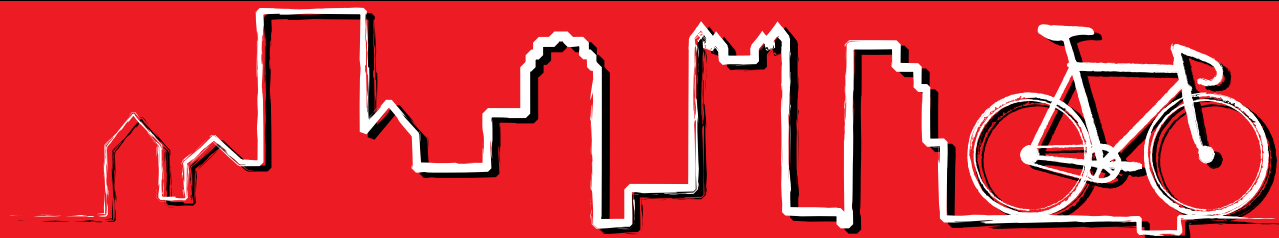


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# URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #12 • March 2009





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# URBAN VELO

Issue #12

March 2009



**Brad Quartuccio**

Editor

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**Jeff Guerrero**

Publisher

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**Co-conspirators:** Carl Buchanan, T. Scott Carlisle, Andy White, Evan Farrar, Ed Glazar, Luke Seemann, Brenton Salo, Roger Lootine, K. Bellon, David Hoffman, Ted King-Smith, Scott Mullen and Andy Singer

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Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh PA 15224

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

Urban Velo is published bi-monthly. That's six times per year, on the odd months. Issues are available for free download as they become available. Print copies are available online and at select bicycle retailers and coffee shops.

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Urban Velo #2 cover photo by Johnny Tarr

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On the cover: Julie Benedetto at the 2008 Bicycle Film Festival in New York, NY. Photo by Brad Quartuccio

Contents: Fans in the Bloomfield neighborhood of Pittsburgh celebrate the Steelers' record setting sixth Superbowl win. Photo by Brad Quartuccio


# Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



In this issue we've invited back some of our contributors from the previous few for another round. Urban Velo #11's cover photographer Brenton Salo is back with his camera in hand, this time featured in our gallery showing off his Portland, OR home. Across the globe, Australian Andy White tells his simultaneously nightmarish and miraculous tale of why he should be dead in *Pain in the Neck*. Evan Farrar and Ed Glazar each contributed to our *Roller Racing* state of the nation report, reprising their

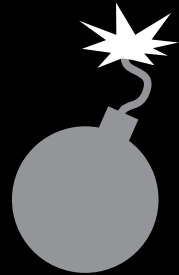
writing and photography roles. It's an all-star cast that I'm proud to feature.

As we finish this issue, we are days away from another road trip and a change of scenery from the production grind. It was on a trip just about two years ago that the idea of Urban Velo was solidified, and it seems appropriate to embark on another as we enter our third year and the first hints of spring '09 begin to show in our part of the world. Go forward, move ahead and give the past the slip. 

We want your words. Send your editorial contributions to [brad@urbanvelo.org](mailto:brad@urbanvelo.org)

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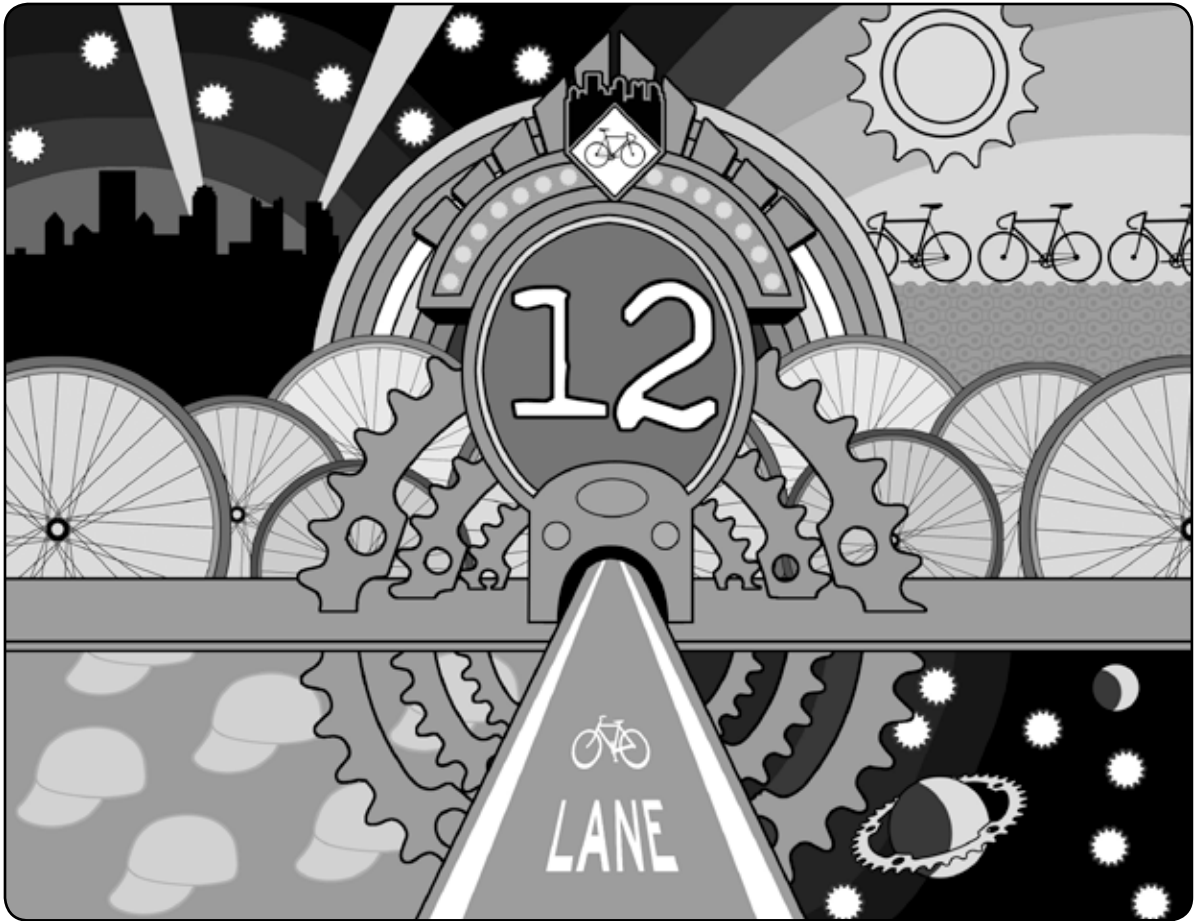


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# Publisher's Statement


By Jeff Guerrero



I promise, at some point in time I'm going to stop writing about how impressed I am at the number of issues we've put out. And I realize a dozen isn't a whole lot in the grand scheme of things. But, for two guys working day jobs it's kind of a big deal. I'm sure a lot of you can understand the kind of effort it takes to be successful at something in your "spare time." Artists, musicians, bike racers, activists—you know what it's like to dedicate your life to your interests, and what a struggle it can be to keep up with work, family, friends and relationships.

Some time ago, one of my illustration teachers gave a lecture about why artists need to play in order to stay

creative. His point was, even if you enjoy what you do, it's human nature to get burned out. This applies to everyone, from craftsmen to scholars, and entertainers to athletes.

During this issue's deadline, Brad and I were definitely feeling the pressure. With the stress of travel and a multitude of day-to-day distractions, it was just about all we could do to put our noses to the grindstone. As fate would have it, Pittsburgh got a weekend of unseasonably warm February weather. Brad had the good sense to suggest we shut the computers down and play bike polo all weekend. Not only did we have fun, I'm certain that blowing off a little steam helped us make a better magazine. 

Urban Velo issue #12, March 2009. Dead tree print run: 5000 copies. Issue #11 online readership: 40,000+



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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Sergio Guerra

**LOCATION:** Porto, Portugal

**OCCUPATION:** Architect

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

I live in Porto in northern Portugal, and there are not many riders here. The old city center has some heavy climbs but 80% of Porto is quite rideable, so I don't see why I don't have more fellow riders.

My biggest complaint is the rough stone pavement that is found in many streets of the city center.

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

Because you get a very liberating feeling, besides it's fast and very practical.

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Jillian Nintze  
**LOCATION:** Pittsburgh, PA  
**OCCUPATION:** Book Jockey

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

I live in Lawrenceville, one of the crazy neighborhoods of Pittsburgh. Exploring the city by bicycle is usually a great experience. I can ride to the river and toast beers to the motorboats, then try to visit a place THOR hasn't yet but somehow their tag appears, it is wild.

On a bike you can find all kinds of hidden parts of the city that most people

don't even know exist. I have friends that have been living in the city a lot longer than me and have no clue about their town.

I believe there are a lot of people who ride bikes that know the city and all of its surprise spots and I think they treasure them as much as I do. At least I hope they do.

I could complain about cars, buses, potholes, and swinging doors but why bother?

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

I don't really have a favorite city to ride. I think Denver, CO is fun, however I have an appreciation for the geography of Pittsburgh. Just when you think your lungs will burst from climbing some hill in the Heights, you reach a nice flat road or you go back downhill, which is equally satisfying.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because it's the only time I feel free. That sounds cheesy but it is true. On my bike I feel more connected to the city and all the people I see, even the ones who yell insults or try to squeeze me off the road with their cars. I believe deep down somewhere in their minds they are wishing they could be out there having an adventure too. How adventurous is it to sit in traffic playing "Mother may I" with the stoplights? Not very.

It's just that having all these cars in the city doesn't make any sense. Bikes make way more sense. That's all.

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

It doesn't matter what kind of bike you ride as long as you ride. Just be sincere and enjoy it while you can.



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# I Love Riding in the City

**NAME:** Josh Novak

**LOCATION:** Fort Collins, CO

**OCCUPATION:** Co-Owner of  
CogNation Clothing

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

I live in Fort Collins, CO. Riding in Fort Collins is a dream come true. The city has done a great job making it the most bicycle friendly town in Colorado. The motorists are aware and respectful, for the most part. Just look out for the CSU bike cops and their knobby tires... they are weiners.

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

My (other) favorite city to ride in is Denver, CO. Downtown is always full of life, and traffic. It is exciting to get in the mix with the cars. Bikes are faster, and parking is free.

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

Riding in the city keeps me alert. It is necessary to read lights, cars and people to ride effectively. Finding the flow. Riding in the city is fast, pure.

## **Poetry anyone?**

riding in the city  
riding with the cars  
don't need a taxi  
to get home from the bars

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Gary Gingras  
**LOCATION:** Boulder, CO  
**OCCUPATION:** Community Cycles Shop Director

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

I live in very sunny and not ethnically diverse Boulder, CO. Many \$5000+ bikes riding around the city and hills. If those same folks would ride the bike to work I might be impressed. Otherwise great bike paths and amazing routes to avoid traffic. Yet we have plenty that are still afraid to ride?

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

Boston, Boston, Boston. Driving two miles will take you two hours, riding to the same location 6 minutes! Amazing fun streets to ravage by bike. Getting to see so much buzzing around a city on bike is just the best way to appreciate things around you. The most beautiful ride which I miss dearly; 30 miles round trip to Walden Pond for a nice soak. Get out past the 95-belt and there are the beautiful roads of Concord, MA.

