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Issue #25 • March 2011



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URBAN VELO

Issue #25 May 2011



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Jeff Guerrero
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On the cover: Cherubim's Air Line concept bike. Photographed at the 2011 North American Handmade Bicycle Show by Brad Quartuccio. Check out www.cherubim.jp

Co-conspirators: Yoshiro Yamada, Ricky Wong, Doug Dalrymple, Dan Powell, Jeff Snyder, John Greenfield, Roger Lootine, Berta Tilmantaite, Stasia Burrington, Carolyn Szczepanski and Andy Singer

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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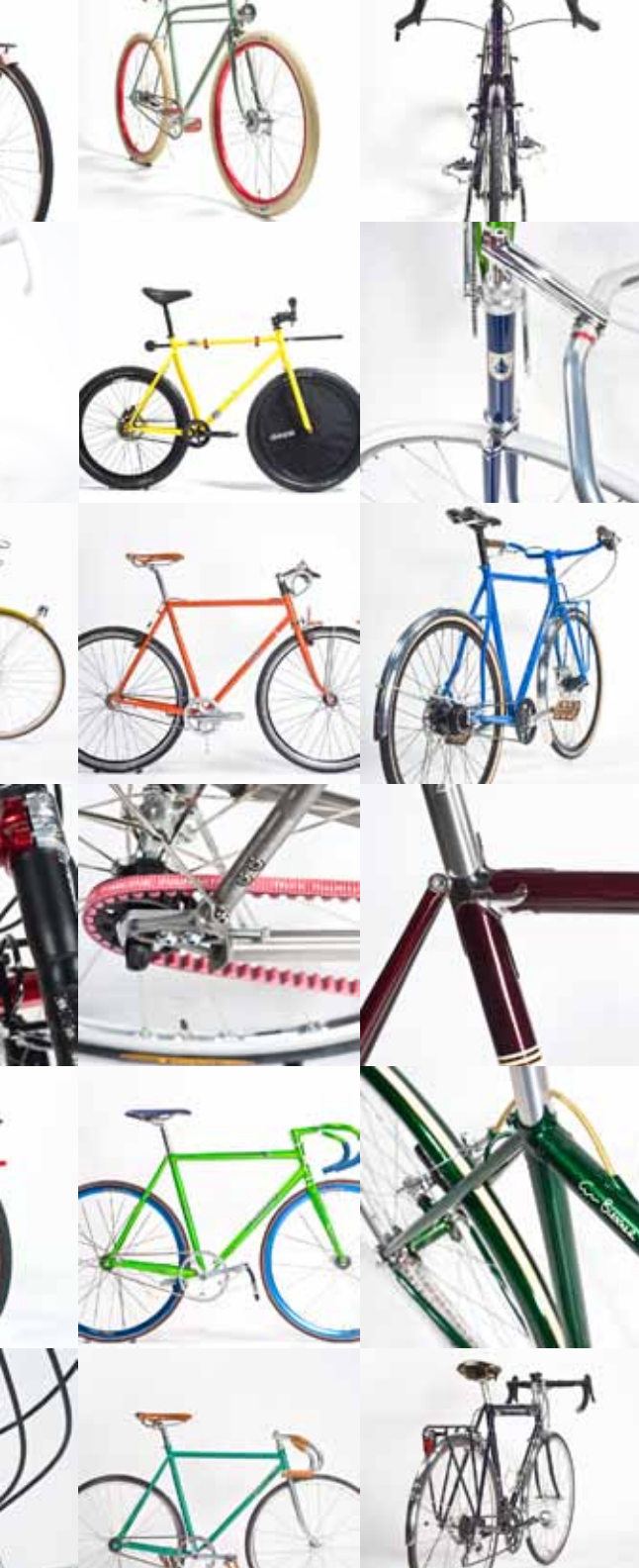
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Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



Looking back, much has changed in city cycling since we first started publishing Urban Velo back in 2007. This issue marks the beginning of our fifth year of publication, and it's impossible not to notice the difference on the streets.

Traveling brings it on home—sharrows and racks in Austin, shops swarming with people in Seattle and everything short of bicycle traffic jams during rush hour in Portland. Many of the infrastructure improvements you see today have been silently in the works for years, and with each lane striped ridership swells and it seems the next one is put down that much faster. Not long ago it seems that I recognized everyone in town on two wheels, now I can't check the mailbox without a cyclist riding by the front door. Cities without a comprehensive bike plan are beginning to look behind the times, when even in the mid-2000s such a thing was but a dream to most transportation advocates.

The “scene” for lack of a better term is changing as well, growing up even. In many places alleycats have taken on a decidedly less rebel feel even if the racing remains fast and risky, countless people relatively recently introduced to riding through commuting or flashy track bikes now consider themselves serious cyclists, even polo is legitimizing itself with a league and dedicated facilities in some cities. The jukebox no longer skips when you walk into a bar with a helmet and messenger bag, cycling is more or less as mainstream as it's been since the introduction of the automobile.

The days of completely flying under the radar unnoticed and unpoliced may be all but over. As urban riding moves further away from the fringe of city existence we're all going to face some changes, most for the positive even if some of the more lawless riding actions end up a thing of the past. I'm glad to be along for the ride, and can't wait to see where it takes us.



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

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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero



Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of publishing this magazine is that it's led to a number of new friendships. Quite a few of these friends live on the other side of the world. I had just recently spent time with a number of my friends from Japan when I heard the news of the natural disaster. While the video footage was heart-breaking, the most poignant reports came directly from friends. The following is an excerpt of an email I received from my friend Yoshi on March 15, 2011:

Several days have passed since the disaster. Fortunately, the damage in the part of Tokyo where I live was not too bad. We only had an earthquake. Northeast Japan was hit with a combination-punch—earthquake and tsunami.

The death toll will likely surpass 10,000. Not only that, but the accident at the nuclear power plant in the area is look-

ing worse every day. Radiation is leaking from the damaged reactors. The prime minister has ordered people living within 30 km of the plant to stay indoors.

The rolling electricity blackouts are the first ever in Japan. The emergency plan, announced late Sunday, threw commuters into a state of confusion. There is no gasoline to be had, and nothing but empty shelves in the market. In addition to the radiation leak, we're running out of things like toilet paper.

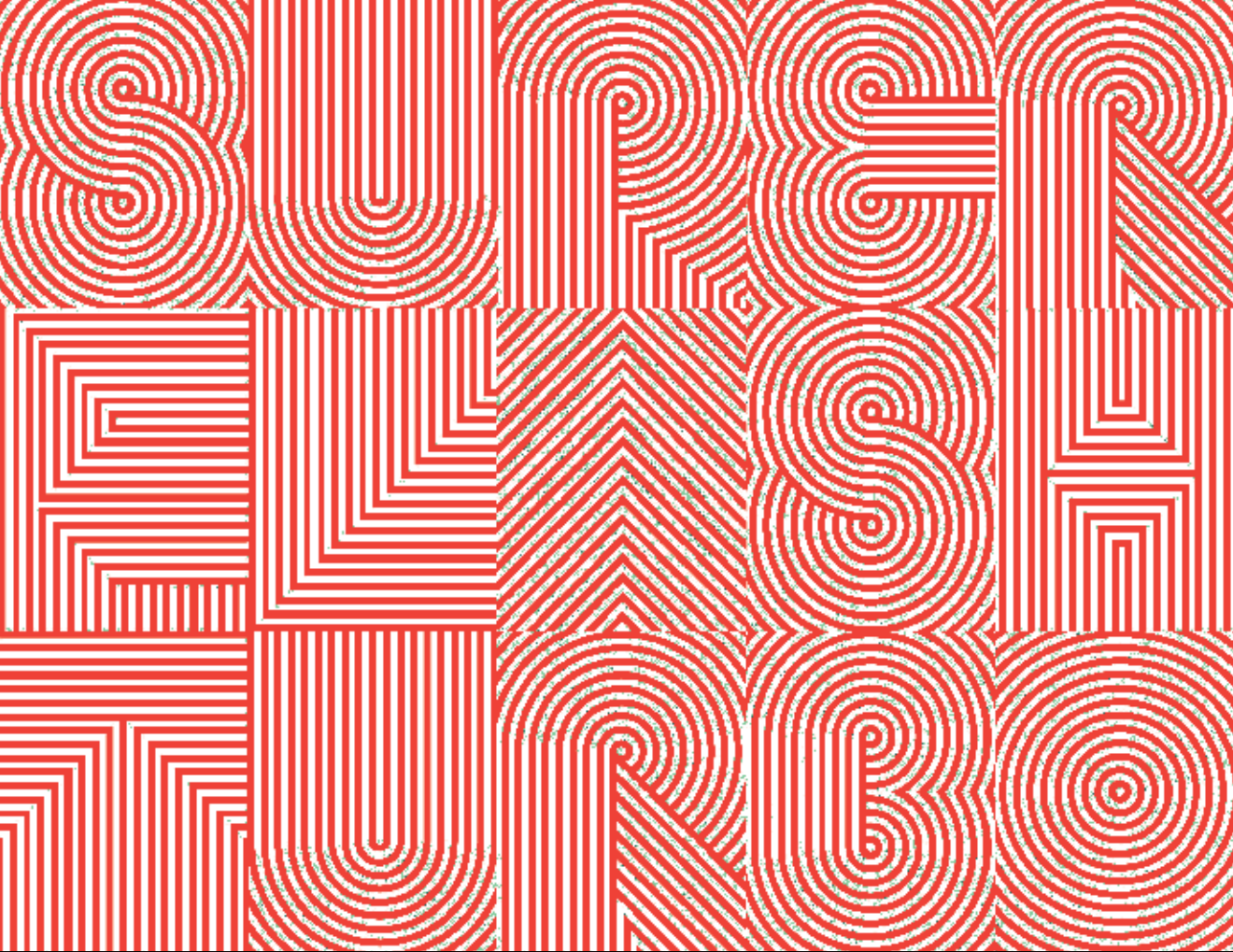
What was once abnormal has become daily life. We are surely in a dire situation, but I'm thankful that my family and friends have been spared the fate that so many victims have suffered. And I'm happy to have received so many words of encouragement from my friends who live abroad.

