "statistic" that 5 of the world's 10 cities with the worst air quality are in China is nothing more than an urban legend. There is only one Chinese city on the list, and it neither glamorous Shanghai nor much-maligned Beijing, but lowly Linfen: www.environmentalsciencedegrees.net/blog/2010/top-10-world-cities-with-poor-air-quality/).

The government's role in all of this is ambivalent: the tax on large cars has recently been increased to 40%, and that for the smallest reduced to 1%. China appears to have made a serious commitment to becoming the world leader in electric car technology. Automotive emissions standards are tighter than the US and generally on a par with Europe. Still, the fact remains that unfettered consumerism is a vital safety valve for a sometimes restive population, something of which the government is acutely aware. And it would appear that there is nothing that Chinese consumers want more than a home and a car to go with it. A government strong enough to tell its citizens how many children they may have could surely do the same with cars; Beijing's unwillingness to stem the flow bespeaks a reluctance to fail in its implicit promise to trade material comforts for social stability. It would be difficult to maintain that this policy is designed primarily to benefit the domestic car industry: local brands make up only about 40% of China's total market. Spending any amount of time in traffic in one of China's major cities amounts to a convincing argument that the juggernaut growth of Chinese car culture is on a completely unsustainable path. Only the government is in a position to pull back on the throttle, which it has so far shown little inclination to do.

The Meaning Of The Bike.

In *The Mill on the Floss*, George Elliott invites us to consider the importance of familiarity as a condition for love: "We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it..." What then does this say about the love we may feel for an adopted country? For I am, despite the qualms expressed above, unambiguously in love with China, and have been since the age of 16. Certainly, much about China is deliciously, maddeningly, delightfully familiar to me: the food, the language, the people, the way of approaching a problem, settling a disagreement or striking up a conversation. The family at my daily breakfast spot knows me well enough to spot me 10 kuai for a weekend if I happen to be short on change, and I count among my colleagues at work, all of whom are Chinese, a former student who has become my closest and dearest professional collaborator. But China and I are also strangers to one another. I draw regular stares, whether as a bicyclist, a surgeon, or the father of a blond and blue-eyed mandarin-speaking 5-year-old. I lead a life of daily discoveries—humbling, surprising, frustrating, sometimes enlightening. Bicycling for me is very much the same. All the riding I do at this point in my life is daily, year round commuting, which is about getting from point A to point B. And back to A. Then back to B. Then A again. What I love is that I am negotiating my own carriage from one necessary point to the other, surrounded by thousands and millions of fellow travelers doing the same thing. I ride the identical route every day, in every season. Herein lies the same granular alloy of the strange and well-known that I encounter in China. I pass the very same points each day on an unvarying route of 25.4 kilometers, and what I love, what I am in love with, is that the road and I are the same day after day, and yet we are completely new, different, as fresh as unexpected weather, a sudden shift in speed or a familiar but unidentifiable smell. Some of us, it seems, are always on the way from A to B, always in that eternally surprising place in between. Never entirely home. 

Nathan Congdon is an ophthalmologist focusing on blindness prevention at Zhongshan Ophthalmic Center in Guangzhou, China, where he lives with his wife and two children. He has been a daily, year-round urban bike commuter for 20 years in the US, Hong Kong and China, and has been car-free for the last 4 years. This essay was mostly composed and revised while riding a bicycle to work.