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

Being on a bike in a city is powerful, everyone in a car will get to their destination slower with slower wits about them. Riding is invigorating, reviving and very awakening. Ride seven miles to work in Boston and tell me you're not ready for the day! Riding in the city keeps you live and alert—why pay for gas. The saying goes—ride to work—work to live—live to ride.

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

Being part of a non-profit bike shop in Boulder, I get to show people what is possible, The photo shows me pulling 800lbs+ of solar panels to an installation. We try to get people out with trailers, etc. and realize bike power is possible and the way to go.

Check out [www.communitycycles.org](http://www.communitycycles.org)



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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Isaac

**LOCATION:** Johnson City, TN

**OCCUPATION:** In between... bike shop groupie

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

I'm near the quaint downtown of Johnson City, TN. There is very little infrastructure to get around car-free. I've been doing it now for almost four years and am easily "the bike commuter" of the town. The roads aren't friendly. The drivers aren't friendly. Don't get me wrong, there are some good people here, but I've never heard of a small city of 57,000 having so many crashes due to cars and animals and assaults and poor road/street sign/sidewalk/bike lane maintenance... the list goes on. This last year many more people started to ride to get around, and I believe it has made traffic, and potential riders, more aware of how to interact safely. We have discouraging terrain as well as a spread out city layout, and yet I feel more and more like I'm finally not the only one willing to tough it out. The bike boom is hitting here now, and made a huge difference for those of us that were doing this as lone commuters.

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

Knoxville is fun. It just seems that it has so many good elements. Dense sections of town sprinkled in the Smokey Mountains, not all hills, not all flat. You can easily meet other urban riders willing to take it easy, goof off, drink a few beers, and put the hurt on through the pedals at a moments notice. There are easy going group rides as well as grueling alleycats. It's easy to have a vintage steel throw-down one-day and ride a century with your superbike the next. Not really a whole lot else to say 'bout that.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

I think it comes down to personal goals that get tested daily, forming real self-reliance. I loved riding BMX and such as a kid and somehow turned into a couch-potato. I got on the old Schwinn 10-speed and bikes were fun again. "How did I ever forget?" I wondered. The more you're out there, the stronger you get physically and mentally. I like to call it "two wheel zen." It takes much of the other bullshit we rely on out of the picture and things become more "human." Things get "real." A nasty crash put me in the hospital with broken bones and a collapsed lung, not to mention a bruised ego. I came back stronger than ever. It has been tough, but the lessons I learn on the bike are why I love riding. I know what's at stake every time I make a move now. I learned how to do this right. Through the attraction of fun I have been forced to become self-reliant. Through self-reliance the bike has made me into a strong man. It's a beautiful relationship.

## Poetry anyone?

I change my own tube  
I dial my brakes and overhaul bearings  
I smell like fresh lube

Back when I was twelve  
I wore baggy pants; spandex was lame  
And look at me now

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Kevin Menard

**LOCATION:** Bellingham, WA

**OCCUPATION:** Owner of Traitor Cycles

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

Bellingham is probably the best town in Washington to live if you love the outdoors. Amazing back roads for road riding, fairly calm drivers that rarely get road rage and great bike culture that is growing every year. We are starting to get a great alleycat scene as well, with my favorite being an ode to "The Big Lebowski" called The Theodore Donald Karabotsos Memorial Alleycat. The White Russians were flowing like water.

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

Hands down Portland, OR is my favorite city to ride in. I am a Seattle native and I love riding in Seattle as well, but Portland is way more bike friendly and easy to get around.

Plus the sheer number of other cyclists on the roads just makes you feel good. From the second you get to Portland you know it is a bike town.

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

Riding in city traffic almost feels like a sporting event to me. Bombing down 4th Avenue in Seattle to make all the lights and dodging cars is a feeling you can't get on your bike unless you ride in a crowded city. There is also just something special about the feeling you get passing cars that are stuck in traffic.

Check out [www.traitorcycles.com](http://www.traitorcycles.com)



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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Patrick Lee

**LOCATION:** Flushing Queens, NY

**OCCUPATION:** Paralegal

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

I live in Flushing, Queens. Land of the utilitarian bicycle and the Kissena velodrome. Riding around the neighborhood you will only find your old Chinese men and delivery people on bicycles. It's a nice, relatively short 14 mile commute to downtown Manhattan, and the riding is fairly smooth. The traffic is usually respectful, due to the lack of bicycle riders, and it is a nice calm place to have a bicycle.

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

Manhattan, because it's exhilarating riding through traffic. It's like playing paperboy in real life, on crack.

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

Stress relief, going faster than cars, traffic doesn't affect you, you can get away from the overcrowded trains, tight knit riding community.

## **Poetry anyone?**

Riding in New York

Requires Concentration

To survive the fray.

**NAME:** Christ Borg

**LOCATION:** Birkirkara, Malta

**OCCUPATION:** Teacher

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

I live in Birkirkara in Malta and I love riding in the city for many reasons; first of all it is faster than in a car and for the fun and healthy aspects of it. Also I love how much I am awake in the morning after a commute.

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

The Sliema seafront, because it is extremely relaxing to ride on the front with the sound of the sea and the force of the wind trying to stop you.

## **Why do you love riding in the city?**

Faster than cars, no parking problems.

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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Cort Percer

**LOCATION:** Memphis, TN

**OCCUPATION:** Bike Shop Employee, Fit Technician, Alleycat Organizer, DJ, etc...

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

I live in the heart of Memphis; all points worth visiting are within 10 miles and the dedicated can ride year round.

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

New Orleans. Tight streets in the Quarter make car traffic extremely slow so it's very easy to go fast or cruise along. Shout outs to Paul, Russell and Daniel!

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

Adrenaline, endorphins, that warm feeling you get when you're stopped at a red light and you glance back and the person behind you gives a thumbs up because they wish they were right there with you.

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

Thanks to all of the out-of-towners who've supported our rides.





 German Innovation

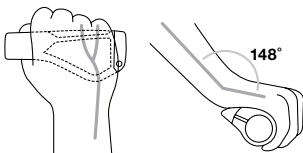
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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Richard Wezensky  
**LOCATION:** Richardson, TX  
**OCCUPATION:** Art Director

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

I live in Richardson, TX, a small suburban city just north of Dallas. Unfortunately, the roads around here aren't as bike friendly as I would like them to be. There are a few bike trails, but the routes are limited and sharing the street is a must. Most of the side streets are nice, and if you know your way around, can get you anywhere in town. I usually stay away from the main roads because there are way too many soccer moms and their Texas sized SUVs tearing down the road.

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

I loved riding around Austin, TX when I was going to school. As anybody who has lived in Austin knows, the culture and vibe are, or were at the time, very earth and bike friendly.

It's also a college town, which tends to bring out more riders. This is something you don't get much of in Richardson—unless you join one of the local store's group rides. I wouldn't mind seeing more riders around town.

## Why do you love riding in the city?

I just love the notion of just getting out and exploring the area around me. It is something you don't get to do when you drive. I've discovered many cool things on my weekend commutes and I hope to find more.

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

I like to call the type of riding I do Suburban Assault.

It's sort of the grass roots nature of riding just to ride. No categories. No classifications. Just two wheels, two pedals and a love for riding.

I'm not about being specific as to how I ride. I'm not about speed, distance or endurance. I'm not about being rugged, extreme or hard core. I'm not about expensive or tricked out bikes.

I'm about riding—whatever, whenever and wherever I can.

I ride on the streets, sidewalks, parking lots and greenbelts. No matter what my route is, I love to get out and ride.

I also obey the traffic laws and yield to pedestrians.

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# I Love Riding in the City



## WE WANT YOU TO CONTRIBUTE

Do you love riding in the city?

Can you answer a few simple questions and find someone to take your photo?

We want you to represent your hometown.

**NAME:**

**LOCATION:**

**OCCUPATION:**

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

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

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

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

Email your responses to [jeff@urbanvelo.org](mailto:jeff@urbanvelo.org)



*The photo above was taken on 2006, January 27, when a big (for Milan, at least) snowfall of about 60 cm completely paralyzed the city. It took me about 30 minutes, but arrived in time...*

**NAME:** Maurizio

**LOCATION:** Milan, Italy

**OCCUPATION:** Administrative employee

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

I live 10km north of Milan, Italy. Riding in Milan is dangerous and the streets are hideous. There are very few cycle tracks, and they often have cars on them; but it's extremely funny.

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

Other Italian cities are more beautiful, but Milan has some very nice places. Moreover, it's a way to demonstrate that not only cars are allowed to bring people to work.

**Why do you love riding in the city?**

I go every day in Milan for my job, but when cars are completely stopped in rush hour, it's fantastic to slip among them and leave them behind. It takes me about 20 minutes to go from home to Milan by bike, and about one hour for a car in rush hour!

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at the end of  
the day...



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# I Love Riding in the City



**NAME:** Elisa M

**LOCATION:** Birmingham, AL

**OCCUPATION:** Book Buyer

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

Birmingham has a small, but growing urban riding community. Every day I see more folks on their bikes, which is encouraging. The mild winters are wonderful, but the summers are scorching. Drivers are not very tolerant of us cyclists, so riding is always an adventure! I get lots of looks of "Are you CRAZY?!", but I wouldn't trade it.

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

I have only ever really ridden here, so it is my favorite by default! I would love to ride in some of the more cycling friendly cities like Portland and San Francisco.

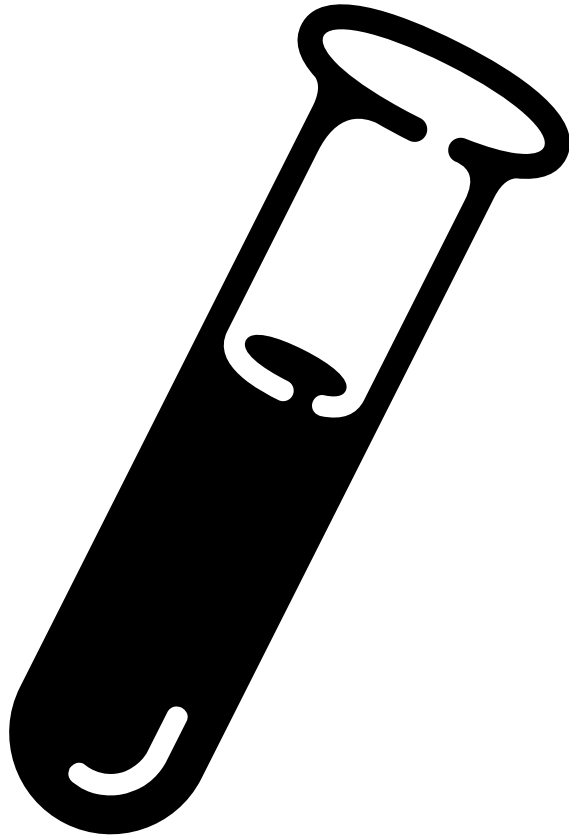
**Why do you love riding in the city?**

I love the relationship you forge with the city when you ride it. My city has moods that I can feel as I ride, something missed from inside a car. Getting somewhere becomes a partnership between you and the roads. It is exciting and fun. People think you are such a badass if you ride, especially at night in a skirt. Plus, not having to wait at every red light is a bonus!

