

URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #15 • September 2009





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URBAN VELO

Issue #15 September 2009



Brad Quartuccio

Editor

brad@urbanvelo.org



Photos by Clara Phillips

Jeff Guerrero

Publisher

jeff@urbanvelo.org

On the cover: Mark Alford, of Indianapolis wins a sprint heat during the 2009 NACCC in Boston MA. See more photos from the event on page 56. Photo by Ed Glazar, www.tedwardglazarphotography.com

Co-conspirators: Kimmo Brandt, Alex Hansen, Leonard Bonarek, David Hoffman, Eric Gilliland, Lisa Perkins, Chris Kouklis, Sherry Schwenderlauf, Jeff Zell, Roger Lootine, Sam Tracy, Josh Boley, Kerri Spindler-Ranta 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.

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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The Working Bikes Cooperative in Chicago puts thousands of discarded bikes back on the road. Read more on page 74. Photo by Brad Quartuccio



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Editor's Statement


By Brad Quartuccio



One would imagine the introduction to the largest issue we've made to date would be easy. There's a lot to choose from—repeat contributors Alex Hansen and Ed Glazar share their photos with us once again, newcomers Leonard Bonarek and Sam Tracy each give us a look into their recent cycling adventures. But even with such a wealth of content, sometimes coming up with a proper introduction after a week of deadline hustle escapes me.

Basic transportation, travel and escape is at the heart of the bicycle; its very impetus for invention. This issue reflects that—from the bridges many of us cross in our travels and the cargo we wish to carry,

to the far off lands that a bicycle can transform and the huge world to explore. It is with particular honor and excitement that the last theme is covered through the writing of Sam Tracy in his *On the Road to Azougui*. His now ten-year-old *How to Rock and Roll* is one of those books that gets passed from rider to rider, getting worn and tattered along the way to match the unmistakable style inside.

This issue marks the beginning of the end of summer for those of us in the northern hemisphere, the last long and warm days to take advantage of before fall and winter are upon us yet again. Ride, travel, have fun and do something you swore you'd do "over the summer." 

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



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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero



Just because Urban Velo doesn't have a "letters" section doesn't mean we don't get our fair share of correspondence. In fact, because we're equal parts print magazine and online publication, we're pretty

much bombarded with things to read—email, Facebook and MySpace messages, phone calls, text messages, message boards, blog comments, postcards and even bona-fide USPS delivered letters. Yet as much as we may be inundated with communications, we still take the time to read them all. And many of them have a profound impact on us. I thought I would share a couple of them with you.

I should have seen this first one coming, though I never imagined I would...

Dear Sir,

Enjoyed reading your magazine, heartening to see the development of the bike culture. When I was a young, bike riding punk there was no bike subculture, just me riding a bike, Anyways I picked up a couple copies of Urban Velo at the Free Store on Penn Avenue, near Kraynick's. Imagine my surprise and delight when reading the publisher's statement in issue #14. I'm that guy that you ran into at Home Depot. I did get a bike. Bought an old Nishiki for \$30 and put \$50 into it, I've been to Kraynick's—you're not the only one who recommended that crazy ole fuck. [I] also visited Eric of North Cargo Trikes who has the workspace and makes bikes behind Kraynick's. Lots of nutty folks in Pittsburgh, so I fit right in.

Keep up the good work. I'm definitely a fan of the 'zine now.

*Thanks,
Tim*

I couldn't be happier for Tim, who's definitely found himself in good company on Penn Avenue. I'm glad I helped play a small roll in inspiring him to get on two wheels (or three if he winds up riding one of Eric's trikes).

The second letter is one that kind of hit me like a brick. It was hand delivered to my mailbox...

Dear neighbors,

My bicycle was taken from the back basement area of my home. I rely on this to get to work and am asking for your help in keeping your eyes open for it. It is a bronze-colored Fuji women's "step through" and had a black basket on the front.

I ride my bicycle to work, so really need it back.

Thanks for any help you can give.

Lois


While I was appalled at the notion of bike theft on my quiet little street, I was pleasantly surprised to learn there was another bike commuter living two doors down. I called Lois the next day and arranged for her to borrow one of my bikes. Coincidentally, she's a nurse at the psychiatric hospital where one of my cycling friends was being cared for. It's not that riding the bus was all that inconvenient for Lois, but there's something about the independence of cycling that appealed to her and I was glad to have an opportunity to help a neighbor.