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Winter Tire Considerations

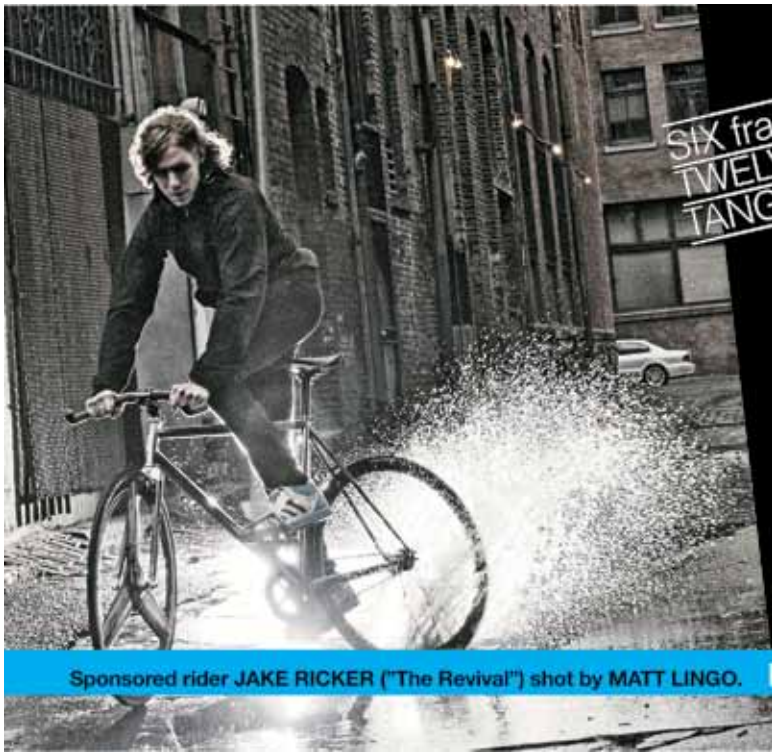
By Brad Quartuccio



Readers in the Northern Hemisphere are just getting ready for the onslaught of winter riding, with images of cold, wet weather sneaking into view. The basics of layering up for the colder weather and adding fenders to keep road slop off both your body and bike is fairly straightforward, but others bits of preparation aren't quite so obvious and take time to develop. Tires are one such item, and everyone has their own recipe for success. Depending on your locale and what Mother Nature may throw down from above you may find yourself swapping tires and technique more often than you like, but it is certainly better than the alternative—not riding at all.

Knobbies

Tires with some tread on them are tempting in the winter, and personally I tend to use a cyclocross tire on the front of my track bike when the snow begins to fall. Beyond the additional clearance needed for the tire itself, the knobs tend to pick up snow and skim it off around your frame and fork, potentially causing problems packing up with wet, sticky snow.

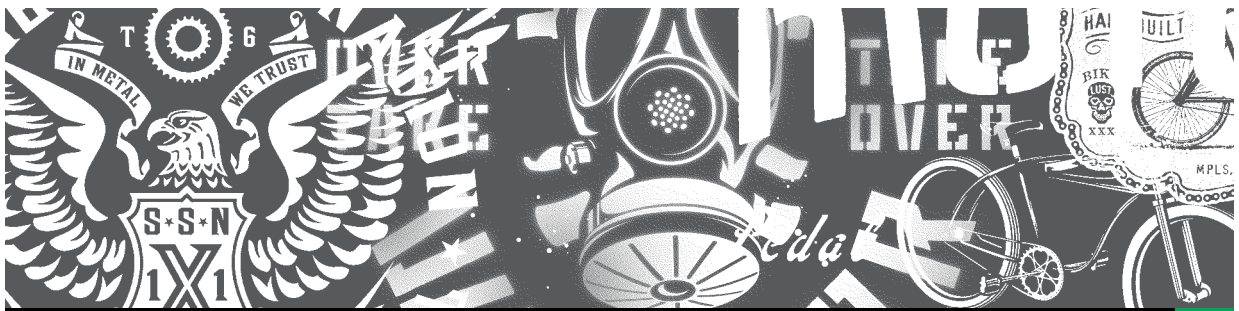


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Flat Resistant Tires

If you haven't already made the investment in a good pair of flat resistant tires, winter is a good excuse for no other reason than changing a flat with cold, wet fingers is even more unpleasant than other times.

Studded Tires

When the roads are glazed over with solid ice, there is nothing like studded tires. When you need them, you need them. Otherwise, they can be quite the liability as the metal studs can be downright sketchy on paved surfaces and can cause significant frame damage very quickly in the event of a flat tire or out of true rim.

Volume Considerations

In general, when the going gets slick it's best to use a larger volume tire for extra traction. Once snow is packed down larger volume tires can help you stay on top of the pack without the front tire breaking through and sliding out during turns. The opposite can be true with fresh

snow—many find that narrow tires cut through to the road below, even if more care needs to be taken when turning to avoid skimming the surface and washing out.

Lower Pressure

No matter what your choice in tires, it helps to lower your air pressure. Riding in the winter is far less about speed and just about being out there in the first place. Don't let so much out that you are risking a pinch flat, but 10-20 psi less than usual can really help keep you upright over the slippery stuff.



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Antique Tech: Crankset

By Brad Quartuccio

The more things change, the more things stay the same. Pictured is a crankset taken from a 1915 Columbia Racer, featuring a spiderless chainring attachment and a two-piece design with the bottom bracket axle integrated into the non-drive side arm. Manufacturing and engineering technology has clearly progressed since these forged steel cranks were produced, but the fundamental design isn't terribly far off from some of the latest versions available at the bike shop.

The method that the cranks come together to form a functional drivetrain however does not resemble current methods, likely due to manufacturing differences more than anything else. The bottom bracket bearings have a threaded sleeve spanning them, with each arm threading into the sleeve to force the bottom bracket axle together and form a tight fit.

It is true that modern two-piece crank designs are better by every measure, but this is one case of how looking at where bicycles have been can be a surprisingly good indicator of where they will go. 