We are OK.

We will be OK.



Urban Velo issue #25, May 2011. Dead tree print run: 5000 copies. Issue #24 online readership: 55,000+



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Rie Sawada

LOCATION: Nagoya, Japan

OCCUPATION: Sunday Coffee Girl

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

Nagoya has a huge car population. It's like Japan's Detroit because it's home to Toyota. We didn't have much bike culture, so we created our own (bike and music festival, alleycat races, keirin, cyclocross races) in the past few years. I created the Love Wheels Nagoya calendar to promote our city to people all over the world. I hope many people see our calendar and see that Nagoya is great and a fun place to cycle in.

Why do you love riding the city?

Cycling has made a huge improvement in the quality of my life. The bicycle has helped me to meet inspiring people

like my friend Crankee, who had a BBQ grill on the rear of his bike. It inspired me to start my portable bike café!

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

I brought my bike café to the 2010 European Cycling Messenger Championship in Budapest. It took a lot of courage to do it for the first time outside of Japan, but bike people always warmly welcome me and enjoy my coffee.

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

I've made so many great friends who enjoy riding and drinking good beer and coffee. Bicycles unite people all over the world!

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NAME: Oliver Leon

LOCATION: Mexico City, Mexico

OCCUPATION: Graphic Artist

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

I live in Mexico City. Riding down here is difficult. The city has been built in order to use cars, so riding a bike can be dangerous. However, lately there have been some initiatives by groups that are making this city much safer to ride in.

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

Of all the cities I have ridden my bike in, definitely my favorite city is Frankfurt. There are a lot of bicycle paths

and infrastructure to let people safely ride. Also, there's a lot of cycling culture, so most of the people are already riding or supportive about it. Of course, the scenery is great.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I can say that I love saving money on gas, or that it's great to stay in shape, but the truth is that I just love riding. There's some sense of liberty about it, and the opportunity to see the city at a more personal level.

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

I must say that if you don't like to ride in the city, chances are you've never done it.

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i ♥ riding in the city



Photo by Ricky Wong

NAME: Liman Zhao

LOCATION: Beijing, China

OCCUPATION: Consultant

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

I live in Beijing and I've been riding a bike in this city since I was a small child. Old Beijing was a maze of *hutongs* (alleyways) and I loved the freedom that the bike gave me to explore. Now Beijing is a city full of cars but the bike is still the best way to get around. Some of the *hutongs* still exist, reminding me of the fun and freedom of my childhood days.

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

Beijing, of course. It's flat, it's mostly dry and there are still an amazing number of bike lanes here. Taking short-cuts through the quiet *hutongs* and back streets is still cool.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It makes the most sense. I keep fit, I feel part of the city because I can see, hear and smell what's going on in the streets. I always arrive on time and I'm proud to turn up on a bike as opposed to the status quo here in Beijing—a gas guzzling, space wasting, air polluting car!



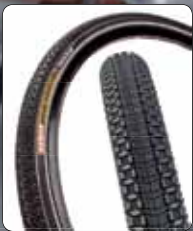
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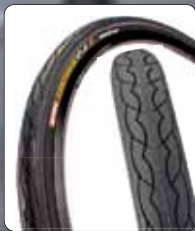
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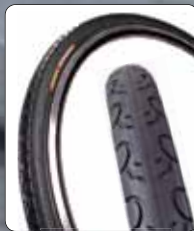
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NAME: Angga Setiawan Nugraha

LOCATION: Sintok, Malaysia

OCCUPATION: Student

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

I am currently living in Sintok, a small city in the north of Malaysia. The climate is perfect. One reason Sintok is great to ride in is because it is near the border of Thailand, I sometimes ride across the border. And this is very interesting because you can ride your bike to another country very easily.

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

My favorite city to ride in is in my hometown Bogor, Indonesia. There are a lot of coffee shops and cafés. The climate is great and Bogor still has many large trees on the side of the road.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It is more efficient and it keeps me healthy. It is very beautiful, especially in the morning.

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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

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Emilien Colin

LOCATION: Lausanne, Switzerland

OCCUPATION: Student

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

I live in Lausanne in Switzerland, near Geneva. It's fun to ride in my city because there are a lot of streets which are quite hilly and steep, but what I prefer is riding along the lake and enjoying the 160 km of cycle path. There is a difference in elevation of 525 m between the top of the city and the lake. Only courageous riders can ride up these slopes.

In Lausanne, there is also a small community of riders which has become bigger and bigger. We play bike polo (Geneva won the ECMC Bike Polo Tournament last year), participate in alleycats, Critical Mass and anything related to biking.

Switzerland is trying to be eco-friendly. For example, if you go to Basel or Zürich, there aren't any cars downtown: you'll find only bikes or a tramway.

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

I haven't had the opportunity to ride in many cities but two years ago I visited New York and its long avenues felt like a paradise for fixies.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It is a fast means of transportation and it is environmentally friendly, good for the health, cheap and pleasant.



Rider: DJ Mull Photo: David Beard

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NAME: Edson Melo
LOCATION: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
OCCUPATION: Ad Executive

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

I live in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a beautiful big city where there are a lot of roads to ride next to the beaches. The weather is good all year long. A real nice place to visit for a bike ride!

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

Definitely Rio de Janeiro. Sunny days, amazing beaches, nice views of the mountains and beautiful, happy people!

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

Riding my bike in Rio de Janeiro is good all year long. A good tip is to plan a visit to Rio de Janeiro for the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016. Come to Brazil, but don't forget to bring your bike!

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NAME: Alexander Hender
LOCATION: Adelaide, Australia
OCCUPATION: Sales Manager

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

I live in Adelaide, South Australia. Riding in our city is the most diverse and understated experience. In a day of riding I can roll out of my front door, follow a river-side bike track for kilometers, hit the hills, blast through some of the gnarliest trails in Australia, head across town and then cool my feet in the ocean before making my way home again. The only problem is the drivers, who are just starting to learn that cyclists are legitimate road users first and impromptu speed humps second.

Poetry anyone?

in their steel cages;
the illusion of freedom
floats away like gas
cars rotate; links in my chain
on my bike, legs become wings



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NAME: Guillaume Divanach

LOCATION: Columbus, OH

OCCUPATION: Customer Relations Rep

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

I live in Columbus, OH. It's a cool city to live and to ride in, with plenty of cyclists and good bike shops. It's especially nice to bike through its calm neighborhoods.

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

Paris, where I lived for three years, is an amazing city. Traffic can be crazy sometimes but that's part of the fun.

You can ride for hours without getting bored and without taking the same street.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because it is nice to be outside in the city free of traffic jams and free to stop wherever I want. I like getting lost on my bike and discovering new parts of town.

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NAME: Christopher Plaskett

LOCATION: Brooklyn, NY

OCCUPATION: Interactive Producer

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

Living in Brooklyn and working in Manhattan makes for an interesting commute. There are pretty awesome bike lanes in Brooklyn, and though they don't evaporate when you hit Manhattan, there's definitely a lot more competition with cars to get places. Though there's a pretty awesome bike-friendly infrastructure that's expanding, a lot of drivers either think bikes are a menace or simply don't notice or acknowledge them. Strangely, a lot of pedestrians seem to feel the same way, and they'll often step out in front of a cyclist without looking at all.

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

San Francisco is absolutely brilliant for riding—something that one might not suspect given its infamous hills.

The bike lanes are pretty incredible, there are great trails through the park, and there are even provisions for utilizing public transit with your bike in tow!

Why do you love riding in the city?

There's something that makes you feel powerful and free in a way that—for me, at least—hasn't existed since I first started riding as a kid. And in NYC, you can frequently get places much faster on a bike than you can in a car or on a train, and the experience is so much better!

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

There are few things that are as much fun as they are functional. City riding is definitely at the top of my list.



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Lindsay Welsh

LOCATION: New York, NY

OCCUPATION: Courier

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

I live and ride in New York City. I am currently a bike messenger for Breakaway Courier. I love riding here! Something is always happening around you, it never gets boring. Streets are crazy, cabs are crazy and pedestrians are crazy.

The family of cyclists here is amazing. Everyone looks out for each other on the streets. A simple head nod to cheers each other bombing down 5th Ave. It's a tight family of people who enjoy life and what they do for a living.

I used to live and work in Pittsburgh, and the cycle community there is pretty awesome, as well. Though I have to say, I don't miss all the hills. Big "high fives" out to all my amazing friends back home!