The third and final correspondence I'll share was a Facebook message. A cyclist was struck and killed near the University of Pittsburgh, and numerous people reposted the news, concerned the victim was our friend Nick. Thankfully it wasn't. Rather than just thanking his lucky stars, Nick organized a memorial the next day.

At dusk, Wednesday, August 5, 2009 we will be locking up a ghost bike to memorialize Ruihui Lin who was killed earlier this week by a currently unknown driver who fled the scene.

We will meet at the intersection where the accident happened, and lock up the ghost bike, light candles and lay flowers for our fellow cyclist.

Come to memorialize Ruihui Lin, and show your support for safer roads for ALL users in Pittsburgh.

Dozens of people showed up to pay tribute to a cyclist none of us ever knew, along with numerous reporters, photographers and TV news cameramen. The ceremony was somber, and we were all reminded of how fragile human life is. On the bright side it reminded us that we aren't just part of a bike scene, we're a community. 



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i ♥ riding in the city



Photo by Kimmo Brandt

i ♥ riding in the city

NAME: Tuomo Kuivamäki

LOCATION: Helsinki, Finland

OCCUPATION: Cargo bike messenger

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

Riding conditions vary wildly depending on the season in Helsinki. From below freezing with heavy snow in the winter to a heat wave in peak summer.

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

Copenhagen, Denmark. Nice bike lanes, good planning. Probably the most bike friendly city on the planet.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I like how my days are a mixture of routine with an element of surprise—everyday there is something new and unexpected.

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NAME: Meg Lofts

LOCATION: Sydney, Australia

OCCUPATION: Web Designer/Developer

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

I live in Sydney, Australia. Riding in Sydney can be magical. I love riding at sunrise, watching the windows on the skyscrapers glow while the harbor starts to glitter and come alive. It's so tranquil and easy to navigate with so very few cars on the road. Sydney can also be a pretty daunting place to ride, drivers can be impatient and

aggressive. There seems to be a real lack of understanding about cyclists and what their rights on the road actually are. It feels a bit like "us" and "them" which is a real shame as bikes and cars should be able to co-exist in harmony on the roads. It is however currently being improved and hopefully within a few years it will be more inline with European cities that really know how to cater to cyclists.

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

My favorite city to ride in is New York City. There are so many cyclists and bikes in all different shapes and sizes. I used to cycle over the Williamsburg Bridge to Manhattan each morning at 6AM. Seeing the skyline at sunrise was amazing. I wouldn't usually describe NYC as calm and peaceful but that's exactly how it looked. On the flipside riding through midtown traffic is exhilarating to say the least. I love the excitement and rate which everything travels—lights, horns, cars, people, bikes all traveling at warp speed. Long, wide, straight, flat roads make it a dream to zip about. I also love the fact that people talk to each other. I met loads of people out on my bike in traffic, waiting for the lights to change or on bike paths.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city to commute to work, nothing beats missing peak hour traffic. Riding is a time I have for myself to put on some tunes, dream up ideas, or think about nothing at all. I also love riding with my mates, whether it's spinning around the park, cruising on a regular social ride or just chatting and exploring areas of Sydney that I'm unfamiliar with. Riding makes me feel like a kid again, and that definitely can't be a bad thing.

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NAME: Simon Keitch

LOCATION: Devon, UK

OCCUPATION: Photographer

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

I live in a farming valley right now—the first rural home I've had since I was a kid—but it's about a 15-20 minute ride from Plymouth city centre. The road system in the shopping district is pretty crazy (lots of lanes, lots of traffic lights, and lots of big roundabouts...) which doesn't make for a pleasant ride but does seem to ensure that cycling is the best way of getting around, and I see more and more people on bikes these days, including a couple of bike messengers who started up business last year. We also have a great cycle route here on an old train track, which takes you out of the city and up to Dartmoor National Park.