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

There is nothing better than riding a bike. Riding makes me feel like a kid again, and riding in the city makes me feel like that cool kid I always wanted to be. On a bike, traffic becomes a challenge, transportation becomes an adventure... and all of it makes my legs look great!

Check out [bikeskirt.blogspot.com](http://bikeskirt.blogspot.com)




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# PAIN in the NECK

I'm Andy White and  
I should be dead.

by Andy White

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

I can remember leaving the “pain room” after another training session on the rollers and my coach mentioning something about my front wheel being loose. If I had stopped and checked the bearings and quick release I could have avoided the life changing, close to death experience I was put through—but I didn’t and so here it is.

The details of the ride are boring. Glorious day, training ride before track racing that night and I was as fit as I had ever been. I'd done the whole climb faster than ever, in a really big gear. Within the last stretch of the climb after doing it all seated I rose out of the saddle to speed over the last pinch.

That "rise" was my fall. Between heartbeats I had landed on my head, shook my brain and was laying flat on my back. My heart was already racing from the physical effort, but now my mind raced, "I've broken my neck." I knew that moving was a bad idea, but I was alone, on a country back road. Cars come every other hour. I had more chance of being rescued by a mob of kangaroos. I wiggled my toes. "Thank fuck!" They were working. It occurred to me I hadn't broken my neck, but my assumption was VERY poor. I had broken my neck and was millimeters from impinging on my spinal cord. Still lying on the ground I reached into my jersey pocket, pulled out my phone and dialed. No reception.

I looked up at the bright blue sky and clouds floated on by. What to do? I knew moving was a bad idea, but I didn't seem to have an alternative. I slowly picked myself up. I looked at my bike. The front wheel had come out. I put it

back in and walked a mile to the main road where I gingerly sat down. The wind had picked up, the clouds covered the sky and the sweat had cooled on my back. I shivered by the side of the road trying to call home. In my time between calls I tried to move my neck. I can't believe that I would do such a stupid act. My neck was so stiff that I couldn't move it at all. Not up, not down and not side to side.

What seemed like an hour later, a pack of cyclists found me and asked if I needed help. I didn't want the drama of an ambulance so I asked them to call my parents from the bottom of the mountain and collect me.

After an actual hour I saw the folks turn up and I got into the car. Between the bickering of what hospital they should take me to I said, "I'll go home, have a bath and relax. I'm fine."

Well, I had that bath, got changed and after calling my wife, went to the doctor, then the radiologist, then the emergency department of the hospital. I could remember the click of heels of my wife approaching but I couldn't turn to see her. We saw the triage nurse and handed over my x-ray as I said, "They told me I should come here for observation."

Some four hours after my accident now, the nurse



pulled out the x-ray and turned to the doctor. Then she turned to me. "Don't move." I started to nod and she said, "Don't even shake your head." Seconds later I was strapped to a board and all I could hear was nurses conversing, "... the radiologist sent him here like that, he walked in. I can't fucking believe it."

I knew this was serious now.

It was a blurry night but I can vividly recall the surgeon hovering above me after having MRI and CAT scans performed. The surgeon started with the details. Fractured C1, the life and death bone, broken C5 and C6 spinous process. He added "I just got out of surgery and the guy before you is never going to walk again. Same accident. Never again. Looks like you will." I had an eerie feeling creep over me, as if he was conveying, "Why should you be so lucky?" Why?

The next morning I woke up and my head was in a halo. A halo is a vice – 4 titanium bolts drilled into the first layer of bone, attached to a brace that covered my chest and back. My greatest piece of luck was that no surgery was required. When they said I'd have this for 3 months it felt like that would be an eternity, but I would have worn it for a year if that meant I could walk. Pain, though it existed,

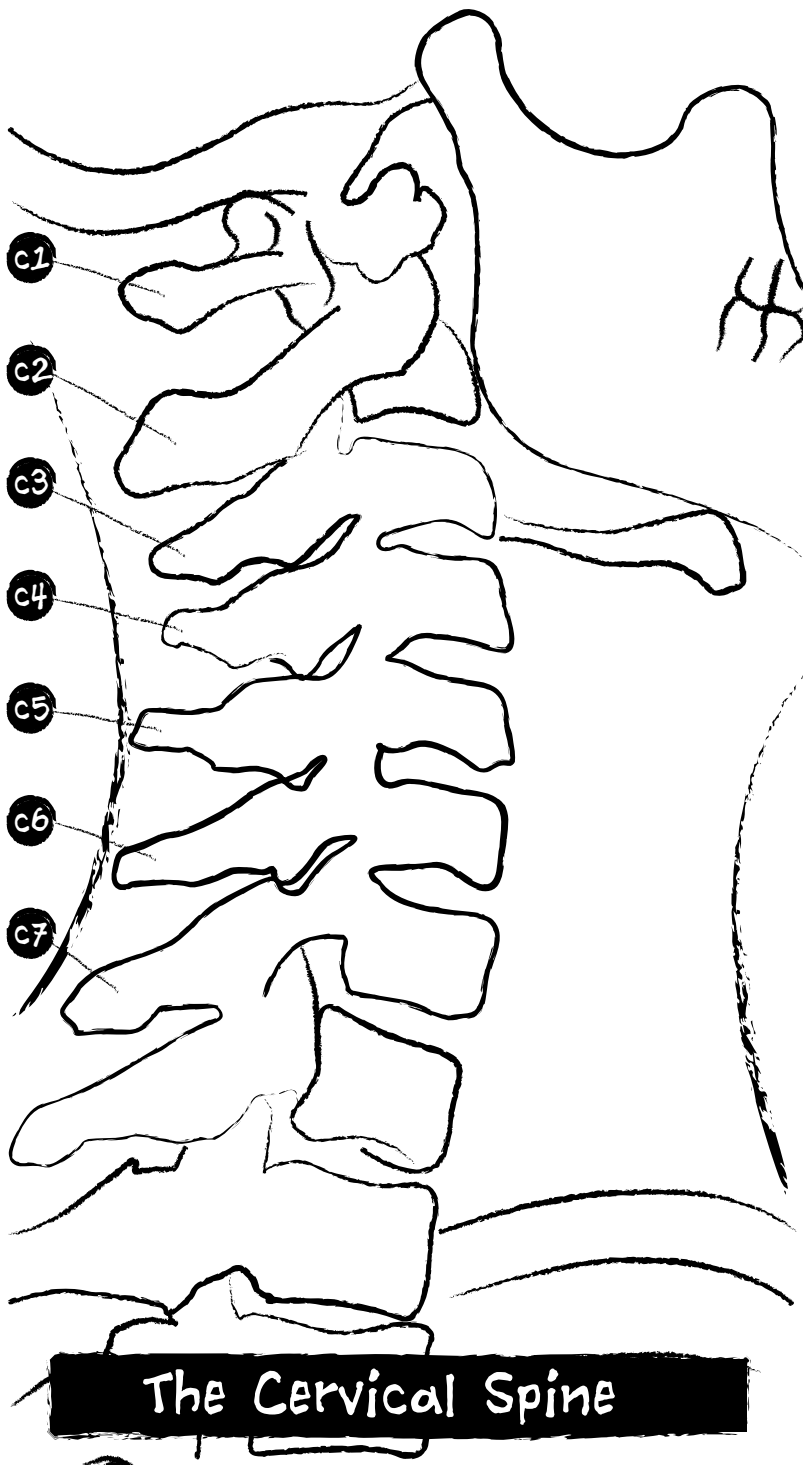
was feeble compared to the possible anguish of having my legs taken away.

I don't think I was as scared of not walking as I was of being a burden on my wife. I knew events like this change not only the person involved, but the family just as much and I don't think I could have handled being the lead weight slowing her down.

The halo hurt, it was uncomfortable, it scared kids at the supermarket, I couldn't drive or ride, I had to cut up clothes to fit over it, sleeping was a pain in the arse, but all that was fine. When I knocked one of the support rods on a door late at night and dislodged the bolts I cried. Like a little kid. I cried because I was scared for the first time. I'd come so close to death and had literally walked away fine and now by feeding the cat I had once again jeopardized my ability to walk. I spent another week in hospital having it refit.

Time, as it does, flew by. Every two weeks I'd go back to hospital for a shower and a change of wool liner. Those showers were like bliss. For three months I had people, strangers or otherwise telling me how lucky I am. I was exposed and humbled to examples like Stephen Murray, a pro BMX rider who is now a quadriplegic, and their fight





## The Cervical Spine

to resume a “normal” existence. I considered life without my first love and greatest passion. In many ways I see the experience as a gift, opening my eyes to life as it could and even should have been.

My wife says my face went purple, then red, green, then white when they took the halo off. I could feel the bolts unscrewing and knowing that my life support was being taken away made me a little uneasy. They said my neck would feel all floppy but I was surprised at how normal it felt almost immediately. My wife said, “I’m going to ask this, because I know this is what he is thinking. When can he ride again?” A week later I was back on the bike, 6 weeks later I rode 400kms in 2 days with friends who were riding from Sydney to Melbourne. I was healed.

I may be physically healed, but mentally I’m more cautious, even if only by my own standards, more emotional. I’m constantly challenged by the why. I see others in wheelchairs and cannot grasp not being able to use my legs. Why them? Why after all the insane splits I’ve performed on a bike at work or in races around the world, it was on a quiet country road at 27km that I nearly cripple myself. Why? I don’t have an answer, but I am eternally grateful.

A good friend says there is nothing like a reformed smoker to preach a message. A mate of mine heard someone say “check your quick releases or you’ll do an Andy White”—but that is not my message. It is wear a helmet. I have no doubt that helmet saved my life and if not from spinal damage, from brain damage. That helmet was the best money I have ever spent.

...and check your quick releases. 