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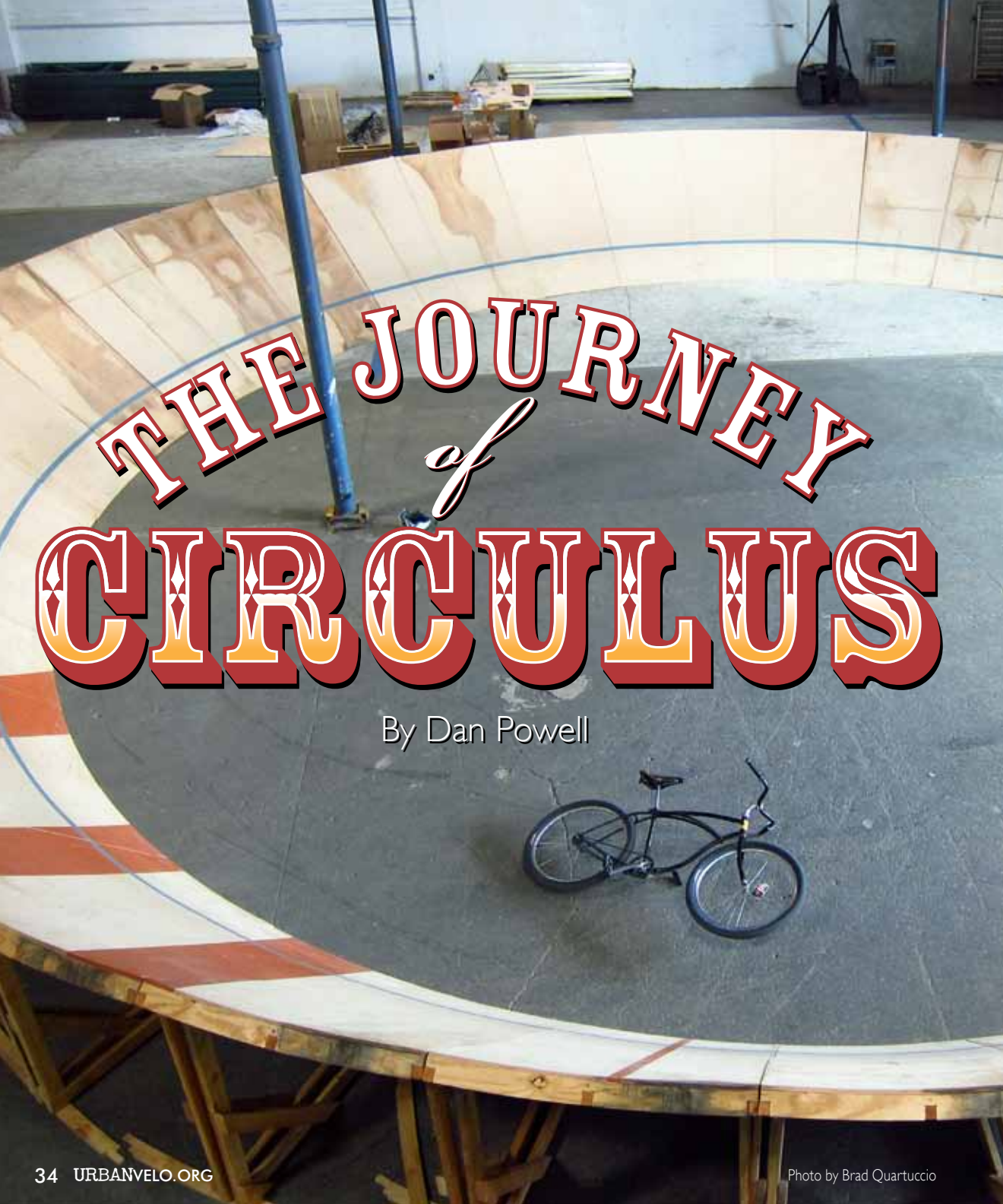
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THE JOURNEY *of* CIRCULUS

By Dan Powell



Dream Big

It was sometime around 1996, I guess, back in the early days of the internet that I first read about the Human Powered Rollercoaster (HPR) in Toronto. The portable figure-8 track was built for the Alley Cats Scramble, and was described as being “coiled around its own body like a serpent with no head or tail.” There were stories of people crashing on it and breaking their leg or jaw. Fishbone played live during the original Dunhill Cigarette sponsored event and it sounded like the most badass party I’d ever heard of.

Ever since then, the thought of owning a portable bicycle track has been circling around my mind. Last spring, I read a post on the Urban Velo website about Samuel Starr, a student at Pomona College who had designed, built and installed a round mini velodrome in the school’s recently decommissioned Seeley G. Mudd Science Library. Looking at photos of Circulus, I was reminded of the dream I’ve had since 1996.

In July 2010 I heard that Starr was graduating, and Circulus needed a new home. His email address was listed in the post so I dropped him a line. Before I knew it, I’d made him an offer for the track. The thing was that I didn’t even have the money I’d offered him, nor did I have a place to put the track. I guess those are what some folks would refer to as “minor details.”

Immediately I started scheming of ways to come up with the cash I’d need to not only purchase the track but also transport it to Portland, OR. Luckily, I’ve got friends that dream as big as I do. In the fall, Lyle Hanson and Kelly Peterson, who own the cycling cap company Cognition, and frame builder Zack Reilly agreed to loan me the money I needed to take ownership of Circulus. My business partner at Portland Design Works (PDW) Erik Olson agreed to let me set up the track in our warehouse until I could figure out what to do with it.



Designing in Circles

Circulus is different than most velodromes. Not only is it small, it is also a complete circle with a mere 50 ft diameter. The structure is comprised of 39 pie-shaped pieces, each with two V-shaped legs that support the constant 45° slope of the track. The pieces bolt together and the weight and size keep the whole structure stable while riders take a spin around the track surface. There are no straight aways or flat sections to get started on. You need to hit the track with speed and accelerate if you are hoping to ride it. Turning a lap on Circulus is a crash course in friction, gravity, commitment and momentum.

I've spoken with Starr about the undertaking of Circulus a few times. Like the Toronto landscape artist John Consolati who designed the HPR, Starr really thought outside the box on his design. His labor of love gave us something truly unique that is a hell of a lot of fun to ride. When I asked him what the original inspiration for Circulus was, Starr recalls the following

"I can remember playing with Lego spaceships in the base-

ment as a kid during cold Minnesota winters. I was obsessed with enacting high-speed crash landings in slow motion with lots of sound effects. I would sit on my knees and draw out the moment before impact for minutes, guiding the ship around me in a circle in quick passes, solving the problem of a small basement and lack of a mile-long straight landing strip. I was obsessed with imagining details and materials and stats of each craft. I kept an index card about each one on file in a recipe box so that I could refresh my memory on the gross weight of each craft and the number of crew on board before it circled around me during its approach sequence for landing. Whether it makes sense to anyone else or not, I see my gradual development of an obsession with bicycles as a direct continuation of my days playing with high-speed spacecraft in the basement. Imagining or experiencing the world as it passes rapidly around me has always been a source of fascination. I suppose it is a pretty common masculine fantasy. Maybe mine has just found a good outlet for activity and creation in bicycle racing and bicycle art projects like Circulus.

Legos and velodromes, it all make so much sense now.

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According to Starr, the execution of Circulus from idea to track took a few months. Brainstorming started in January of 2010, and the first cut of cardboard for a scale model happened in late February. Motivated not only by building the track the least expensive way possible but also by finishing the project for his graduation in May, the entire design took around three months and involved scale models and full sized sections. If the design sounds smooth and easy, the actual construction was anything but. When asked how long it took to CNC the wooden parts of the track, Starr replied “Forever. I ate caffeine pills like they were breath mints. I had a lot of all night sessions alone in the CNC room. I think it was roughly 36 hours of pure set-up and cutting on the router, and another 48 straight hours in the woodshop doing factory-style assembly-line cuts. Assembly in the woodshop was probably another 48 hours. Most of the time and challenge was dealing with that sheer weight and volume of materials in a limited space, and by myself. I had to think through every single step and situation of materials.”

When the construction of the parts was complete, Starr rounded up some friends and went to work building the track in the Library. Working side by side with friends was a release from the endless hours of solitary design and fabrication work, and the track went up in a

few nights. Starr turned the first laps on the track, with his excitement showing in the photos of the night. Circulus was installed in the Mudd Library for two weeks, and was featured in the LA Times.

Going Mobile

This past January I took a look at the atlas, bought a one-way ticket and flew from Portland to LA. There I met up with an old buddy, rented a 24 ft moving truck, and began to track down Circulus. When the installation at Pomona College ended, several sections of Circulus were then part of the “Re:Cycle-Bike Culture in Southern California” show at the Sweeney Art Gallery at UC Riverside. The rest of the track sections were stored under tarps in a backyard near Upland, CA. After retrieving all the parts from the separate locations, loading them all into the truck and enjoying an In-N-Out burger, I caught a few hours of sleep at the home of some friends before driving the 1,000 miles back to Portland solo. When I arrived at our warehouse the next night, about 10 friends were waiting to help me unload the track. I was weary from the road but could tell from their collective excitement that we’d gotten into something big. It would be a few weeks until we found out how big.

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Photo by Brad Quartuccio

Circulus sat in three neat stacks in a corner of our warehouse for almost a month before we could round up some pals and get a free weekend day to get after building it. I had some rough dimensions in my mind from conversations with Sam, and I was certain that we'd have no trouble building the track around the poles that hold the roof up. It only took a shuffling of the fully built track about 10 ft and rotating cast of volunteers 9 hours to do it. We were nothing short of ecstatic when the first of our friends hopped on his bike and took a run at the track and stayed up for the first shaky lap!

The Future of Circulus

Photographer Jeff Snyder was there to document the entire build process, and within days videos of us building and riding the track were popping up all over the internet. Website commenters called Circulus the "Hipster Hamster Wheel" and referred to it as that "circular bastard child of a velodrome." The idea that a bicycle accessory company would install a velodrome at their office was apparently hard to believe. Curious people started showing up to see it for themselves. First it was just people we knew. The garbage truck driver and the UPS man wanted to know what we'd built. Then people from Portland we didn't really know started stopping by with beers hoping to turn a few laps. Eventually, people from outside Portland started arriving to peer into our windows.

By then we'd already started making plans for a Circulus event later in the summer, but when Interbike called and asked us if we'd be interested in setting up the track at the largest trade show in the bicycle industry, we knew that Circulus was much bigger than the physical space it took up. We knew we needed to act and give the people what they wanted—a Circulus Party.

In early spring we did just that. With Backyard Blam's Amanda Sundvor spinning records and beer flowing, folks from as far as Los Angeles and Vancouver started turning laps. Five hours later, just about everyone in attendance moved into the center of the track where a dance party had broken out. Standing outside the track I couldn't help but think that our gathering wasn't quite "Dunhill Cigarettes and Fishbone" but I was pretty damn happy with how things had worked out.

So what now? We've put Circulus through its paces. Parts of the track need a little attention but we've learned quite a bit. Yes, the track is portable. We're pretty sure that we can have it set up someplace in about five hours. Yes, it is fun. Just look at the smiles on people's faces when they get done riding it. Hopefully the fun is just beginning.



Check out www.ridepdw.com

A man with a beard, wearing a green t-shirt and khaki shorts, is captured in mid-air while performing a wheelie on a black mountain bike. The bike is tilted upwards, with the front wheel high and the back wheel on the ground. The background features a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds and a dense line of green bushes and trees. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

AJ Austin

Photo: Jake Marx

milwaukeebicycle.com

KINFOLK LOUNGE, TOKYO

By John Greenfield







If you want to visit Kinfolk Lounge, a cozy, atmospheric cocktail bar with vintage keirin frames hanging from the rafters, be sure to print out a map of its exact location. In February, three weeks before the Sendai earthquake devastated northern Japan, my buddy T.C. and I visited the country for a few days. After spending an afternoon at Tokyo's Tachikawa Velodrome, a gambling venue where old men in parkas studied racing forms and smoked as racers whizzed by in a rainbow blur, we decided to drop by Kinfolk for a drink.