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

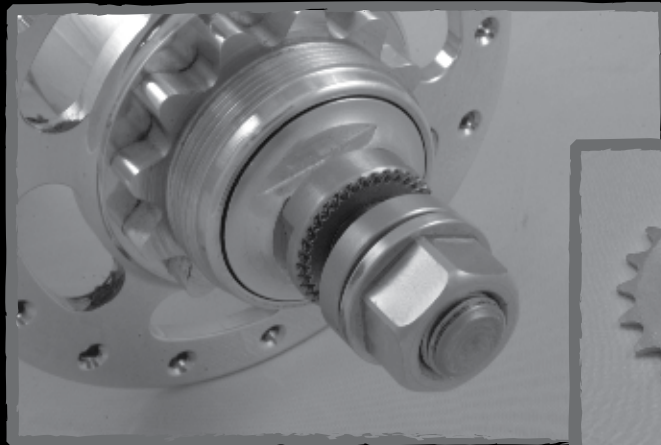
I travel quite a lot for my work but I never have the opportunity to ride in the cities I'm passing through unfortunately; Paris always looks like a fun place to ride a bike, and Gent in Belgium seemed like a great place to live; amazing culture and lots of cool people riding old bikes. Of the few cities I've lived and ridden around, Bristol is without a doubt my favorite; the narrow old roads are slow to drive around at best and get gridlocked at rush hour, plus there's nowhere to park, so a bike is by far the fastest way to get around. The old streets and architecture keep things interesting with plenty of narrow alleys, cobbles, old flights of steps and plenty of short steep hills. Plus, if you get bored of the city you can ride out to the trails within 15 minutes, or get on the cycle path out to Bath for a change of scenery.



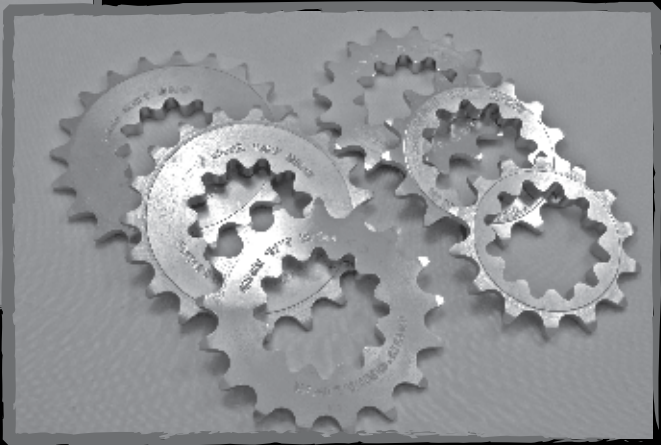
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Name: Karl Addison

Location: Seattle, WA

Occupation: Artist and Partybots Eco-Apparel

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

I live, work, play and ride in Seattle, Washington. Seattle is a great city to ride in. I feel like we have a full spectrum of every style of rider, from our daily commuters, mountain bikers due to the nature that surrounds us, speedsters and many track bikes. There are an amazing amount of events and weekly rides that happen in Seattle due to a strong community of cyclists. It is very easy to ride anywhere and see a friend on the opposite side of the road. Weather can be a bit of a pain—but when you are prepared for it, it is not an issue. One of my favorite rides is downtown on 2nd Ave. in the rain, which happens a lot. I enjoy my bike as a means to see friends, deliver my apparel line to stores and to get around to do art installations throughout the city.

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

I have to say that Tokyo, Japan is my favorite city to ride in. I have had the luxury to travel often and bring my bike as a means of transportation. Riding on the left side seems pretty natural for me, and their roads are unbelievably smooth and clean. It makes for a joyful ride to not worry about potholes and getting a flat. Drivers are very courteous including the taxi-cabs, unlike New York City. You do have to be more mindful of scooters, motorcycles and mopeds. They zig and zag through traffic more than bikes and they are hard to hear until they are right behind you. I did enjoy how friendly other track bike cyclists were, nearly every single one I came across would wave.