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Why Cable Locks Suck

By Brad Quartuccio

Cable locks are great as a secondary deterrent to theft, but in all but the most idyllic neighborhoods should never be used as a primary lock. There is a reason beyond style most cyclists in the know carry around u-locks—they want to keep their bikes. Locking up with a cable as your primary lock in any city in the United States is a surefire way to have your bike stolen.

Many of the missing bike stories around town begin with cable locks being cut. It's startlingly easy to do with a simple pair of cable cutters available at any bike shop or well-stocked hardware store, making it an easy crime for

even the most hapless of thieves. Even large cables can be cut with minimal technique by working around it in a chewing motion. The pictured 10mm braided stainless steel cable took just four cuts with bicycle cable cutters to sever—no time at all and with remarkably little effort or finesse.

It's true that any lock can be defeated, but at least u-locks and heavy cut resistant chains require more serious tools to get the job done. Reserve the cable lock for secondary position only and be that much more likely to keep your bike yours. 

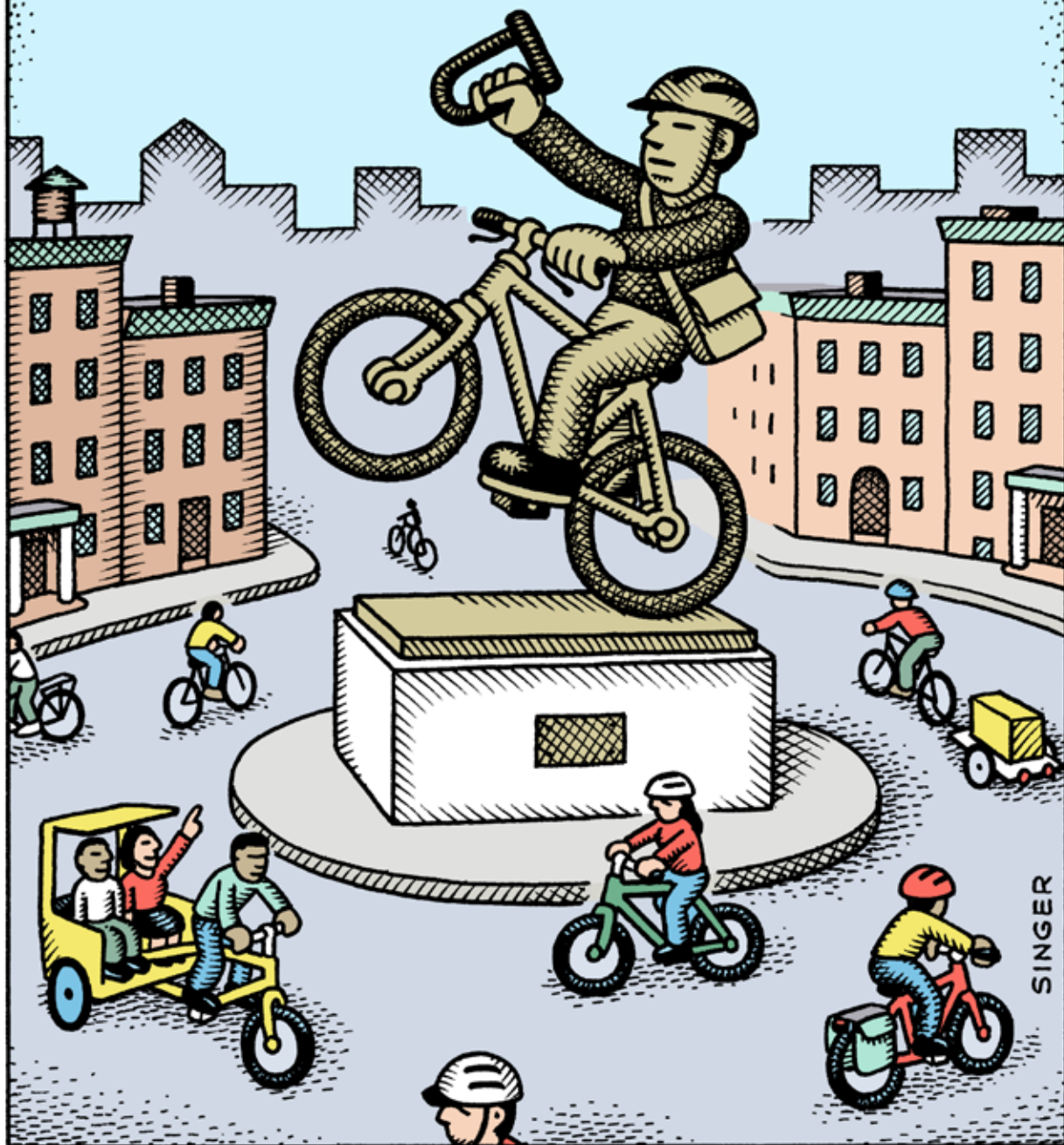




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