Finding addresses in Tokyo is tricky, so when we got to the Nakameguro neighborhood it took a lot of wandering around and asking "Keenfolk bah wa doko deska?" until we stumbled upon the tiny, second-story lounge on a quiet back street. With old-school Japanese woodwork, comfy couches, candlelight and tasty libations, it was definitely somewhere I wanted to spend some time. It's run by Ways&Means, a collective of expats who also build custom track bikes as the Kinfolk Bicycle Company. Co-owner and bartender John Beullens filled me in on the history of the bar, Ways&Means' current projects, and what it's like mixing mojitos for Japanese gangsters.

Who's involved with Ways&Means and how did you wind up opening this place?

It's me, Ryan Carney, Maceo Eagle and Salah Mason. Me and Maceo, we've been friends for a long time, and Maceo grew up with Ryan and Salah in Washington State. I'm originally from Sidney, Australia, and I've been living in Japan since 1999. Round about that same time Maceo was coming over from New York and doing graphic design work and



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graffiti art. We were both skateboarding a fair bit at the time so that's how we met.

As we got older we both stopped skateboarding and started getting into track bikes. We were buying second-hand track bikes in Japan and selling them Stateside. Maceo was coming over three or four times a year for work, doing a clothing brand over here. Every time he visited he would buy all these track bikes, as many as he could take back with him on the plane.

We'd go out to all these bike stores in the suburbs that were run by old men. A lot of them were the builders' stores where they had all the old keirin frames that weren't really for sale. But we'd go in and talk to them for long enough and we'd be like, "Come on, how much are the bikes going for?"

In 2008 Maceo and Ryan were visiting some builders with the idea of setting up a bicycle brand that would be designed by Maceo and Salah and made in Japan by these old men. At the same time I was getting the keys for this place. The whole time I've been in Japan I've worked at bars, cafes and restaurants and I knew from experience, having run my own bar before, that doing it by myself was really hard work. Maceo and Ryan were coming to Japan

a lot so it made sense that they'd help out with the bar whenever they could.

So they still live in the U.S?

Well Ryan has been living here for the past year, year-and-a-half, and Maceo and Salah both live in the States but visit fairly frequently.

Why did you come up with the name Kinfolk?

The guys in the States came up with that. It was either that or Maceo's old graffiti crew name which was Lit Fuse. But I thought about what it would be like for a Japanese person to say and a lot of Japanese people can't pronounce "L" or "F." So I was thinking Lit Fuse would be hard for them to pronounce.

I guess for a bar name Kinfolk sounds a little more welcoming than Lit Fuse. What all does Ways&Means do besides the bar and the bikes?

Salah and Maceo do web design and graphic design work. We also do a lot of tie-ins with other companies. Last year we did a project with Nike where we created a one-off bicycle for a famous Japanese messenger, Shino.

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Was it a pain in the ass to open a bar in Tokyo?

No, a lot of it comes down to connections, knowing the right people and timing. Knowing the language helps because all my day-to-day administration and ordering alcohol, taxes, all that stuff's in Japanese. So that's probably a hassle if you don't know Japanese but generally it's a lot easier than setting up a bar in America, which we're trying to do right now. We just signed a lease on a building in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. (They held an opening party at the space, called Kinfolk Studios, on February 25.) In New York especially there's so much red tape involved in getting a liquor license and getting your space up to code.

What kind of frames does Kinfolk Bicycle Company make?

We make two types of frames. One is a keirin-inspired track frame. The builder we use built bikes for keirin racers for about 30 years. So he uses the same geometry that he used when he was building the bikes for keirin. The other type of frame is a custom-made, steel road frame.

What's special about keirin frames?

They're steel, whereas a lot of bikes ridden on velodromes around the world are made of high-tech material like carbon fiber. But in Japan, as you've seen today, track racing is a gambling thing more than anything else, so they have regulations that the bicycles have to be built in a certain way so that no rider gets a performance advantage. Everyone's riding a similar bike.

What's the bar's signature cocktail?

Our ginger-mint mojito is very popular. I used to work in this really high-end cocktail lounge where there were yakuza (Japanese Mafia) guys coming in. And this one guy would always order a mojito and specifically ask that there be ginger in the mojito. And I tried it and it was good so figured I should bring it down here when I opened this place. It goes well with Japanese ginger ale, which is really gingery, and a little bit spicy.

Every have any problems with the yakuza guys?

No, no, they're fine. They don't really pay any attention to Westerners. They're in a whole different stratosphere. We're not really worth their time.

So what were things like here when Tokyo hosted the Cycle Messenger World Championships?

It was crazy. There were messengers sleeping in ham-

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mocks made of tarpaulins, homeless people hammocks, in the park across the street. It was rainy season, September 2009, and it was pissing down rain. There were gangs of messengers and other cyclists riding around town from one convenience store to the next buying beer.

And then during the actual messenger world cup, which was out on Odaiba (a man-made island in Tokyo Harbor), in a big car park, that was pretty crazy too. Luckily there was a convenience store near where one of the tightest turns in the racecourse was, so everyone could just sit there and drink all day.

Where's your favorite place to ride around Tokyo?

I really like Meiji Jingu Park which is in between the Harajuku and Roppongi districts. It's a sporting area with baseball fields and soccer fields and tennis courts and there's a lot of trees and roads that go around those sports facilities, so it's really nice place to cruise around. I also like going through the Shibuya neighborhood late at night because the place is completely lit up with neon signs

reflecting off the pavement. At three o'clock in the morning there's hardly anyone around and you can just kind of fly through.

In general, how is it riding a bike around Tokyo?

It's really safe, it's good. Everyone's very conscious about the fact that people are riding bikes on the street. You do have to look out for taxis but I guess you could say that about any country. The only thing is taxis here have doors that open automatically, so there could be nobody in the back of a taxi and suddenly a rear door could swing open for a passenger to get in, and you could ride into it.

What's the funniest thing that's ever happened at Kinfolk?

All the furnishings are hung pretty low—you've got to duck everywhere. So we have a lot of tall guys that hit their heads multiple times when they're in here drinking. And the more they drink, the more they hit their heads and the less it seems to hurt.



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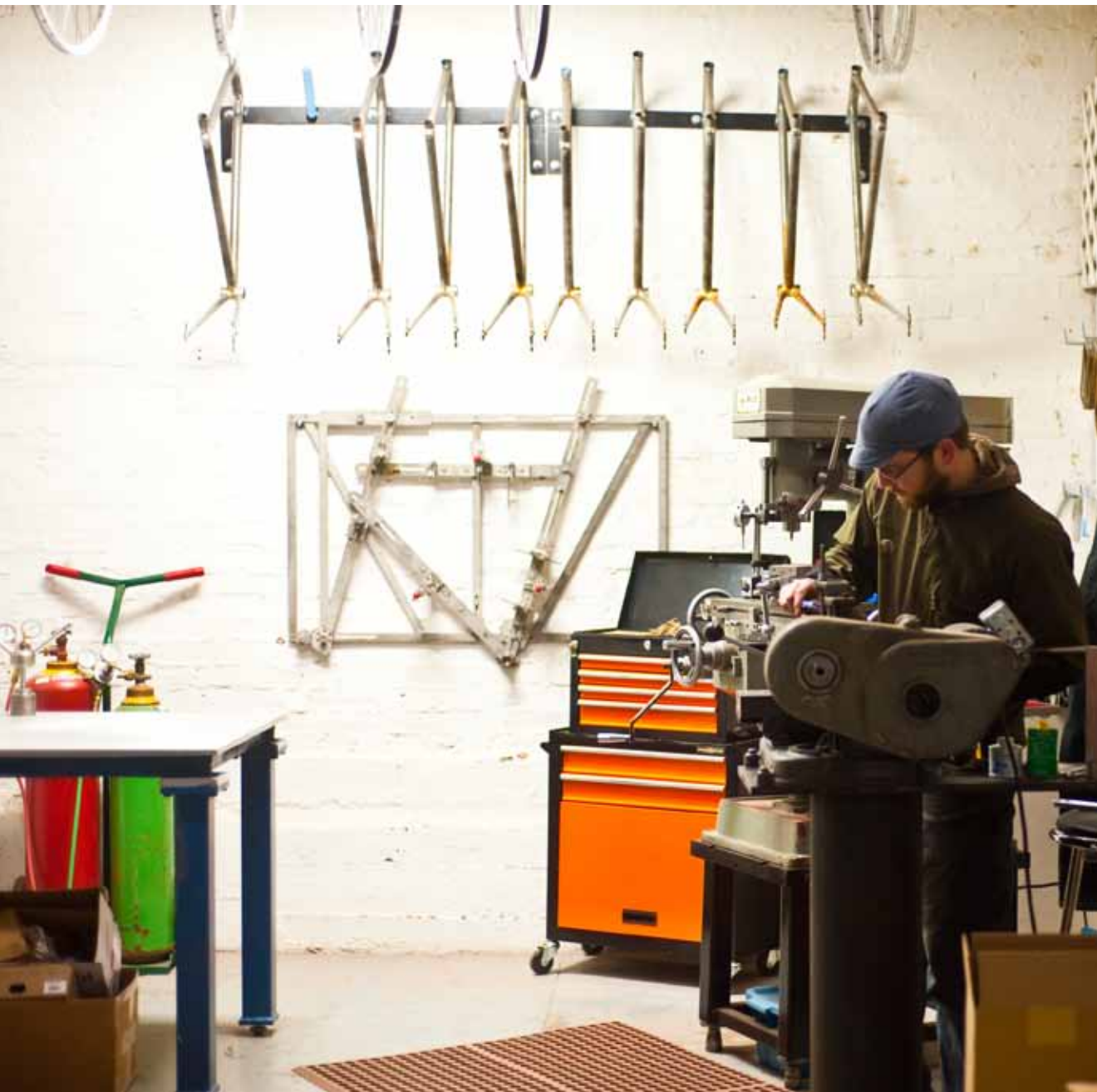
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Three Portland Framebuilders