 German Innovation

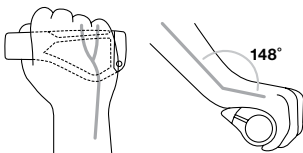
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NAME: Lyra Porras Garzon
LOCATION: New York, NY
OCCUPATION: Media Educator and Documentarian

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

I live in the Upper West Side and I commute all the way to Downtown Brooklyn. It takes me roughly an hour each way, down the Hudson Greenway and across the Brooklyn Bridge. It's great to ride in New York City because it's a constant test of my survival skills, instincts and reflexes, and the view is just fantastic during sunset in the Hudson Greenway. Crossing the Brooklyn Bridge is always a pain because of the tourists who choose to either stroll on the bike path or stand smack in the middle for a photo op, ignoring the cyclist going downhill. Then there's the constant threat of getting doored or the nasty drivers who either turn without signaling or choose to park their SUVs in the center of the bike lane. And still, I opt to be a bike commuter. It's the best way to see and experience the city—both its beauty and madness.



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Do you love riding in the city?

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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



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NAME: Erin

LOCATION: Shanghai, China

OCCUPATION: Teacher/PhD Student

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

I moved to Shanghai a few months ago and despite having ridden in Manhattan for the past 3 years, it took me a few weeks to get the courage to face Shanghai rush hour. I still remember my first ride into the city center, in a bike lane filled with weaving motorcycles narrowly missing my front wheel and cigarette-smoking Chinese wobbling back and forth on their rusty cruisers. Despite China's new love affair with cars, bike lanes here still get incredibly full and riding can be harrowing. I've had a few near collisions, but now I'm used to the chaos and enjoy all the activity that I see on my commute to work.

Everyone here rides—women in heels, full grown men in pajamas, whole families. Old folks ride too, and with amazing agility.

One thing anyone planning on riding here should know: the one and only traffic law seems to be that if it is bigger than you, it's got the right of way. Be forewarned!

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

New York is still my true love. Riding over the Wil-

liamsburg Bridge with a sunset behind the skyline and the (surprisingly) fresh smell of the East River filling my nose is perfection. I really miss that.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Part of it is that bikes don't pollute, they're cheap and healthy, but I think ultimately it's because it is the best way to observe life in a city. I've only been in Shanghai a few months and I already feel pretty at home on its streets. I know its bridges and alleys and I watch the residents go about their lives from my bike. I've discovered so much of the city by accident just by getting lost.

Plus it's like playing the most amazing video game ever that doesn't make you feel lazy and that gets you where you want to go in the process.

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

zixingche=bicycle

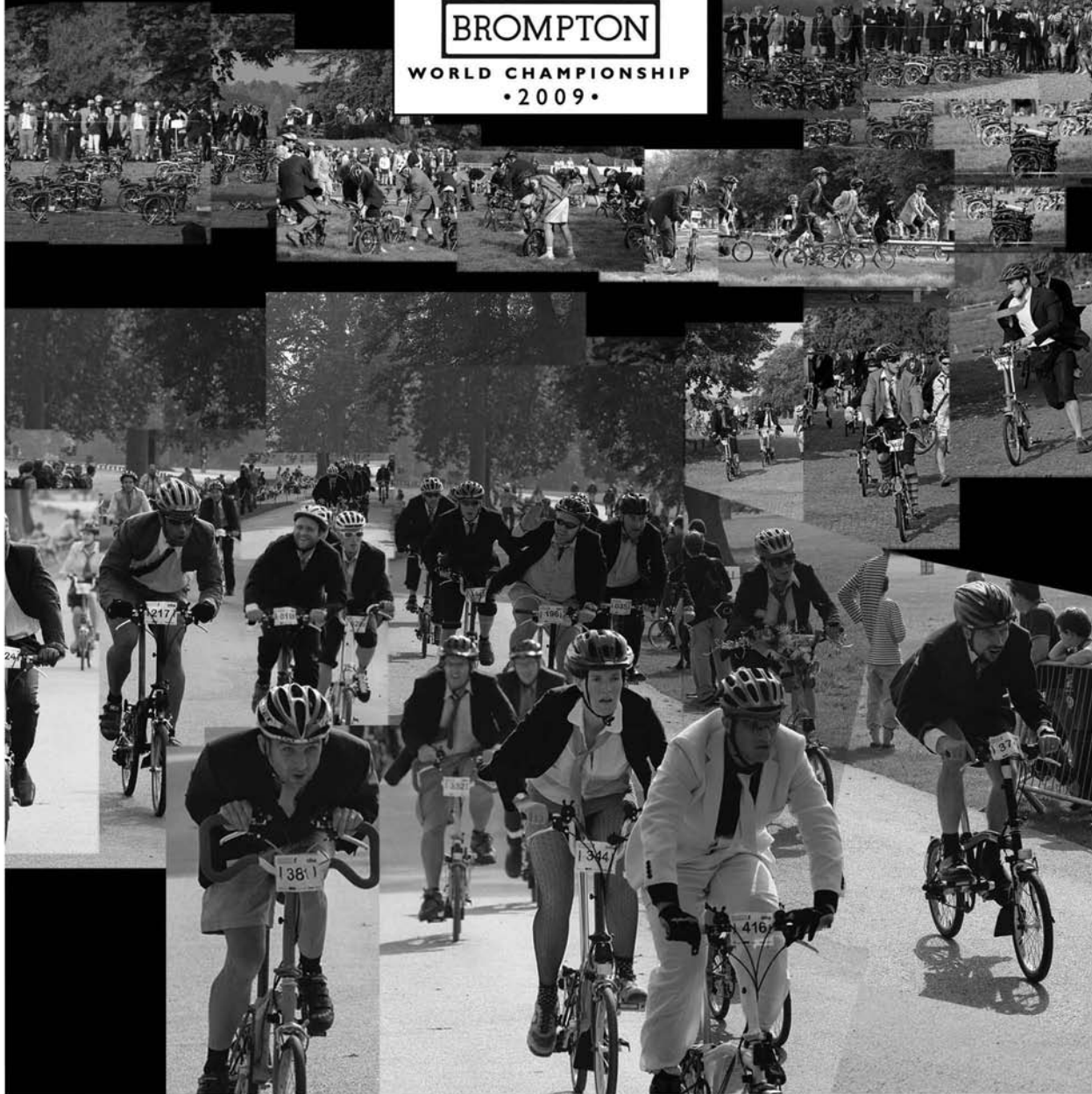
zi (self), xing (movement) che (vehicle)