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Goldprints NYC. Photo by Ed Glazar, [www.tedwardglazarphotography.com](http://www.tedwardglazarphotography.com)

# ROLLER RACING

A State of the Nation Report by Evan Farrar

[www.opensprints.org](http://www.opensprints.org)

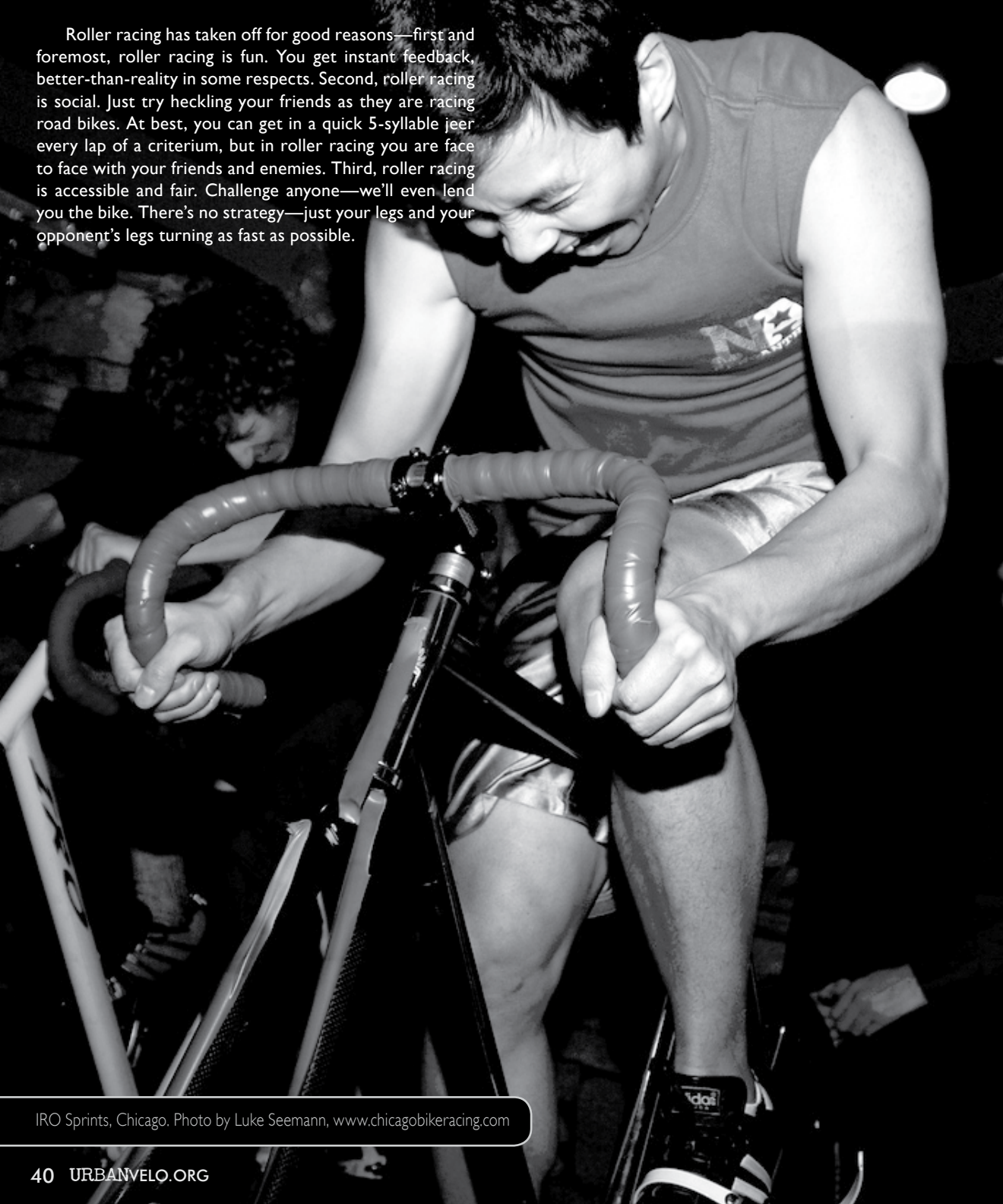


Roller racing is spreading. Fast. In the past three years I went from having vague knowledge of one stationary bike racing setup, to seeing it live in a second city, to building one myself, to hearing about and helping others build their own nearly every day...

And today I have a hard time grasping just how many cities in North America and beyond race bikes indoors. I drew up a map as an exercise, and after making thirty little X's I had to stop and take a breath; roller racing isn't a small

time thing anymore that is supported by a few people. It is now to the point that some of the early cities support several setups and sometimes even a real USAC sanctioned roller racing club on top of that. Here in home sweet Chicago I just can't manage to take my rollers everywhere they're requested, so another group has taken the totally free hardware designs and software of OpenSprints and created a second rig to raise funds for their high school track team.

Roller racing has taken off for good reasons—first and foremost, roller racing is fun. You get instant feedback, better-than-reality in some respects. Second, roller racing is social. Just try heckling your friends as they are racing road bikes. At best, you can get in a quick 5-syllable jeer every lap of a criterium, but in roller racing you are face to face with your friends and enemies. Third, roller racing is accessible and fair. Challenge anyone—we'll even lend you the bike. There's no strategy—just your legs and your opponent's legs turning as fast as possible.



IRO Sprints, Chicago. Photo by Luke Seemann, [www.chicagobikeracing.com](http://www.chicagobikeracing.com)



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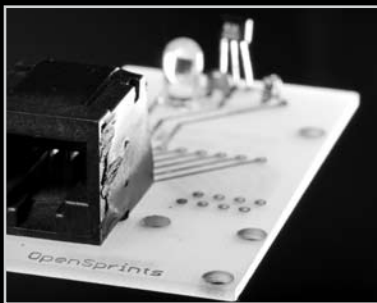
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the  
Bumper  
issue



Black & Gold Sprints, Pittsburgh. Photo by Brad Quartuccio

## DOING IT YOURSELF



It's only a matter of time, but as of this writing there is no commercial roller racing setup available for purchase; each and every racing rig out there is some sort of home-spun job. The work of Evan Farrar and others at [OpenSprints.com](http://OpenSprints.com) makes creating your own timing setup fairly easy through free software and sensor designs that plug into a USB port,

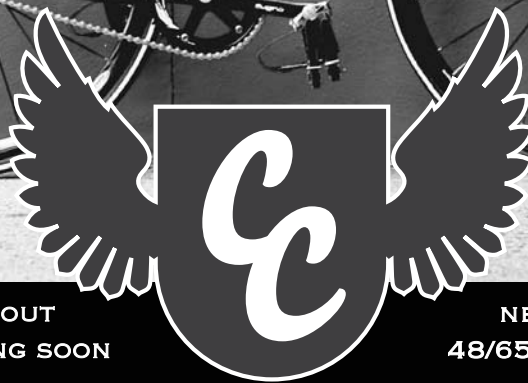
with printed circuit boards available to make the soldering side of things that much easier. With a pair of rollers, a bit of patience and the help of a nerdy friend, Goldsprints are well within reach.

The spread of this phenomenon, as far as I can figure, went like this: New York and Toronto have been doing sprints since before I knew about them, probably since shortly after seeing it at the '99 Cycle Messenger World Championships in Zurich where the "Goldsprints" label was coined. A few other cities ran on the same basic hardware, including San Francisco's west coast interpretation. I first saw Toronto's equipment in '06 at Heaven Gallery in Chicago. The bug bit me, and eight months later I was helping to raise money for Chicago's ultimately successful '08 North American Cycle Courier Championship bid. Almost one year later, I traveled to the Bicycle Film Festival in Minneapolis where Landon, a pro-

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# ROLLER RACING NORTH AMERICA



2008 CMWC, Toronto. Photo by Brad Quartuccio

You can find roller races happening in these North American cities...and others!

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New Orleans  
New York City  
Pensacola  
Philadelphia  
Phoenix  
Pittsburgh  
Portland  
Salt Lake City  
San Diego  
San Francisco  
Seattle  
St. Louis  
Toronto  
Vancouver



Rapha Races, Portland. Photo by Brad Quartuccio

grammer, and Geno, proprietor of One on One Bicycle Studio, caught the bug as well. In a few months ColdSprints was born. At roughly the same time Luke Orland joined in and made OpenSprints a stable, reproducible system. Before long folks in Bozeman, MT and Cincinnati, OH found our plans and built their own systems without us even knowing about it. Jon in Salt Lake City heard about Chicago's IRO Sprints after seeing the NYC Goldsprints at Interbike, and soon enough he was helping us get more solid marketing and documentation for the OpenSprints platform. Now I can't really think of areas *without* Goldsprints of some kind within reach.

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With all of these locations and people involved across the land, Goldsprints is starting to vary widely, thriving on a do-it-yourself culture of innovation. Minneapolis has retro 80's pixelated Excite-Bike graphics. San Francisco emulates the original big circular dial, but in software. London's Rollapaluzza uses real, honest-to-god 1950's Barelli mechanical dials, but they've augmented them with huge automatic digital stop-watches. And Japan, go figure, is way ahead of anyone else technologically; they've got 40-foot projections and 3D animations. Standards haven't really begun to emerge because I feel like we've only now started to get our head above water—but soon, we'll all start to compare race times city to city by standardizing crank length, wheel size, gear ratio etc. I'm looking forward to the innovations to come as even more cities come online with Goldsprints setups of their own.



Rollapaluzza, London. Photo by Brad Quartuccio



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Jonny Burger  
Northeast Portland



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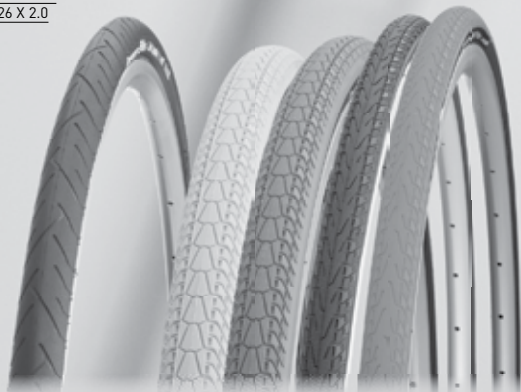
### T-Serv 700C

TIRE SIZES  
700 X 25c  
700 X 28c  
700 X 32c  
700 X 35c



### T-Serv 26"

TIRE SIZES  
26 X 1.25  
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Zach Rodenfels

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Polaroid in the Spokes



Brian Patrick  
Southeast Portland

### About Brenton Salo

Brenton is a photographer from Portland, Oregon. In 2008, he collaborated with Seattle graphic designer Aaron Edge to create the book **Rain City Fix**. Upon publication, they decided to turn the project into a series of books from different cities.

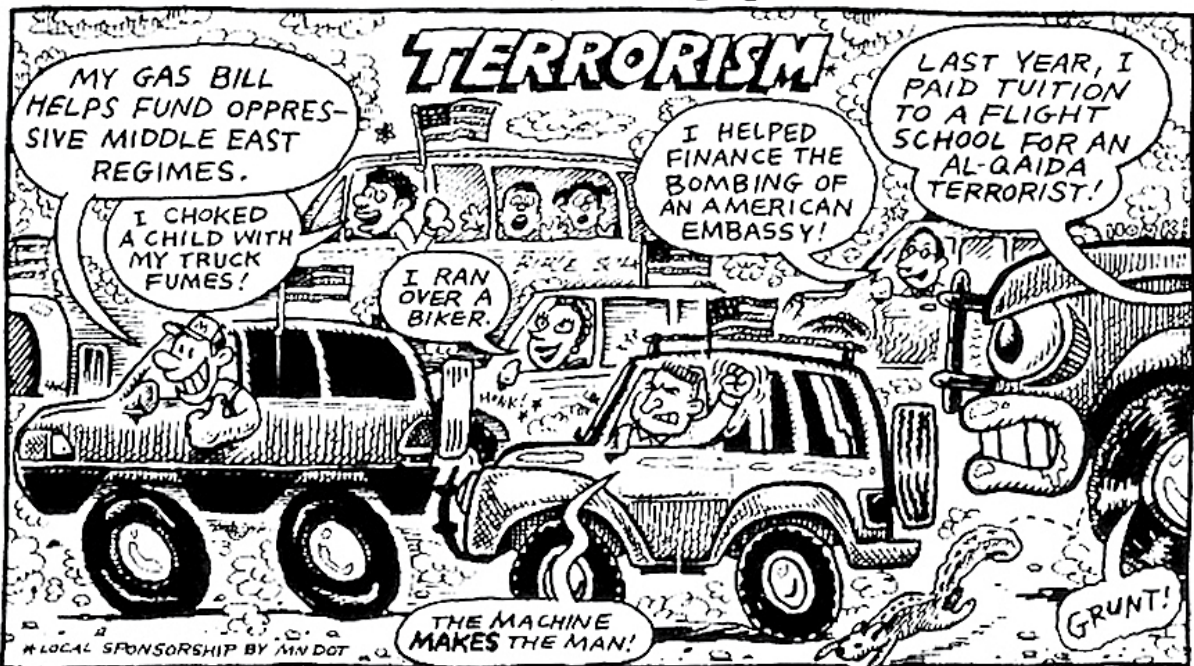
Since Brenton lives in Portland, they decided to do the next book there and call it **Rose City Fix**. Brenton says, "I want it to be as much about Portland as it is about bikes, because you really can't separate the two. I want to display this city as I see it—kind of a mess and obsessed with cycling."