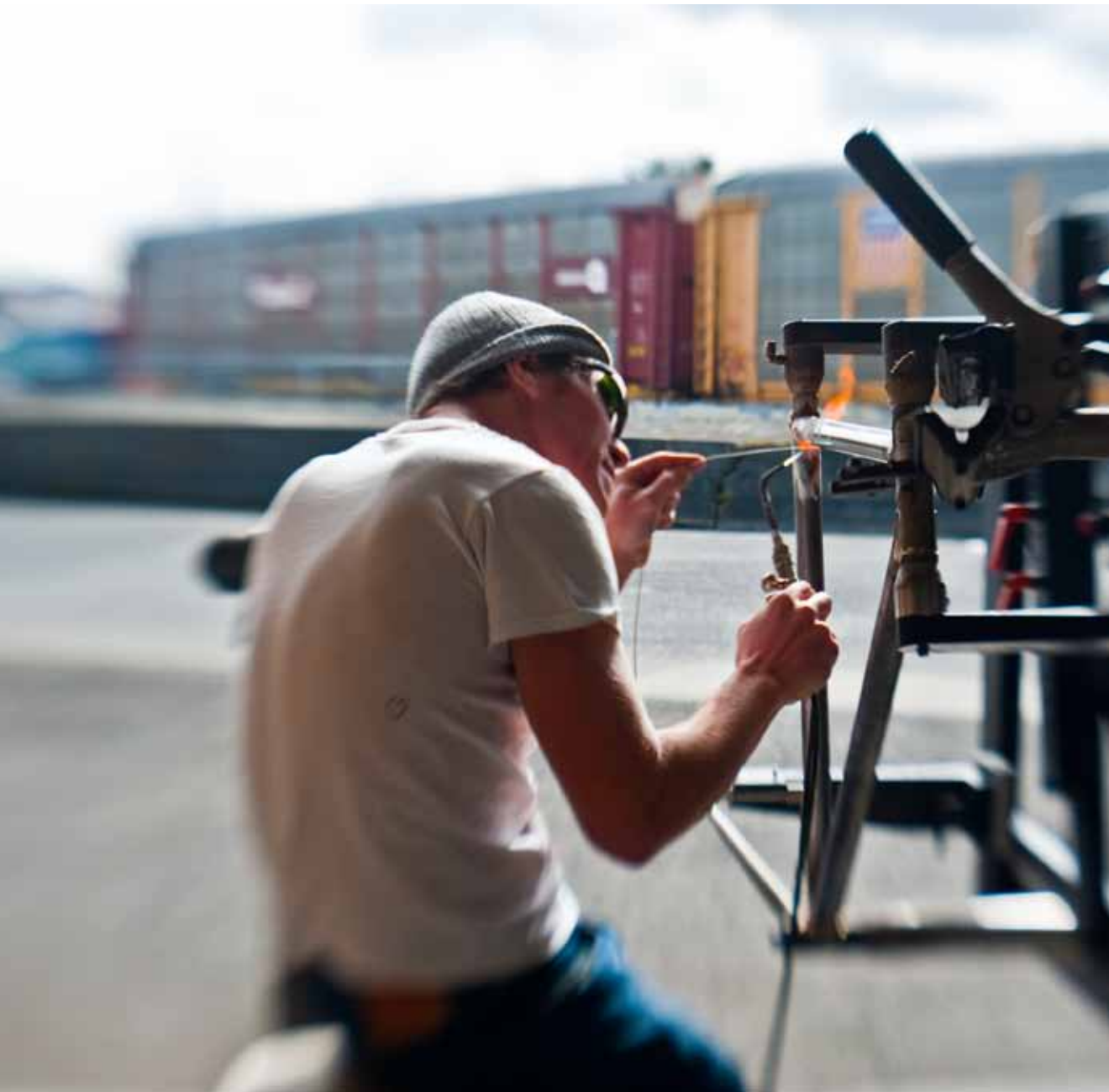
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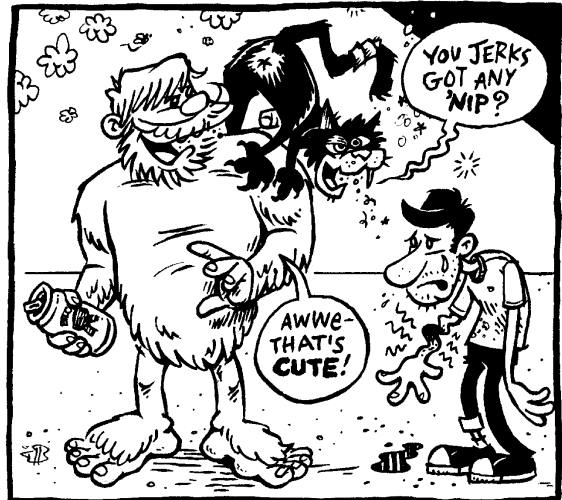
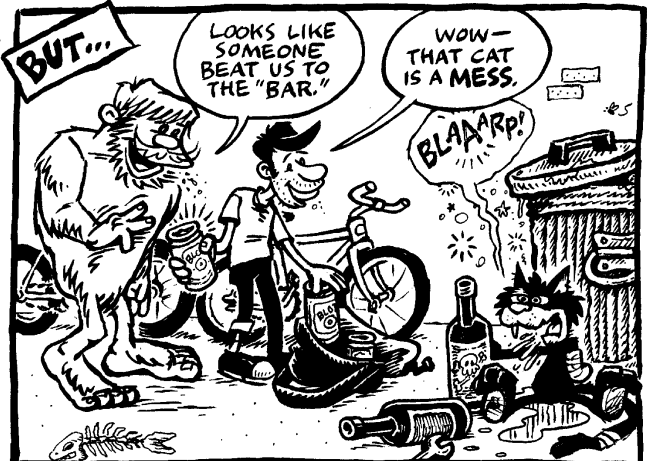


Three Portland Framebuilders

Photos by Brad Quartuccio







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Raleigh Rush Hour Flatbar

It's been months since I first rolled out on the Raleigh's Rush Hour Flatbar, yet people's reaction to the bike is still the same... Last week another random driver leaned out of the window of his car to say, "Nice bike!" My friends have the same reaction, even those who've seen it several times can't get over the Raleigh's good looks. And my own first impressions stand—it's a pretty bike that rides really nicely.

The frame is TIG welded from Reynolds 520 butted chromoly steel tubing. Although it sounds exotic, Reynolds 520 is not one of the proprietary tubesets manufactured on Shaftmore Lane in Birmingham, England. It's 4130 chromoly steel manufactured in Taiwan to the Reynolds standard.

The straight blade fork is lugged chromoly steel, and looks every bit as sharp as the rest of the bike. Like the frame, it's drilled for a brake and comfortably holds a 28c tire (but probably not much more). The frame and fork really take a back seat to the matching chromoly integrated handlebar and stem. The single-bolt stem is about 105 mm with a negative rise that ends up pointing just a hair above 90°. The handlebar is 500 mm wide and comes straight as an arrow—no sweep, no rise. I really didn't want to

remove the très chic one-piece handlebar/stem combo, but begrudgingly that's exactly what I did. Every time I went for a ride I found myself wishing for a few degrees of sweep, and after a few miles my wrists were noticeably uncomfortable.

Although it might seem unthinkable, I took off the stock Brooks Swift saddle, too. It's undoubtedly one of the selling points of the bike, I just don't seem to break in saddles as fast as other people. And I don't like to wear padded bike shorts on every ride, so I switched to a basic padded saddle.

Although I've made some changes, it's not to say that I disagree with Raleigh's parts spec, or that other riders should follow my example. Much to Raleigh's credit, the parts that I left unchanged are nothing short of impressive. The Sugino crankset and Weinmann wheelset have been bombproof so far, and the Vittoria tires have yet to flat on me (knock on wood).

The 2011 model is available for \$850 with a new paint job and a few minor parts changes as compared to the 2010 model reviewed here.

Check out www.raleighusa.com



Dahon Speed Uno

Folding bikes can run the gamut from serious performance to space saving city commuters, with prices varying accordingly. One of the simplest and least expensive folding bikes available is the Dahon Speed Uno, a \$380 coaster brake only folder perfectly suited for short urban commutes and small office spaces. With no shift or brake cables, it couldn't be easier to fold or maintain this bike—nothing gets in the way of folding, and besides air in the tires and tight clamps there isn't much to worry about. At 24.8 lbs the Speed Uno is one of Dahon's lightest folders, making it that much easier to stow on mass-transit or in the upstairs office.

The lack of cable actuated brakes and any sort of shifting mechanism is both the greatest advantage and disadvantage to this bike. It certainly keeps it simple, but it also keeps it casual as the 20" wheels and 64" gear ratio top out speed-wise just about where you'd like given the stopping ability of a coaster brake. Riding a coaster brake in traffic requires some practice to reacquaint oneself from childhood—you have to be mindful of your crank positioning at stops to avoid an awkward stance when the light turns green. Besides the obvious differences in the ride of

small wheels to the larger ones most of us are used to, the Speed Uno rides reasonably well—there is no discernable wobble or play in any of the folding joints, and even when standing on the pedals the bike feels sturdy.

Folding bikes are truly defined not only by their ride, but by how quickly and easily they transform into a smaller package. No problems there, it couldn't get much easier to fold up the Speed Uno—fold the pedals inward, lower the seat, fold the bars down and finally fold the whole package in half. It's all held folded together by a magnetic clasp and really couldn't be easier to do, just three quick release clasps and about 15 seconds and you're ready to go. Folded the bike measures 11.7" x 30" x 25", too big for air travel but perfect size for just about everything else.