Well said, I think.

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NAME: Derrick
LOCATION: Philadelphia, PA
OCCUPATION: Shop Wrench

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

Sometimes Sunny Philadelphia. Some of the roads are horrible. Aside from potholes, the tourist trap cobblestones and criss-crossed trolley tracks wreak havoc on a 25c tire. But compared to the last city I lived in riding here is incredible. People here are tolerant of cyclists and while there may be only a few bike lanes, motorists actually know how to contain themselves. Where once I was harassed at least weekly, since moving here I've only been yelled at twice.

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

All of Holland. They have stoplights for bikes!

Why do you love riding in the city?

'Cause I get hungry. They have food in the city. And Philly's got expensive car insurance, so it's easy to make excuses to spend money on bikes. I'd write down how much I love passing cars and dashing through congested streets, and how weaving through traffic is an amazing rush. But isn't that why we all love riding in the city? Plus I really do like to eat.

Check out www.endoftheinternet.com

NAME: Marco (aka Nick Garrison)
LOCATION: Modena, Italy
OCCUPATION: Office Worker

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

Hi, I live in Modena in Italy, a small place that has the great car factories that are Ferrari and Maserati. In the city there are some bike paths and it is safe to ride. Modena is a very green area, many parks and a lot of trees.

Ciao,io vivo a Modena in Italia, una piccola citta' ma con grandi case automobilistiche come Ferrari e Maserati. Nella mia citta' ci sono molte piste ciclabili cosi' rende piu' sicuro girare in bici, Monena e' anche piena di alberi e parchi.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because is faster than a car and I don't waste my money on gasoline. I want to feel the wind on my skin.

Mi piace pedalare in citta' perche' e' piu' veloce che andare in macchina,poi non inquinno e non spreco soldi in benzina. Mi piace sentire il vento sulla testa.

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

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NAME: Mia Kohout

LOCATION: Vancouver, BC

OCCUPATION: Marketing and Advertising Director,
Momentum Magazine

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

I live in East Vancouver on Commercial Drive. Riding a bike in Vancouver is by far the best and most fun way of getting around. Vancouver has tons of bike routes—smaller roads off the main roads that are rich with traffic calming devices, bike push button lights and heaps of cyclists. The real cycling gem of Vancouver is the seawall around Stanley Park. 5.5 miles (8.8km) of a divided bike/pedestrian path that is a must for any Vancouverite or visitor to the city. Try to avoid the weekend if you can, it gets crazy busy!