Check out [www.raincityfix.com](http://www.raincityfix.com).



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# Discovering the Bicycle in Bogotá

By K. Bellon

Wide awake at 4:45 a.m., my brother and I lay in bed. He then clicked on the small clock radio as he would in many future July mornings. The hiss-filled, distant sound that came through the single speaker in the radio instantly transformed the room we shared in our family home in Bogotá, Colombia. It was 1984, and the first stage of the Tour de France that year would be starting soon. I distinctly remember closing my eyes during those July mornings as I pictured every climb, and every descent, as the Colombian reporters who traveled by motorcycle described the agony and pain I would come to associate with the sport of cycling.

Cycling had long been part of the Colombian zeitgeist, but it was not until that summer that my brother and I truly discovered it. We had already heard tales about the great Colombian legends of the sport, but that July things changed for us and we became truly immersed in cycling for the first time. Bogotá being what it was during the '80s, my family always found itself living in gated city blocks with one or two armed guards standing watch. To be fair, these "armed guards," were little more than kind men from rural regions of Colombia who, in retrospect, were possibly still in their teens. Along with their flimsy, nearly homemade .22- caliber rifles, every guard fastened a small transistor radio around his arm, in which he listened to all cycling events with a religious fervor unknown even to the most fanatical Colombian Catholic. From these guards, whom my brother and I always befriended, we heard tales of the great "Zipa" (Efraín Forero), winner of the inaugural "Vuelta De Colombia," as well as Martín Emilio Rodríguez, known throughout Colombia simply as "Cochise." Cochise was perhaps the most talked about name in cycling at that time, though his achievements all seemed distant to us since they had mostly occurred in the 1960s and '70s.

Cochise also raced in Europe at a time when transatlantic travel was rare for Colombians. He had managed to win stages at the Giro d'Italia, had held the world hour record and had even partnered with Felice Gimondi for time trial events in Italy. This was an amazing feat for any cyclist, particularly one from such a small, distant country such as ours. These individuals along with the following generations of Colombian cyclists had personalities and life stories as colorful as their uniforms. They were glorious and tragic all at once, not unlike most characters in Colombian history. Perhaps it was their life stories which Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez (once a cycling newspaper reporter) invoked during his Nobel Prize lecture in 1982. Márquez had to ask very little of his imagination due to being surrounded by such complex personalities and situations, as well as the difficulties of communicating these realities to those in wealthier nations. He stated that a Colombian's reality is "...a reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that nourishes a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty ... Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable. This, my friends, is the crux of our solitude."

As great as these accomplishments seemed, they were unimportant to my young, 5-year-old mind. To me, the only cyclist who mattered was Lucho Herrera, the young Colombian farmer who would be racing in the Tour de France that year. For a country in the grips of an ongoing civil war, which, by the mid-'80s, was greatly aggravated by narco-traffickers and their destructive streak, sports had always served as a distractive passion, the likes

of which I have never experienced again anywhere in the world. Our religious devotion to cycling was part of a shared consciousness, for better or worse helped bring all Colombians together. To be perfectly honest, the only time I experienced a similar sense of a shared consciousness after having left Colombia was in the months that came after September 11 in the United States. It's with that level of intensity and focus that nearly all Colombians could be united. Perhaps they were seeking an escape from the deadly realities of our daily lives by cycling. Forever the underdogs, the mere idea of ours reaching notoriety on the world stage—in any sport—could transform the entire nation and its mood.

That year, with an extremely limited budget, the Varta team ventured to France. Their team cars were partially staffed by the riders' mothers, who prepared "agua de panela" (boiled water with brown sugar) for their sons to drink as they pedaled away through the French countryside. To say that the riders came from modest means would be an understatement, especially by American and European standards, and the same could be said for the teams for which they raced. It was with these hardships in mind that Colombians like my brother and I were brought to tears that year, when Lucho Herrera won the famed Alpe d'Huez stage in the Tour. The entire country erupted in celebration, and thousands lined the streets near Bogotá's airport to greet our national hero upon his return. I recently found footage of Lucho Herrera's stage win on YouTube. After watching mere seconds of the video, I instantly teared up all over again as I was overcome with emotion. Like so many other moments in Colombian cycling, that victory too is forever intertwined with painful and violent events in our country's history.

Only months after the stage victory in one of France's most famed ascents the country was still deep in a joyful trance over the victory including me and my brother. On a seemingly normal Wednesday afternoon that year, M-19 guerrillas took over Colombia's Palace Of Justice in Bogotá holding nearly 300 hostage and eventually killing 11 magistrates of the Supreme Court (much like a member of the United State's Supreme Court) as well as administrative assistants and day laborers. After days of gunfire exchanges with the Colombian army, millions of Colombians watched in horror as the Palace Of Justice burned down on national television. Colombia awoke from its cycling-induced trance. Seven days after the violent disaster, the now-stunned Colombian population was struck by disaster yet again.

The Nevado del Ruiz, located in the Caldas Department, had not erupted since the 1800's, but it suddenly

woke from its slumber. With the heat generated by its sudden explosion, its snow-covered peak melted, creating a massive mudslide that went on to kill over 23,000 in the town of Armero below. During the seven days between these two monumental events, the Colombian track racer Ephraim Rodriguez managed to set three track cycling world records. Those few months, with their extreme highs and lows are a grim but fair reflection of Colombia's reality for much of that decade. As the Colombian population suffered through one hardship or another, cycling (and eventually soccer) would always inexplicably manage to raise the entire country's spirits. For all the misery that exists in Colombia, its residents have always been an incredibly joyous people, managing to find happiness in the most unlikely places. This has made Colombia one of the happiest places on earth, according to many studies. It is perhaps for that reason that my visceral response to the video of the Alpe d'Huez victory, as it is for many other Colombians is so profound. My tear-filled reaction speaks volumes about a country that has found extreme joy in the midst of what most would call misery and much of that joy has come from cycling during that era. I firmly believe that had Karl Marx known how seriously Colombians would take sports during the most arduous times in our history, he would not have referred to religion as the "opiate of the masses," but rather to cycling as the "opiate of Colombians." If ever a people desperately needed something to distract them from the wounds inflicted by violence and injustice in their country, Colombians during that era were surely those people. With all this in mind, it should come as no surprise how a Colombian cyclist answered the question of "was it a tough climb?" after a particularly arduous stage win. His response? "It wasn't hard, I was not alone. I had millions of other Colombians pedaling along with me."

Every afternoon, after listening to that day's Tour stage on the radio, I would venture out to the steep streets of our suburban Bogotá neighborhood to ride the unbelievably ugly purple BMX bike that my parents had so kindly bought second-hand for me and had painted at a local body shop. On Sundays, I would often find myself at the Ciclovía, along with nearly two million other Bogotáños. The Ciclovía is a weekly event in which over 70 miles of Bogotá's major streets are closed to traffic in order to allow cyclists and pedestrians the ability to ride, walk and run through them. It was at the Ciclovía, that many Bogotáños lived out their Tour de France fantasies. Over the years, the Ciclovía has grown to include aerobics in city parks as well as yoga classes attended by hundreds along the routes, and is now a crucial part of the government's



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[raleighusa.com/rushhour](http://raleighusa.com/rushhour)



## Colombian Cycling & Cycling in Bogotá

Short documentary about Bogotá's Ciclovía:  
[www.streetfilms.org/archives/ciclovía/](http://www.streetfilms.org/archives/ciclovía/)

Bogotá as a sustainable, bike friendly city:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=0j3FVPeTwoU&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0j3FVPeTwoU&feature=related)

*Kings of the Mountains: How Colombia's Cycling Heroes Changed Their Nation's History*  
By Matt Rendell

*A Significant Other: Riding the Centenary Tour de France with Lance Armstrong (Victor Hugo Peña)*  
By Matt Rendell

health initiatives, particularly for the city's poor. Still, it is primarily (as its name conveys) a cycling event.

The popular tradition, which began in 1976, has now been duplicated in many major cities worldwide (including New York City last year), and was a major part of our lives growing up in Bogotá. Last year, in an unusual turn of events that could only occur in Colombia, congressman Jose Fernando Castro Caycedo wanted to propose a law to decrease both the hours of the weekly Ciclovía as well as the streets that it occupied. Those who opposed his introduction of the law argued that it was not only part of the city's fabric but also crucial to the health of its inhabitants. As Caycedo, a heavy smoker, was introducing the law to congress at a public hearing, he collapsed due to a hemorrhage and died. As a result, the event lives on and every Sunday Bogotáños can still ride their bicycles across town through its major arteries, much as I did as a child.

Aside from the weekly Ciclovía, Bogotá now also has a yearly "car free day," and miles of bike specific routes wind their way through the city. In an effort to reduce traffic congestion and better the population's health, the city now offers freely staffed bike parking garages in transportation hubs as well as nighttime Ciclovía events. These are all significantly progressive undertakings particularly when one considers that the city has a population of 8.2 million people.

On weekdays I was relegated to our side of town where I would climb 151 Street top to bottom. As I climbed slowly, I pretended to shift gears by placing my hands sternly on the nonexistent shifters on the downtube of my single-speed, Colombian-made, BMX bike. At the top of the hill I would make a right turn, riding by the pharmacy and then the bakery, where I would always begin my sprint to an imaginary finish. I always crossed the imaginary finish line first, no surprise there, arms stretched out in a sign of victory. About a block away from the finish line near the train tracks, a small hill in the grass made for a perfect launch ramp to begin my makeshift time trial stages. While most kids in the United States would have tried to go up and over such a hill on their BMX bike I used it to go down just as I had seen Colombia's riders do during time trials. I can only imagine what I must have looked like as I rode down the steep streets of northern Bogotá in my bike carefully holding my developed aerodynamic position. For these imaginary stages I would tilt my handlebar forward enabling me to hold it much like the bullhorn bars that were beginning to crop up at time trails back then. This being Bogotá, a mountainous city that sits 8,600 feet up in the Andes, I remember having to ride up steep hills in every direction away from our house. This daily riding



# PathFinder

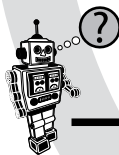
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routine went on for years, and I rode for several hours at a time most days, not simply in our driveway as kids often do but in large loops spanning many city blocks.