This seems an ideal folding bike for commuters with short hops, multi-modal transit users or even folks regularly taking the bus out of town looking for wheels that are easy to bring along with. Fender mounts make it all-weather capable, and the simple plastic loom over the chain keeps your pants clean and in one piece. The only true caveat is for taller riders—even if the post has enough extension for people up to about 6'4", the saddle to bar distance is just about 26", making for a short cockpit as compared to what tall folks are used to. For everyone else, this might be the inexpensive folder you're looking for.

Check out www.dahon.com





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CETMA 5-Rail Cargo Rack Review

Racks and baskets have been a game changer for my bike experience since I was first introduced to them. Just being able to pile it on and ride brings a whole new element to riding, especially for practical reasons. I prefer front racks to rear ones for both handling purposes and the ability to actually see and stabilize what I'm carrying. Two years ago I first started using this CETMA 5-Rail rack, with countless cargo loads carried around town since.

The CETMA 5-rail is as simple as it gets; a big L-shape with an 11" square platform ideal for carrying all sorts of things if you're creative with bungees. Tubular chromoly rails and mounting struts keep the weight with hardware to 2.6 lb. The handlebar mounting hardware is the simple Wald design that has worked for decades, even if by today's standards the stamped steel construction can seem dated.

Within the first week I swapped some of the stock nuts and bolts for a pair of cut down seat QR binders,

making handlebar mounting that much easier even if not truly quick release. The variety of heights on the back section of the CETMA rack should accommodate most bike handlebar heights, but mounting success is more a sure thing for bars with minimal cable clutter to interfere with, though with some creativity this rack can be made to fit just about anything by virtue of its simplicity. The stock clamps require a 4" wide spread and a 25.4 mm clamp diameter handlebar.

Strong and light, the handmade mounting struts really make the CETMA rack stand out. They attach with p-clamps on the rack side and a fork-end on the other to easily slip over the axle or to facilitate use with a quick-release skewer. While a nutted axle seems the most logical choice for a front rack, I've successfully used a quality steel QR skewer without incident. Do so at your own risk.

I find that in everyday use I tend to keep the rack attached and at the ready, as there is no telling when I may want to carry a box of something, somewhere. I prefer the lack of any sort of fence to make carrying boxes and other large objects that much easier, without potentially having to balance it on an empty rail.

I've even done some light touring with this rack, as the rails fit standard pannier clips and I was able to otherwise improvise the rest of the mounting. In terms of weight capacity, 45 lb boxes of magazines are handled regularly with ease, a pair of them is certainly possible but not the most comfortable situation to be in as the steering gets decidedly weird after that one box limit. There are a number of people in this world who have ridden on the front of a CETMA rack, but I'm not one of them.

The 5-rail as tested is available for \$120, with 3-rail and 7-rail versions also an option. CETMA racks are handmade by Lane Kagay in his minimal Eugene, OR shop, and sometimes demand is known to outstrip supply.

Check out www.cetmacargo.com





Fyxation Mesa Slim Pedal

With the advent of new-school foot strap systems, there has been a whole new interest in flat pedal design, with Fyxation recently releasing the pictured Mesa pedals. The overarching design feature is the slim nylon pedal body, though the chromoly spindle and sealed bearings make it clear that this is a performance pedal, not just a good looker.

The high impact nylon bodies are just under 14 mm thick, while a generous 110 mm across providing a large, thin platform. Large platform pedals are generally very comfortable even with the most flexible shoes, and the large surface area tends to grip well too, helped along in this case by 10 molded in studs. The thin profile allows you to run your seat a hair lower than with other pedals, lowering your center of gravity and at least theoretically improving stability. The wide pass through gaps easily fit the webbing typical of new-school strap systems, and the nylon body doesn't tend to wear out the straps as the hard edges of metal pedals can. Clipping a pedal on the ground, grinding or even smacking your shin all have better outcomes with a nylon bodied pedal, making these especially

suited to certain more aggressive uses.

The chromoly axle supports the pedal body via a sealed bearing on the inside and a long wearing bushing on the outside. Keeping it slim, the axle doesn't feature an external 15 mm wrench surface, only a 6 mm hex key on the end. Overall a pair of the pedals comes in at a light 320 g.

When it comes to real world use, these pedals have proven to have enough grip to not make me think about them, even when wet. At some point in just a few weeks time I've all but worn off one of the studs, but that's the reality of nylon rather than metal bodied pedals. Nylon just tends to wear faster, especially upon impact. So far, so good—even considering the visible wear the construction and quality feel of the Mesa pedals give me every reason to believe I'll have them for some time.

The Mesa pedals are available in red, black or white for about \$50. If you're looking for something less expensive, Fyxation also has the loose ball bearing nylon platformed Gates pedal available for about \$20.

Check out www.fyxation.com



Skully Skull Lights

Like several prominent light manufacturers, the Taiwanese company S-Sun specializes in underwater diving lights in addition to bicycle and general outdoor lighting. So they not only know a thing or two about bulbs and reflectors, they're arguably among the best at making waterproof electronic equipment.

The Skully brand of lights is a bit of a departure from S-Sun's typical products, which are generally intended for performance-minded athletes and adventurers. These fun little silicone skulls with LED eyeballs are marketed to the lifestyle audience, so they're purposely cute and cool at once. In my experience, anyone who sees them in person wants one for their bike, too.

As much as the Skully lights are designed to be fun, they're also quite functional. At roughly 20 lumens, they're not going to take the place of a high-powered headlight or tail light, but they're definitely bright enough to help you be seen in traffic (they are claimed to be visible from 600 m). And the mounting system is really quite clever—the arms can be crossed over to attach the unit to either a horizontal or vertical tube from 10-35 mm diameter.

The roughly \$17 Skully lights are available with white, red, green or blue LEDs and the silicone bodies come in black, red, blue, purple, orange, yellow, white, green and pink.

Check out skully.com.tw

Planet Bike Superflash Turbo

Planet Bike makes some of more popular blinkie lights out there, with the time tested Superflash being unmistakable on the road. The new Superflash Turbo ups the ante with a higher powered 1 Watt LED (the old Superflash was a 1/2 Watt), while keeping the retail price right around the \$30 mark. The flash pattern has been turned to eleven as well on the Turbo model, with an even more "random-looking" pattern that is truly eye catching, and according to the literature visible from a mile away. It's so bright that I'd recommend getting a less powerful blinkie for group rides, as I'd hate to get caught behind this for long. For commuting and general night riding however, light it up, and this does the job. Flash, steady and off are the only choices here, making it easy to turn on/off even with gloves on and keys in hand. The pair of AAA batteries are longer lasting than the button-cells in other lights, and rechargeable versions are readily available for every day riders. If you're looking for one of the brightest tail lights out there, this is a solid choice.

Check out www.planetbike.com



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Wood decked racks are in, and **Portland Design Works** is on it with the Payload. It looks good with the curvy lines of the tubular steel rack and double ply bamboo deck, but it also has the guts for a 77 lb load rating for some serious touring or grocery getting. Big loops for attaching panniers and bungee hooks are a practical design touch, as is the rear blinkie/reflector mount. Retail is around \$80, on par with other high end racks. www.ridepdw.com

The **All-City** Wallner Pro pedals are now available. We first saw these at Interbike, with them now ready for miles as spring is here. Sealed bearings, true double sided cages and threaded toe clip mounting holes make these serious, long serving pedals. Available for around \$56. www.allcitycycles.com

Full Speed Ahead has been quietly filling in their Metropolis urban parts line, expanding to include a seatpost and stem along with the bars and much awaited two-speed transmission cranks. www.fullspeedahead.com



The **Paul** Twin Pull Lever actuates the front and rear brake at once, ideal for bike polo enthusiasts or adaptive cyclists. A pin can be moved to run as a cantilever/caliper lever or a v-brake lever. The pin can also be removed and the lever flipped over to run it either right or left handed. The barrel adjusters are tucked in next to the bar, away from wayward mallets, and the front of the lever is beefed up to survive abuse as well. The \$63 lever weighs a mere 93 g. www.paulcomp.com

SpotMe is a one-woman project from a year-round London bike commuter, inspired by both the trend towards fashionable everyday cycling and the undeniable safety implications of reflective material. Each package of three reflective buttons is about \$15, with a number of designs available to brighten up your jacket or bag. A sensible, cutesy gift for the cyclist that seemingly has everything. www.spotme.cc



The **Soma** Mini Velo has landed, bringing a touch of Japanese urban cycling culture Stateside. Built from Tange steel, the Mini Velo is currently sold as complete bike only, retailing for \$1200. www.somafab.com



The **VP** Gold Sprint is an urban platform pedal that's been in development since before the last big trade show. It features a low profile, wide platform, cut away corners to lessen the chances of a pedal strike while cornering and a unique retention system. The toe clip is more ergonomic than traditional ones, and made from a durable composite material that's both tough enough to take the abuse of daily rides in the city, but smooth enough not to damage your shoes like metal clips can. www.vp-usa.com



The **Burro** limited-edition pedal straps use an easily adjustable full hook and loop mounting and closure system and feature a 2" wide strap. MSRP is \$50. www.burrobags.com

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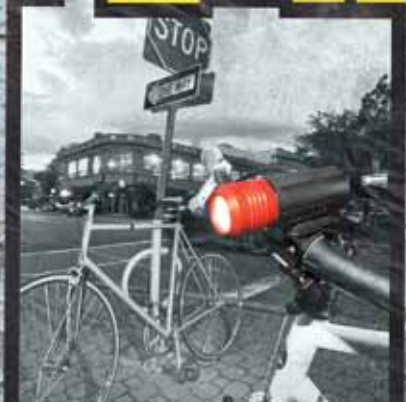
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WITH **INES BRUNN**

Words and photos by Berta Tilmantaite



“She is amazing! How does she do that?” people whisper while watching Ines. It seems so simple and easy when you watch her—she does everything so smoothly and just modestly smiles when everybody starts clapping and shouting. Ines’ performances really challenge one’s imagination and ability to figure out how she does that.



Ines Brunn is from Germany, but for the past six and a half years she has called Beijing, China home. Together with friend Federico Moro she opened a fixed gear bicycle and juggling equipment shop "Natooke" in 2009. Along with Shannon Bufton, they lead a cycling group "Smarter Than Car" (www.stcbj.com) to promote biking and preserve the unique cycling culture of Beijing through various rides and events. It's been 21 years since Ines started artistic cycling, and has since performed on her bike in countries around the world.