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

Over the past few years I've been lucky enough to

have experienced riding in many North American cities. San Francisco and Montreal are real highlights for me, mostly because there are so many stylish cyclists taking over the streets. Portland is of course a biking mecca, and another big surprise to me was Chicago and Minneapolis. I visited both cities in the dead of winter and was pleasantly surprised to see so many people on bikes. They have a pretty amazing bike culture scene there too. Biker beard overload!

Why do you love riding in the city?

It's by far the most fun, efficient and cheapest way to get around. Who doesn't like to smell the flowers on their way to and from work?



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NAME: Shane Glassey

LOCATION: Christchurch, New Zealand

OCCUPATION: Aircraft Engineer

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

I live outside Christchurch and commute to work as often as I can which is usually at least 2 times a week. My commute is around 30km each way and varies from main road traffic to secluded rural roads. Summers are great and winters suck in New Zealand, no snow but the frost and winter southerly storms make winter a challenge.

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

My favorite city to ride in is Toulouse in France. The city is so well set up for cycling and the car drivers the most accepting I have ever seen. Toulouse has a Velib system like Paris, which is just fantastic. Brisbane in Australia comes a close second for climate and also the great number of off-road cycle paths I found when I was there.

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

I like to point out to all my non-cycling friends and work mates that it's not really that hard to cycle to work or to use your bike rather than the car. You do have to show a bit of commitment but first of all you just have to learn to make a conscious thought every time you go for the car keys—think, "Can I use my bike for this trip?" If the answer is "yes" then do it. Pretty soon you don't have to think about it and you just naturally go for the bike.

NAME: William Kern

LOCATION: Austin, TX

OCCUPATION: Veterinary Technician

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

I live in Austin Texas now. Riding here is like living in a giant playground for adults sometimes. There are so many festivals, celebrations, sports and shows that it really makes every day fun. I truly am surprised almost every day by some unexpected site or event.

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

I rode in Dallas as a teen and remember it fondly. Boston was great because it seemed impossible to get around by car, but a bike is a blast and I love that dirty water, what!

Why do you love riding in the city?

Embracing this planet and its growth is a very healthy thing for me. Watching my skyline change is like a sport for me. I've spent a lot of time in the country but this city is where I belong. It's mine.

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

Oh yeah, there are lots of cool hills to bomb and lots of cool rides and lots of cool trails and a bike shop on every corner and, and...good efin' music and food.



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Christian Coomer

LOCATION: Seattle, WA

OCCUPATION: Web Developer

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

I live in the emerald city of Seattle, and it's an amazing place to ride. Lots of great places to ride, and lots of great people to ride with. Most of the drivers and most of the hills aren't that bad.

I moved here almost two years ago and quickly found that cars suck in the city. It was quite the change, as my life revolved around my cars for years. These days, I only have a driver's license so I can get into bars.

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

Seattle, because I really haven't ridden in many other cities. I hear Denver, NYC, Portland, and countless others are awesome, and I plan to travel with my bike and ride more cities. I'm especially dying to make it out to NYC with my bike.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Riding the city is my ecstasy. Dodging traffic, flying through gaps, finding the fastest line, and just riding hard is the very best part of every day for me. And it's relaxing... even when I've got so much adrenaline flowing through me that I shake when I stop.

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

I'm going too fast, the wind flies past
Stopped traffic ahead, I'm gonna be dead
Legs come to a stop, the back wheel hops
Twelve more feet, gonna be dead meat
"Oh snap!" there's a small gap
Tire grabs like glue, fly straight through
Make it past, still going too fast