Two years ago, I returned to 151 Street in Bogotá and I was surprised to see that it was steeper than I remember. I was impressed that my five-year-old legs could manage the ascent and was amazed by the fact that my parents would let me wander that far away from our house and into such busy streets. It was standing there two years ago on 151 Street in Bogotá, as I was showing my American wife the country, city and neighborhoods where I grew up, that I suddenly remembered the overwhelming love I once had for both my bicycle and the sport of cycling. It suddenly occurred to me that I could recapture that joy, the joy of riding my bike, and perhaps even pretend to win the Alpe d'Huez stage once again. If it was even remotely possible to recapture a small percentage of that joy, my life could be transformed once again. I had to try.

Like so many others my age I stopped riding my bike somewhere around my teens, perhaps discarding it as so many other toys. In my case this was also exacerbated by the fact that my family moved to the United States where cycling was simply not part of the shared consciousness, even if American Greg Lemond managed to win the Tour the very year we moved to this country (1990). Upon moving to the United States it became clear to me that few if any people other than children rode bicycles and that roads seemed rather unsafe for a kid my age to ride on. More importantly, there was no Ciclovía. As a result, there would be no more early mornings for my brother and I to watch much less listen to the Tour. It appeared to me that the connection I had to the sport and my bike came largely as a result of living in Colombia. Once outside that environment a bicycle made little sense.

Nevertheless, last summer I found myself, now in my 30's shopping for a bicycle. I was out to relive memories that better adjusted adults would have managed to let go of during their path to adulthood. As I began to talk to bicycle shop employees, I inevitably told parts of my storied love affair with cycling as a child in Colombia. Understandably, the young employees often looked at me as they would the town fool. And why wouldn't they? As a result of not knowing a single adult who rides a bicycle I began to research bikes and equipment online as well as frequently visit local shops. Upon doing so, I quickly realized that individuals with substantial budgets and attitudes now primarily occupied the sport I once loved. The cycling world, it would appear, had no room for a 30 year old with misguided notions about trying to once again have as much

fun as he did as a kid. My pursuit, however, seemed well worth it so I continued.

With a small budget I first bought a simple three-speed complete bike thinking I should simply replicate the simplicity of my childhood bike. I quickly realized that its gearing was not sufficient for the plentiful hills in this part of the country. Apparently, one gear had been enough for me to tame the Andes as a five-year-old but my aging body and form was not what it once was. After selling my recently purchased bike I quickly upgraded to a new bicycle with an internal 8-speed hub and platform pedals. I quickly found that riding carelessly as I once did for hours is not as easy as it was then. Life has a way of getting complicated and busy over the years, and the freedom and carefree lifestyle I had as a five year old is now a distant memory. This should come as no surprise to anyone but it did to me. Though I managed to ride only about once a week through the spring, summer and fall of last year, I still had brief moments of pure joy that took me back to that earlier time. Riding alone in silence through the local streets and trails, however, also reminded me of how far from home I am and how much I miss my beloved Colombia as well as those simple days in my childhood. Leave it to me to find sadness in what others manage to find great joy in, riding a bicycle. This is a small but persistent character flaw that I've tried to work on over the years and continue to work at nearly everyday. While some say that the glass is half full, others say its half empty. I say there's no glass. It was stolen or someone broke it long ago. Still, owning a bike again made me very happy, even when I was not riding it. I felt like a kid again and would often manage to forget my adult concerns as I found myself riding. What an amazing feat for a small, man-made machine to accomplish.

Today, as the snow falls outside, and a new year rolls forward, I'm in search of a new bicycle that will better suit my riding needs. I'm now craving hills much as I did as a child. I am looking for a bike that if you'll excuse the vapid wording, will work better as a time machine; a time machine that can hopefully transport me to an earlier time of my choosing. Perhaps if I ride hard and long enough I will reach the top of the steepest hills only to find myself back in Bogotá in one of those summer Sundays of 1984. Perhaps I will also learn to finally feel at home in what continues to feel like a foreign country and city to me even though I have lived here for so many years. So if you see a guy in the streets riding in non-cycling attire, sprinting for no reason, and then raising his arms pretending to win a stage at the Tour de France, just ignore him. It will just be me, winning Alpe d'Huez once again.



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## Bicycle Advocacy

# \$TIMULU\$ PACKAGE

Industry Funds Advocates to a Whole New Level

By David Hoffman

### Show Me The Money

One-Mississippi, two-Mississippi.

When I tell people what I do for a living, they usually say two things. “People actually get paid to do that?” And second, “Where do you get money to fund that?” I’ve heard these two questions so many times that I can feel the rhythm between them.

One-Mississippi, two-Mississippi.

I’ve been working as a bicycle advocate since 2002, and by far one of the hardest things about this job is finding the funding that is needed to run and sustain an advocacy organization. Just where does this money come from? Traditionally, bike organizations have relied on membership dues, grants from foundations, and large events (such as a gala fundraiser or bike ride). And like most bike advocates, I desperately clung to the belief that the bicycle industry would be interested in funding advocacy. After all, we reasoned, what better way to sell more bikes than to get more people bicycling? While many people in the industry were sympathetic to our work—thanked us profusely for our work—understood the difficulty in finding funding—encouraged us to keep at it—and had lots of other contacts within industry that we should be talking to, very little funding came from industry. Admittedly, bike

advocates have often been given discounted booth space at trade shows, or received in-kind donations of product that they can use to raise money, but actual cash has historically been slim.

To be fair one particular company, Planet Bike, and one particular organization, Bikes Belong, have been funding advocacy in a big way for some time. Funding from industry has traditionally come from providing grants to help build and finish local projects such as trails and connectors. Additionally, industry tends to favor supporting their local advocacy groups; for example Trek and Planet Bike routinely support the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, Fuji supports the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, and WTB supports the Marin County Bicycle Coalition.

### First Signs of Change

Every year the League of American Bicyclists hosts the National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C. The Summit brings together hundreds of advocates and industry folks for several days, and it is one of the few times each year that these people stand shoulder to shoulder as they lobby our leaders in Congress for more funding for bicycle projects in the United States. At the end of the 2007 Summit



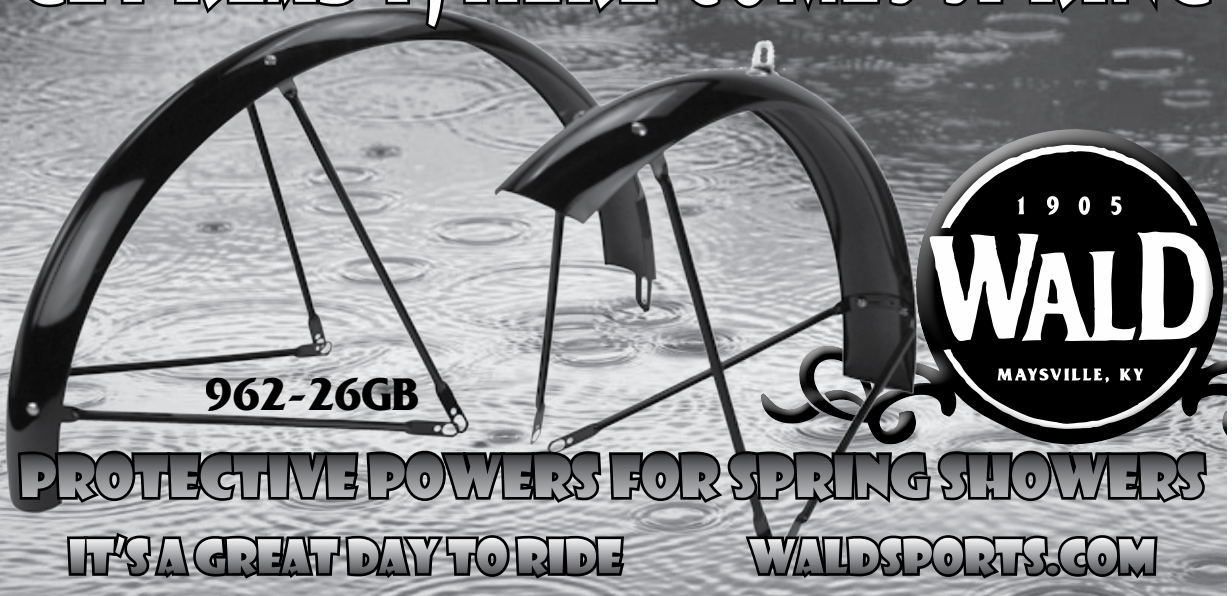
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many industry leaders including Trek, Fuji, and Shimano indicated that they would be stepping up their advocacy efforts. Trek in particular launched their 1 World 2 Wheels effort to actively promote bicycling as a lifestyle. Fuji launched Bike Emory in an effort to bring more bikes to a college campus. These programs are designed to highlight bicycling as a lifestyle as well as a healthy and sustainable mode of transportation. Advocates were wondering if industry was going to help to directly support local, regional, and statewide efforts the way that Planet Bike had been doing for years.

Since 1996, Planet Bike has given nearly \$650,000 to help advance bicycle advocacy, with the majority of this funding allocated to the Thunderhead Alliance for Bicycling and Walking. Planet Bike's formula for giving back to the biking community is simple: 25% of all of their profits go to advocacy. Their goal is to give \$1,000,000 to bicycle advocates by the end of 2010, and these guys are the real deal. Planet Bike president Bob Downs talks freely about their funding strategy, hoping that others will follow their lead and reinvest in the advocates who are making the streets safer and more accessible.

## SRAM Steps Up

Late in January of 2009, SRAM announced that they had given \$400,000 to the Thunderhead Alliance for Bicycling and Walking and the League of American Bicyclists to help boost their local advocacy efforts. If this seems like a newsworthy chunk of change, SRAM's foundation website indicates that they plan to give away \$10,000,000 over five years. Since the fund's inception in September of 2008, SRAM has already given \$1,400,000. For bike advocates, this is a staggering amount of money coming from industry.

To date, funds have been distributed as follows:

Safe Routes to School National Partnership – \$200,000 in December of 2008 to be used to help support the network of 350 non-profit organizations, government agencies, schools, and professionals all around the country. This first grant will focus on improving bicycling infrastructure.

I.M.B.A. – \$200,000 in December of 2008 to be used for building capacity within the organization, adding staff on a regional basis in order to help build and grow local clubs, and building a new grassroots fundraising program.

Bikes Belong – \$200,000 in January of 2009 to be used to lobby for inclusion of large-scale bicycle projects and funding within the Federal Stimulus Bill, upcoming Federal Transportation Bill, and future climate change legislation.

Thunderhead Alliance for Bicycling and Walking and the League of American Bicyclists – \$400,000 each in Janu-

ary of 2009 to be used to build and grow local, regional, and state grassroots bicycle advocacy organizations.

SRAM will not limit their contributions to just the US. The SRAM Cycling Fund website indicates that their scope is worldwide, with the US receiving 60% of the funding, Europe 20%, Taiwan 5%, and the remaining 15% remaining uncommitted. According to SRAM, the US is targeting to receive the majority of the funding, as "bicycling infrastructure lags behind the rest of the world."

## A Perfect Storm in the Making

Have we really reached a tipping point in the way that bicycle advocates and the industry work together? I'd like to think so. People will cite many things that could have contributed to this remarkable shift in the way that the bike industry works with advocates: the warming climate, the changing administration, the economic crisis, the national health concerns related to obesity, the massing numbers of advocates who are clamoring for funding, the advocates who now work in industry... the list goes on. Whatever the reason, I'm thankful that it's finally happening.