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Artistic Cycling

Ines did gymnastics as a child, but as she moved through adolescence it was hard for her to continue. “You start thinking if it makes sense to do all of those things, because there is always a chance you can hurt yourself. As a child you don’t think about that, you just do whatever the coach tells you to do, but later you start doubting, whether it is safe or not. A good coach would help you to get over this, but my coach wasn’t supportive, so one day I just decided to quit, I didn’t want to do it anymore,” Ines explains.

She was looking for some other sports to enjoy, but nothing seemed to be inspiring and challenging enough. Not until by pure chance Ines saw a woman doing artistic cycling. “I saw a lady doing bicycle tricks and it was like love at first sight. I saw her doing it and I realized that this is what I am going to do and still till today I love it,” Ines says. She liked cycling since her childhood; therefore to be able to combine gymnastics and biking was really amazing. A few years later Ines joined the National team

of Artistic cycling in Germany and took part in a number competitions.

Artistic cycling requires a lot of practice time. Coming from the field of gymnastics, Ines had advantages for doing bike tricks—her body coordination and balance was very good, and she had strength and flexibility, all important for doing bike tricks. By trying to do what she already knew from gymnastics on the bike, Ines “invented” a new stance, which is appropriately named after her—the “Ines Straddle.”

Performing is an essential part of Ines’ life as she enjoys doing it and believes she can inspire people to ride bikes. Ines performs for cycling events, bike competitions, parties, festivals, corporate anniversaries, TV shows—wherever she is invited. “A lot of people come up to me after performances to tell how impressed and surprised they are, that such things could be done on the bicycle and that they can be done by a woman,” Ines says, smiling.



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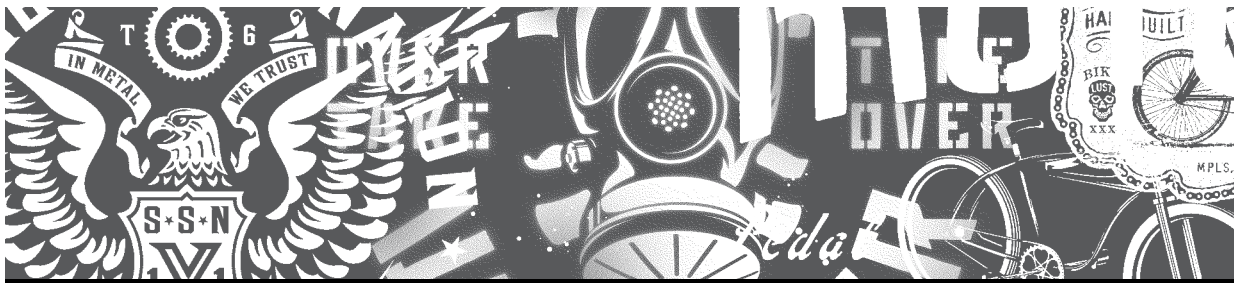


The Bike Business

There were only a few people who rode fixed gear bikes in Beijing, as it was hard to get such bikes and parts just a few years ago. This was one of the reasons Ines decided to open a fixed gear centric bike shop. “To own a shop is not the best way to make money, but I like meeting biking enthusiasts. Every day many cyclists from different countries, different age groups and different backgrounds come to the shop and the thing that unites all of them is biking.”

She thinks back to her first visit to Beijing in 2001. Biking culture was so strong here—bike lanes were full and there

were hardly any cars in the wide streets. “I wish it was the same now,” Ines says, “but it’s the opposite—cars flooded the city and even the bike lanes are blocked by cars. People consider cars as a symbol of wealthier life. They think, bikes are not cool, but rather something from the past and were only used as transportation, when people couldn’t afford cars. By selling colorful fixed gear bikes I want to attract people to bike and to prove them that biking actually is cool, fun, and what is more important, healthy and good for the city and environment.”



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Beijing Riding

It is especially convenient to ride bikes in Beijing, as there are bike lanes everywhere and the city is very flat. Traffic is crazy, but according to Ines people are generally aware of bicycles and can anticipate and predict what you are going to do. “It is also interesting and fun—you can communicate, negotiate with people in the traffic, nobody gets angry here, everybody does what they want and understands each other. However, an antipollution mask and helmet should not be forgotten.”

Ines enjoys biking, as it gives a feeling of freedom and achievement. “You can race cars, you can beat busses and there are never traffic jams for bikes. It’s also very interactive, as you can chat with people while standing at the traffic light. You use your own strength to move, so there is a feeling of achievement involved. And it lets you feel the environment, smell the air,” Ines tries to name all of the reasons why she loves cycling, but as we all know it’s just impossible to put passion for bikes into words. 

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RIDING WITH THE DRAGON

AUTHOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST LOUNG UNG

By Jeff Guerrero

Among Loung Ung's earliest memories are those of riding beside her mother in a pedal-powered rickshaw to the markets of Phnom Penh. Born in 1970, Loung (which means dragon) lived a comfortable life as a middle-class Cambodian child. She had the love and guidance of two dedicated parents and the affection of her six siblings. Much of her free time was spent visiting the movie theater across the street from her childhood home and seeking out the tastiest fried crickets from the multitude of street vendors.

Her comfortable world came crashing down when a militant communist regime, the Khmer Rouge, seized control of the country in 1975. Under the extremist policies of Pol Pot and his supporters, many of Cambodia's most affluent, intellectual and artistic citizens were summarily executed. The middle class city dwellers of Phnom Penh,

including the Ung family, were evicted to the Cambodian countryside at gunpoint and organized into forced-labor "reeducation camps." An estimated 1.7 million people died in the four years that followed, including both of Loung's parents and two of her three sisters.

The adage, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger," couldn't have been more true with regard to Loung. Fearless and aggressive from the traumas of war, she was selected for training as a child-soldier under the Khmer Rouge. At the age of nine she successfully defended herself against an attempted rape by a full-grown male soldier. At age 10 she fled to Thailand with her oldest brother, Meng, riding out of Cambodia on the back of his bicycle. They subsequently moved to the United States, along with Meng's wife, to begin a new life with an entirely new set of challenges.

Not only did she need to learn English, Loung had to un-learn the killer instincts that kept her alive in a war zone. In America, she struggled with depression, as well as the recurring nightmare of being chased by soldiers who wanted to rape and kill her. As a teenager, she found that she could escape, even if only for a little while, on her bicycle. In her memoirs she writes:

My mind full of Cambodia, I race down the hill with my ponytail flicking back and forth like a tail as I bounce over the gravel and potholes. Faster and faster I pedal on the expanded country road and ride my bike forward into the future. In front of me, the horizon looks bright with opportunities, possibilities and hope.

Loung's future certainly was bright. In high school, she began writing down her memories of Cambodia, which would eventually form the basis of her first book, *First They Killed My Father*. Her teachers marveled at these essays, and encouraged her to pursue college despite the financial challenge it would be for her refugee family. As fate would have it, she was awarded a full scholarship and graduated college with a strong sense of purpose. Although she had the desire to work in a field that dealt with war, genocide and hunger, these issues brought back memories that made it impossible to focus. Instead, she took a job working to help victims of domestic abuse. But her life's calling was yet to be discovered.

In 1995, Loung finally returned to visit her family in Cambodia. Fifteen years after saying a heart-wrenching goodbye to her sister, Chou, the two reunited in the Phnom Penh airport. As they walked out of the airport, Loung was deeply affected by the scene she was confronted with. Crowds of amputees lined the walkways, begging for money. Chou explained, "Land mine victims, many of them here."

Despite the fact that the Khmer Rouge was no longer in power, the Cambodian countryside was still riddled with hidden explosive devices. And so even though the nation was in the midst of rebuilding, its people were still suffering the horrors of war. In her second book, *Lucky Child*, Loung recounts a story of one such incident, related by her sister:

From her tree, Chou sees the man lying on the ground in a storm of red dust. With a dazed look, he props himself on his knees, tentatively stands on one leg, and lifts up his bike. Slowly, he pushes his bicycle forward and hops the rest of the way into the village market. A chill runs down Chou's spine when the man passes, his face smeared with blood, his eyes big like crabs, and his dark shirt wet with brushes and twigs stuck all over it. As he passes Chou, his left leg pushes him

on while his right leg drags in the dirt, dripping thick streams of blood as it goes. Chou suppresses a scream when she sees that his right leg is shredded and hanging by the skin to its stump, his foot only bits of charred skin and melting flesh. When he passes the crowd, his face is ashen but calm. Then abruptly, he falls to the ground; his body convulses for a few minutes and then is still.

Upon returning to the United States, Loung joined the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and served as a spokesperson for their International Campaign to Ban Landmines. The Nobel Peace Prize winning organization has provided more than 15,000 victims with prostheses and rehabilitation services.

Loung's speeches have moved thousands of people, and her notoriety has grown beyond her wildest dreams. She's signed an autograph for Salman Rushdie, shared a stage with Paul McCartney, dined with Queen Noor of Jordan, conducted a fundraiser with Clint Eastwood and traveled around Cambodia with Angelina Jolie.

Despite her prominent status as a best-selling author and a sought-after professional lecturer, Loung remains quite grounded. She loves cold beer and authentic Chinese food, and spends her free time enjoying the outdoors. She lives just outside of Cleveland, where she and her husband co-own a trio of hip Ohio City restaurants. And as you might suspect, Loung loves riding in the city:

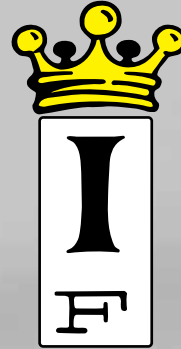
I love my bikes, all five of them—two mountain, two road, one tandem. Bikes have pretty much always been in my life. Living in Vermont and Maine, bikes were the best way to see and feel the natural beauty of those states. And in DC they're the best way to get around the city. I didn't own a car for my six years in DC. As a rule, I always had my bike, and one to spare for friends and visitors to ride with me. By the time I left DC, they were all stolen.