Thank you, Planet Bike for leading the way. Thank you, Bikes Belong for helping to build the local infrastructure. Thank you I.M.B.A., for your political savvy and incredible network of local clubs and advocates. Thank you, Thunderhead for helping to build and grow our hundreds of grassroots organizations. Thank you, League of American Bicycles for the National Bike Summit and over 120 years of leadership. Thank you, National Safe Routes to School Partnership for changing the way that our children get to school and remain active. Thank you, SRAM for helping pull us all together.

I look forward to the day when there is no "one-Mississippi, two-Mississippi" after telling people what I do for a living, and that funding for world-class bicycle facilities—from any source, including private, industry, or government—is as commonplace as the frustrated commuters that sit on our congested highways instead of riding their beautiful bicycle.



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Photography by jeff@bikejts.com

# Bikes on Film

By Ted King-Smith

## B. I. K. E.



Flaming machines crawl through the twilight while crowds cheer and rage, police charge and maim, a ruthless dictator addresses a nation at war. Is this Airstrip One or Neo Tokyo? Blade Runner or the Warriors? It is New York City in 2004 where the

Critical Mass demonstration becomes a centerpiece of protests against the Republican National Convention. A party for a party who drove our nation into a manifestly selfish and self-destructive war for oil, a resource coveted by internal combustion regimes worldwide, yet to human physical existence virtually useless.

It is in this environment that B.I.K.E. opens, a film by Jacob Septimus and Anthony Howard about the New York chapter of the Black Label Bike Club and the attempts of one of the filmmakers, Tony Howard, to join. From their founding in Minneapolis originally as The Hard Times Bike Club in 1994, the Black Label Bike Club has been a subculture within a subculture. The club has prided themselves on being tight knit, secretive and exclusive. Their denim vests, piercings and tattoos depict an aesthetic style of Mad Max meets the Black Rebel Motorcycle Club. Their resourcefulness is manifested in the ingenious fabrication of choppers, trick bikes, recumbents and most symbolically tall-bikes. Their drunken derring-do is unrivaled. Their initiation is the tall-bike joust, in which combatants are toppled off eight-foot bikes by giant pole-arms.

The club, however, faces the challenges and pitfalls of any group: uniformity, hierarchy, conformity and fame. Fame, which despite themselves this formerly tight-knit group of rust-belt punks have attracted. The New York chapter finds their ranks swelling and with that, the notoriety and celebrity that only the Big Apple can bring. This tension becomes palpable when the New York club and the filmmakers are met with the enmity of the founders in Minneapolis who threaten to make Howard "eat his own face." The club's attempts to stay underground seem

at odds with Howard's attempt to join which may be a narcissistic stunt for an artist seeking personal recognition. Howard's drug-fueled unraveling and consistent denial by both his girlfriend and the club leads him to form a rival gang "The Happy Clown Fuck Club" to challenge Black Label to a showdown at "Bike Kill." "Bike Kill" is their premier event, to be a full-blown anarchist street party complete with unicycles, jousting and piss-soaked mattresses, to be held simultaneously with the city's transformation into Republican occupied territory. Add to this dramatic tension a subplot about one member, Doyle, and his attempts to build a rocket bike for the event, which could likely kill him.

B.I.K.E. is a film with many facets, a documentary about bike culture projected as a post-apocalyptic narrative. Although the film is superficially about Howard's attempts to join the club he refers to as "a punk rock Hell's Angels," the film resonates more as an exploration of subcultures and group mentality. It is a film about the dialectics of conformity versus individuality, inclusiveness versus exclusivity. Although the film's moniker translates to Bike Inclusively Kill Exclusivity, it is this exclusivity that is vital to the subject. Exclusivity is how the club injects meaning into its existence and how they differentiate themselves from any other sub-cultural identities, which, according to them, can be bought and sold on the shelves of fashion. To them, their existence is an attempt to create a fragile pearl of truth and genius within the crushing doldrums of the Bush era and have some unruly drunken fun while they are at it. Although the group's sanctimoniousness as self-proclaimed artists and individuals can be quite grating, as if one can only be an artist or individual through their acceptance, there can be little denying that what Black Label does looks pretty fucking cool. From its onset cyclists have formed competitive clubs and teams, whether they be local advocacy groups, regional clubs, corporate teams or urban gangs. Black Label Bike Club merely carries on this tradition. They are a group of riders driven by fun, pain and ingenuity to create undiluted non-commercial urban culture in the bowels of society.





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# Getting a Handle on Handlebars

By Brad Quartuccio



Steel track drop bar, 25.4mm clamp diameter, traditional bend.

**H**andlebars are available in a practically infinite number of varieties to suit certain applications and rider preferences. Beyond the obvious choices between drop and flat bars are a myriad of other shapes and forms, and within each a number of variations and measurements that define the subtleties of shape and component compatibility.

Bar choice can have huge effect on comfort and bike control, and experimentation is key to finding what works for you. Generally speaking, wider bars will lend more control over the bike, help you develop more power when climbing and help to open up your chest for better breathing. This comes at the expense of aerodynamics, and for

a given build there is definitely a too-wide point where they are all around uncomfortable. In the same respect, bars that sit higher can help alleviate hand, wrist and neck pain while a lower position lends an aerodynamic advantage and can help to engage muscle groups in the lower back, and maintain steering control up very steep hills. For long distance riding and touring, bars that offer multiple hand positions can be a godsend to keep your upper body loose.

When it comes down to it, the real deciding factor is comfort and control. A comfortable bike will see more frequent use and longer distance trips than one that makes your back ache or hands go numb.

## Component Compatibility.

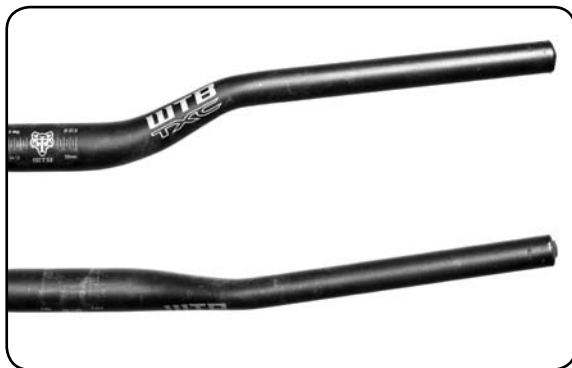
There are two important measurements that determine stem, brake and shift lever compatibility—grip diameter and stem clamp diameter.

**Grip Diameter** – This is the size of the bar where the grip, brake and shift levers mount.

22.2mm – Mountain bike bars measure 22.2mm, as do mountain brake and shift levers along with any accessories meant for flat bars.



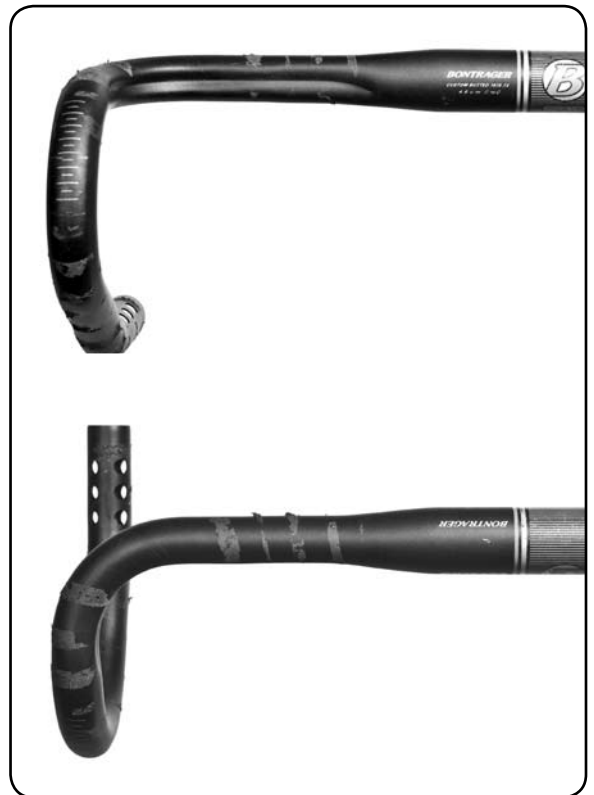
Flat bar, 25.4mm clamp, 22.2mm grip, 5° back sweep.



Riser bar, 31.8mm clamp, 22.2mm grip, 6° up sweep, 9° back sweep.

23.8mm – Road bike bars measure 23.8mm, along with road brake/shift levers and most in-line cyclocross levers.

These numbers usually only come into play when experimenting with some of the more uncommon bar choices like moustache, dirt drop or cruiser bars that may be available in either diameter to accommodate different component choices. Otherwise, with rare exception, flat and riser bars accept mountain componentry and drop bars accept road components.



Road drop bar, oversized 31.8mm clamp, 23.8mm grip, ergo bend, grooved for cable housing.



**Stem Clamp Diameter** – This is the size of the bar where the stem clamps.

**25.4mm** – This is the smaller of two clamp size common on mountain bikes and other flat bars along with steel road and track drop bars. Certain other bars use a 25.4mm diameter clamp to maintain compatibility with mountain stems. Bars with 25.4mm stem clamps usually have 22.2mm grip and accessory areas, with a notable exception being flared dirt drop style bars.

**26.0mm** – This is the smaller of two sizes common on road bikes and nearly always has a 23.8mm grip area. The vast majority of road quill stems have a 26.0mm clamp

diameter. 25.4mm bars can be shimmed to fit either with a commercially available product or a carefully cut aluminum can.

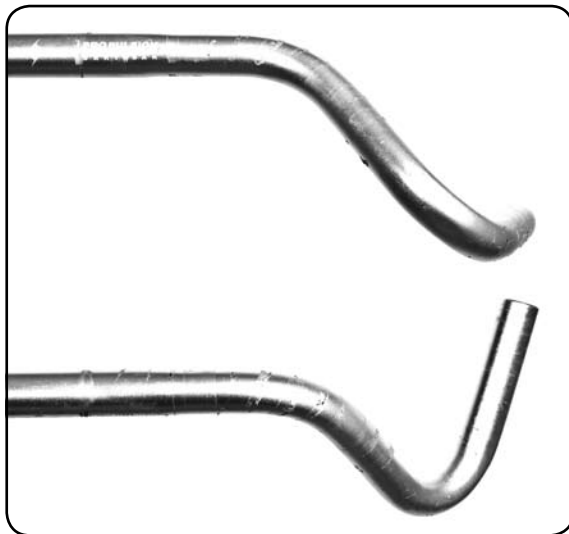
**31.8mm** – The most recent addition to the bar clamp diameters available, this is the oversized clamp common on newer road and mountain bikes. The purpose of this clamp size is to provide a significantly stiffer bar/stem connection with a minimal weight penalty.

It is imperative to match the correct stem and bar clamp diameters for safety's sake. Using the wrong clamp size could overstress the stem, the bar or both leading to potentially catastrophic failure.





Moustache bar, 25.4mm clamp diameter.



Dirt drop, 25.4mm clamp diameter, flared drops.

## Terminology and Measurements

Looking through a handlebar manufacturer's catalog can be daunting with the number of terms being thrown around to describe bar shapes and variations.

**Width** – Measured end to end for flat and riser bars, usually measured between the bends of a drop bar from center-to-center. In the case of drop bars with a flare to the lower grip section, this measurement is taken from center-to-center of the bar ends. Broadly speaking, anything narrower than your shoulders is doing yourself a disservice.

**Sweep** – This is typically used on flat and riser bars to denote the angle at which the bar extends from the stem clamp as compared to perfectly straight. Most flat bars “sweep” back towards the rider by about 5°, riser bars usually feature more back sweep and many also have an up sweep for better wrist positioning.

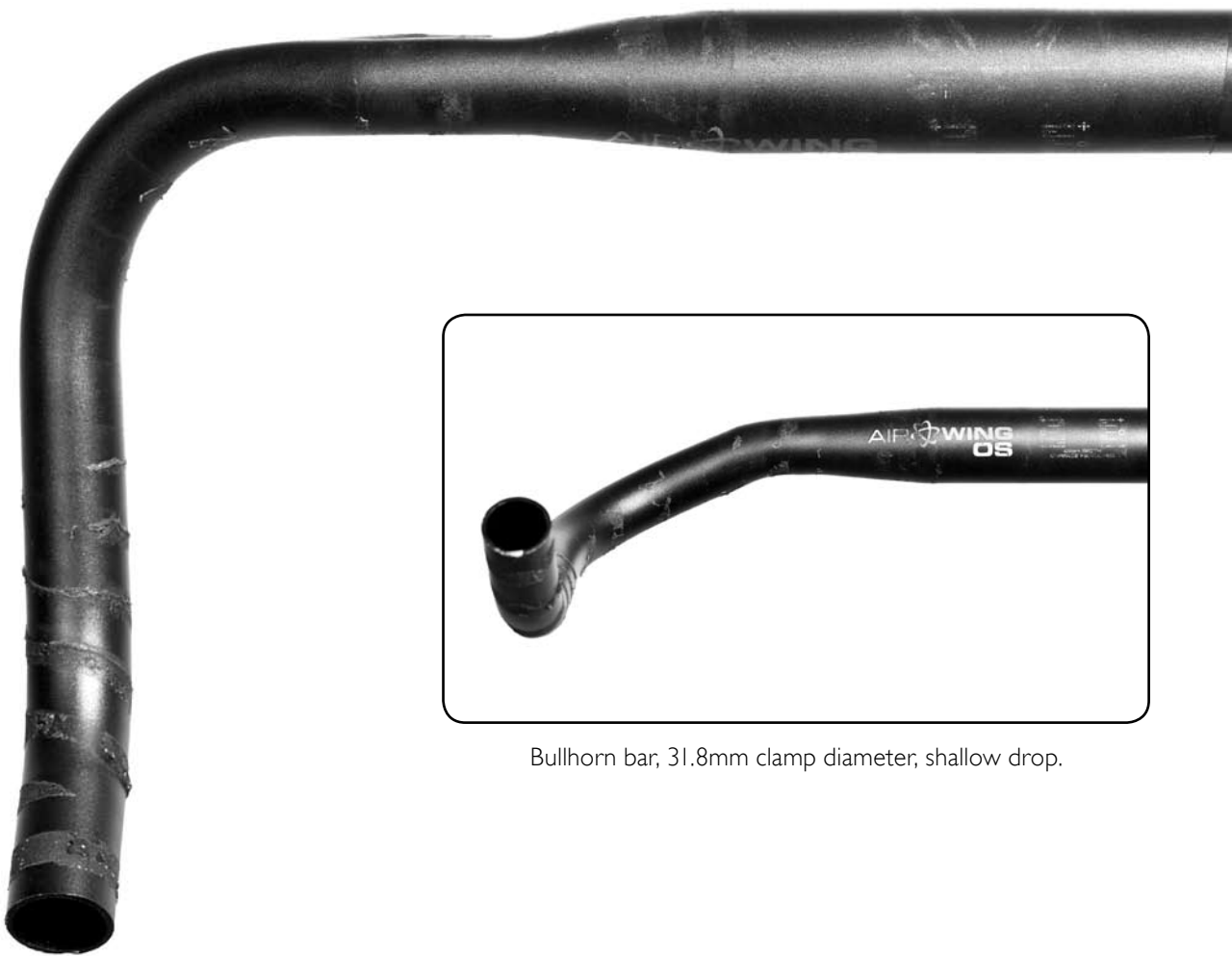
**Rise/Drop** – In the case of mountain bars, this is the amount of rise in the center section of the bar. For drop and bullhorn bars, this defines the depth of the lower grip section and can vary between a fairly shallow drop for some current road racing bars to the deep drop of classic track and pursuit bars.

**Reach** – This measurement denotes the distance handlebars extend forward, defining where the brake hoods are in relation to the top section of the road bars or where the grip area is on bullhorn bars.

**Bend** – This is a label that again only applies to drop bars and refers to the generic shape of the curve of the bar. Traditional bends are smooth curves whereas ergo bends feature more or less pronounced flat sections with the drop.

**Cable Routing** – Road bars are either round with no provision for cable routing or feature grooves front, back or both for the cable housing to nestle in beneath the tape.

Beyond the above terminology there are as many other manners which manufacturers and resellers refer to handlebars as there are shapes themselves. Especially when it comes to flared drop bars and other non-traditional shapes it is important to compare measurement methods between manufacturers but in many cases only direct side-by-side comparison is going to reveal all of the differences between them.



Bullhorn bar, 31.8mm clamp diameter, shallow drop.

## Other Considerations

Physical bar shape is only part of experimenting with hand positioning. No matter the bar choice there are other considerations, namely stem length and rise, brake lever positioning and the precise rotation of the bar in the stem. Some bar shapes will require more trial and error than other before deciding upon a final position, or ditching that bar shape for something all together different.

As one can imagine, once the bar swapping starts it can be hard to stop. With so many variables, handlebar

shape and accessory positioning can be a tinker's dream or nightmare, or a bit of both as the more unusual combinations of components come together with shims late into the night.



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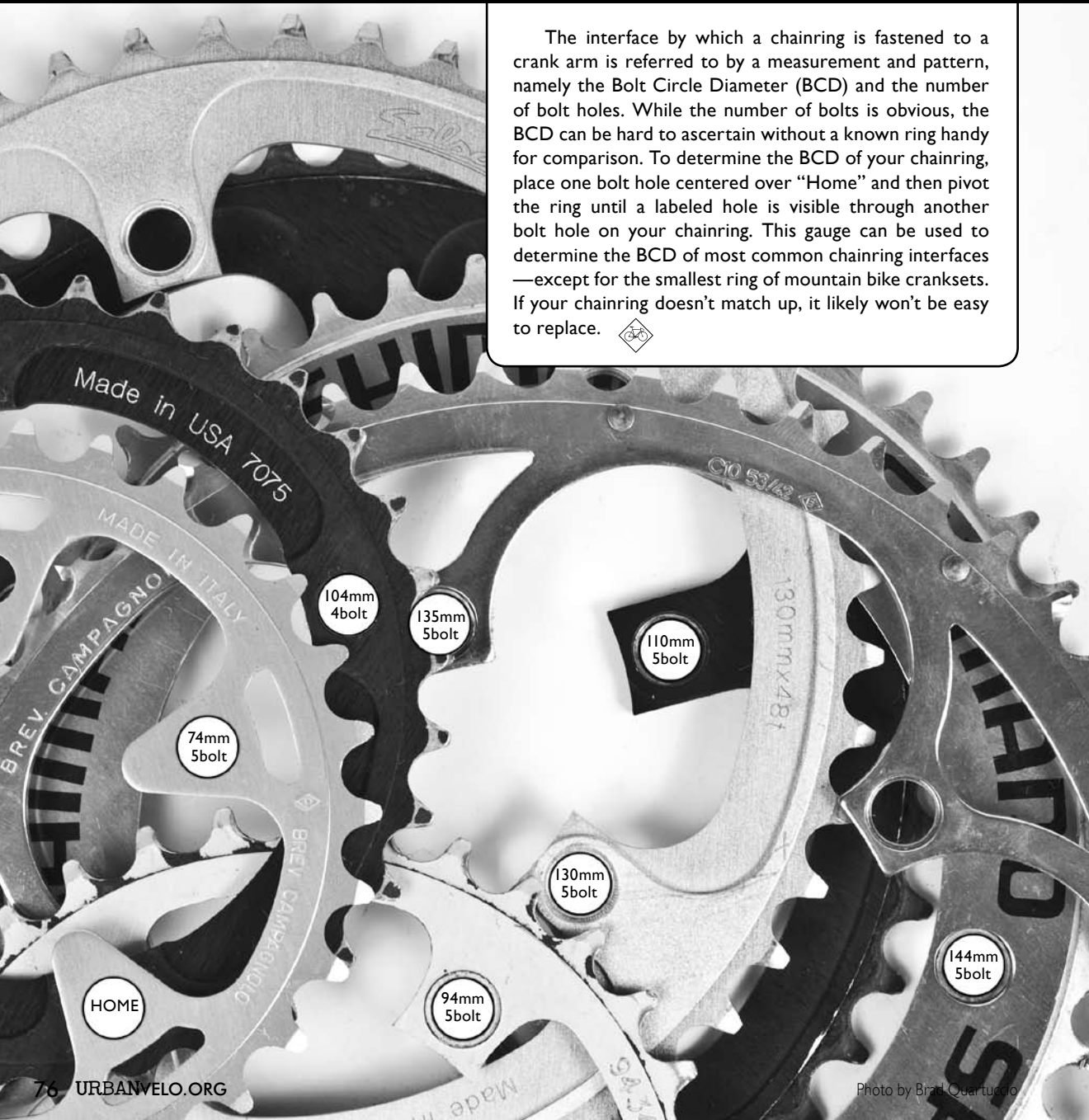
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# Chainring BCD Gauge

By Brad Quartuccio

The interface by which a chainring is fastened to a crank arm is referred to by a measurement and pattern, namely the Bolt Circle Diameter (BCD) and the number of bolt holes. While the number of bolts is obvious, the BCD can be hard to ascertain without a known ring handy for comparison. To determine the BCD of your chainring, place one bolt hole centered over “Home” and then pivot the ring until a labeled hole is visible through another bolt hole on your chainring. This gauge can be used to determine the BCD of most common chainring interfaces—except for the smallest ring of mountain bike cranksets. If your chainring doesn’t match up, it likely won’t be easy to replace. 





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A black and white photograph showing the faces of several children, likely in Zambia, looking towards the camera.

The logo for Spokepunchers features a stylized, cartoonish dinosaur or dragon head with its mouth open, showing sharp teeth. Below the head is a banner with the word "Spokepunchers" written in a hand-drawn, cursive font. The website address "spokepunchers.com" is written below the banner.

The logo for Rushin' Revolution features a large, stylized, white graphic that resembles a pair of wings or a stylized "R". Below the graphic, the text "RUSHIN' REVOLUTION" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below that, "SOX|HATS|CULTURE" is written in a similar font, with vertical bars separating the words. At the bottom, the website address "RUSHINREVOLUTION.COM/URBANVELO" is written. A small, black and white photograph of a man is visible in the bottom right corner.



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