Loung says that her Southeast Asian upbringing precludes her from comfortably riding bikes in the harsh Cleveland winters, but throughout the rest of the year, she's an enthusiastic cyclist:

My husband and I have never been competitive riders. Rather, we ride for a healthier life, community, grace, and beauty. We take our bikes to the movies, parties, dinners, shopping and the beach. No worries about parking, guilt over that extra plate of dim sum, or of life moving too fast. And yes, there is grace and beauty on a bike, because there is nothing like that long, lingering view of red fall leaves or baby green spring buds as you slowly pass by. Beauty. Grace.

Loung is currently working on her third non-fiction book, the story of her mother. Not surprisingly, Ay Chourng Ung delighted in riding bicycles, too.





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ANNUAL ADVOCACY AWARDS

By Carolyn Szczepanski



Living car-free in Washington DC, I savor my early morning commute on nearly empty streets and love whipping home from the bar in the quiet hum of the streetlights. But even in those moments of solitude, I'm part of a movement of millions.

Everyone knows that local bicycle advocacy leaders play a critical role in making cycling better, whether you ride to get away from it all or to be part of a social circle. Even if you're not involved, you're reaping the benefits of improved infrastructure, more bike-friendly laws and heightened awareness of your rights to the roads.

To shine the spotlight on just a sliver of local advocacy groups' work, the Alliance for Biking & Walking recognizes the most prominent leaders and impressive accomplishments with our annual Advocacy Awards. During the National Bike Summit, we threw a party and raised a glass to organizations and leaders that made a particular impact in 2010. Below are three of the award winners.

Winning Campaign of the Year Michigan Complete Streets Coalition

Michigan has spent the past century focused on all things automotive. The advocates at the League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB) threw that trend in reverse in by gearing up the movement for complete streets. Complete streets is common sense for cyclists but a revolutionary idea for many engineers—roads should be designed for cars, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users alike. At the start of 2010, Michigan had just one local complete streets ordinance; by the end of the year there were more than 20 thanks in large part to the Michigan Complete Streets Coalition. The LMB grew the coalition to 105 organizations, building partnerships in the health, transit, environmental, engineering, and disability sectors to name a few. Even politicians couldn't ignore the voice for safer, more accessible streets as the legislature passed a statewide complete streets bill in just four months.



Best Practices

Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition



Those of us in the advocacy world talk about building a more inclusive movement, but often it's just that—talk. The Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition is taking action. In 2010, their City of Lights campaign raised the profile of “invisible cyclists” and sparked national media coverage and conversation. At first, the initiative was literal, providing lights to riders who didn't have them. But the title grew to mean much more as the effort engaged men and women who ride but whose voices aren't heard because of language, economic barriers or immigration status. Through true collaboration, the LACBC partnered with day laborers and neighborhood residents to elevate the needs of those who rely on bikes for daily transportation. Now, with the help and determination of the LACBC, those invisible cyclists have a public profile at city hearings and urban planning sessions.

Advocacy Organization of the Year Bike Pittsburgh



The streets of Pittsburgh are steep and twisting, and the winters are long and brutal. So why is bicycle mode share up? Why was the city designated a Bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community last year? Bike Pittsburgh. The advocates at BikePGH have worked with government officials to get new infrastructure on the ground and partnered with the local companies to get the business community on board, but BikePGH excels at more than basic organizing. The members of their small staff are ambassadors for the movement—friendly, energetic and welcoming. By extension, they're building a community that exemplifies those same characteristics. Just one example? This past winter, two feet of snow pummeled the city, blanketing a popular bicycle/pedestrian bridge. When the city didn't step up, the cyclists stepped in, organizing a work party that cleared the bridge in a matter of hours.

Visit www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/awards for more information and to read about the entire class of 2010 award winners.



Suicide Fixed Cog

By Brad Quartuccio



Picture above is a fixed cog installed on a hub with freewheel threading, using a bottom bracket locking. This looks similar to a proper setup, but mechanically it's risky business.

Even with the widespread availability of track hubs with proper reverse thread lockrings, there are still people out there running what those in the know refer to as a suicide fixed cog—a fixed cog secured on standard freewheel threads with a bottom bracket locking. If the name didn't give it away, a suicide cog is not a good idea. While countless people have managed to successfully run such a setup without catastrophic failure, plenty of others have spun the cog off of the hub at just the wrong time, risking life and limb all to save less than a hundred dollars.


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Freewheel

One side benefit of standardization is that parts that should not ever fit together sometimes do. Most readily available bicycles conform to ISO standards, with fixed cogs, single- and multispeed freewheels, and left hand bottom bracket cups sharing the same 1.37/1.375 in x 24 tpi threading. This means that fixed cogs and old-school bottom bracket lockrings thread onto freewheel hub threads, making for a tempting combination for the cash strapped who want to go fixed. Older, multispeed freewheel hubs and complete wheels are a dime a dozen, and they are easily respaced for a single speed drivetrain. It's not a far leap to notice that a fixed cog and bottom bracket lockring fit, and at first glance even go together snug. There you have a suicide hub, and mechanically a terrible idea.

Traditional track hubs feature right hand cog threading and a stepped, smaller diameter left hand thread lockring (1.29 in x 29 tpi ISO, 1.32 in x 24 tpi Italian). This configuration ensures that, installed properly, the fixed cog does not come loose with the force of backpedaling, as friction between the faces of the cog and lockring forces the lockring tighter as the cog unthreads. In a suicide setup with

a right hand thread bottom bracket lockring and standard freewheel threads, backpedaling forces both the cog and lockring loose. Some swear it works, and I'd be a liar if I didn't admit my own experiments in the realm, but a fixed cog without a reverse thread lockring is just a bad idea and absolutely not recommended. Even with thread locking compound or epoxy holding it in place, you're just asking for it to unthread just when you need it to hold tight.

If you're on the market for used bikes via swaps or Craigslist for yourself or friends, you should be on the lookout for suicide fixed conversions of older road bikes. They're fairly common amongst those flipping bikes for a profit, and are definitely a mechanical risk that one should not take lightly. Respaced single speed conversions are completely legit, and hubs with proper stepped fixed cog and lockring threading are common enough that there is no reason to settle for anything else if you're going fixed. Even if you are so far successfully already running a suicide setup you should stop and switch—the retail and used market is saturated enough that the safe and correct hub is only a few dollars away.





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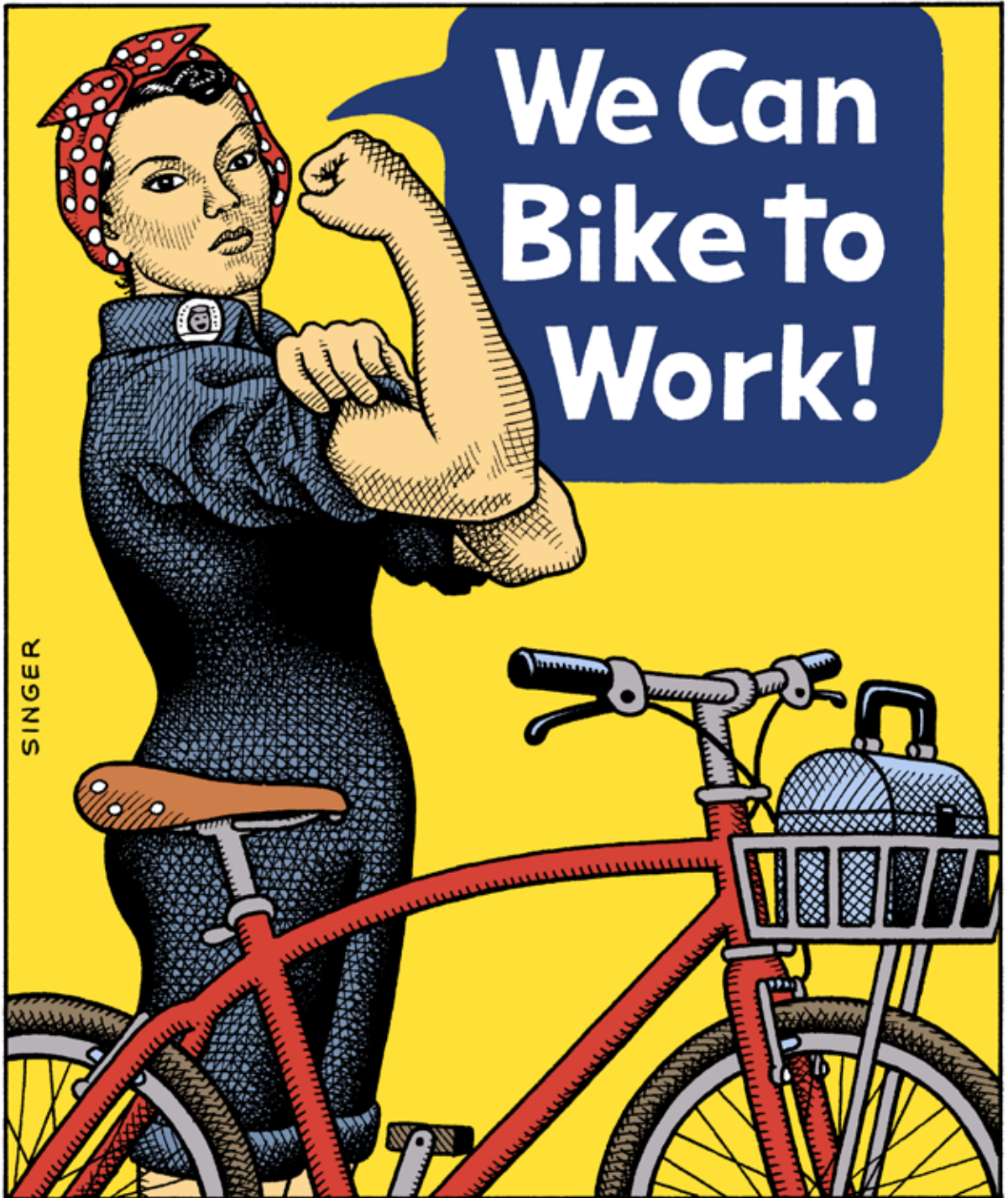
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