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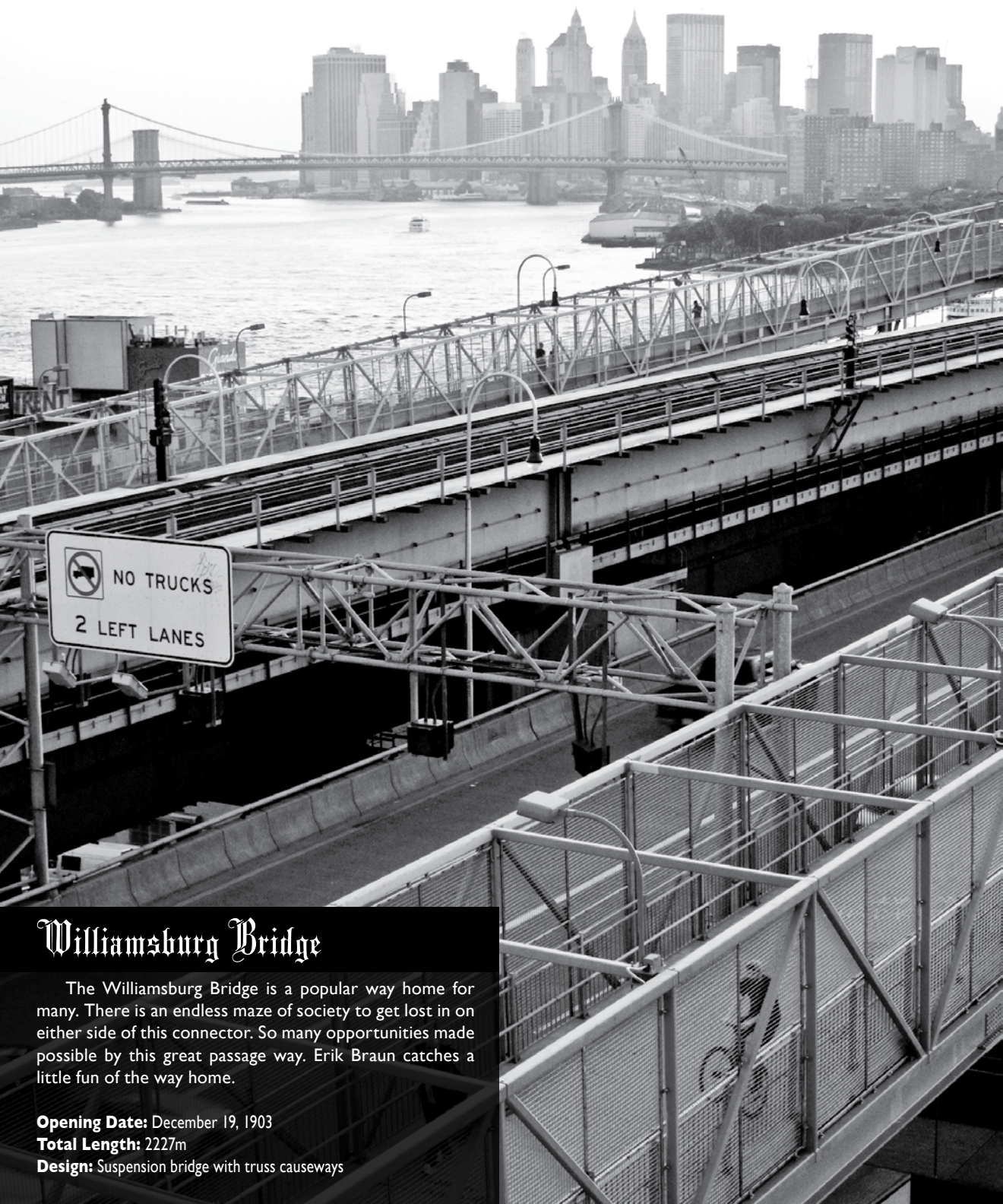
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City Bridges, the urban vein that connects, downtown overpasses, or one you've biked over in your hometown. A bridge is a sight to see; each has its own unique characteristics—metal, concrete and wood amassed in combinations forming an umbilical cord of urban sociological sprawl. This collection of photos contains imagery of New York's most cycled giants. They've been a part of this city's great past, will be a part of urban cycling's future, and it's time to give these great vessels their background props.

Bridge Kings

Words and photos by Alex Hansen



Williamsburg Bridge

The Williamsburg Bridge is a popular way home for many. There is an endless maze of society to get lost in on either side of this connector. So many opportunities made possible by this great passage way. Erik Braun catches a little fun of the way home.

Opening Date: December 19, 1903

Total Length: 2227m

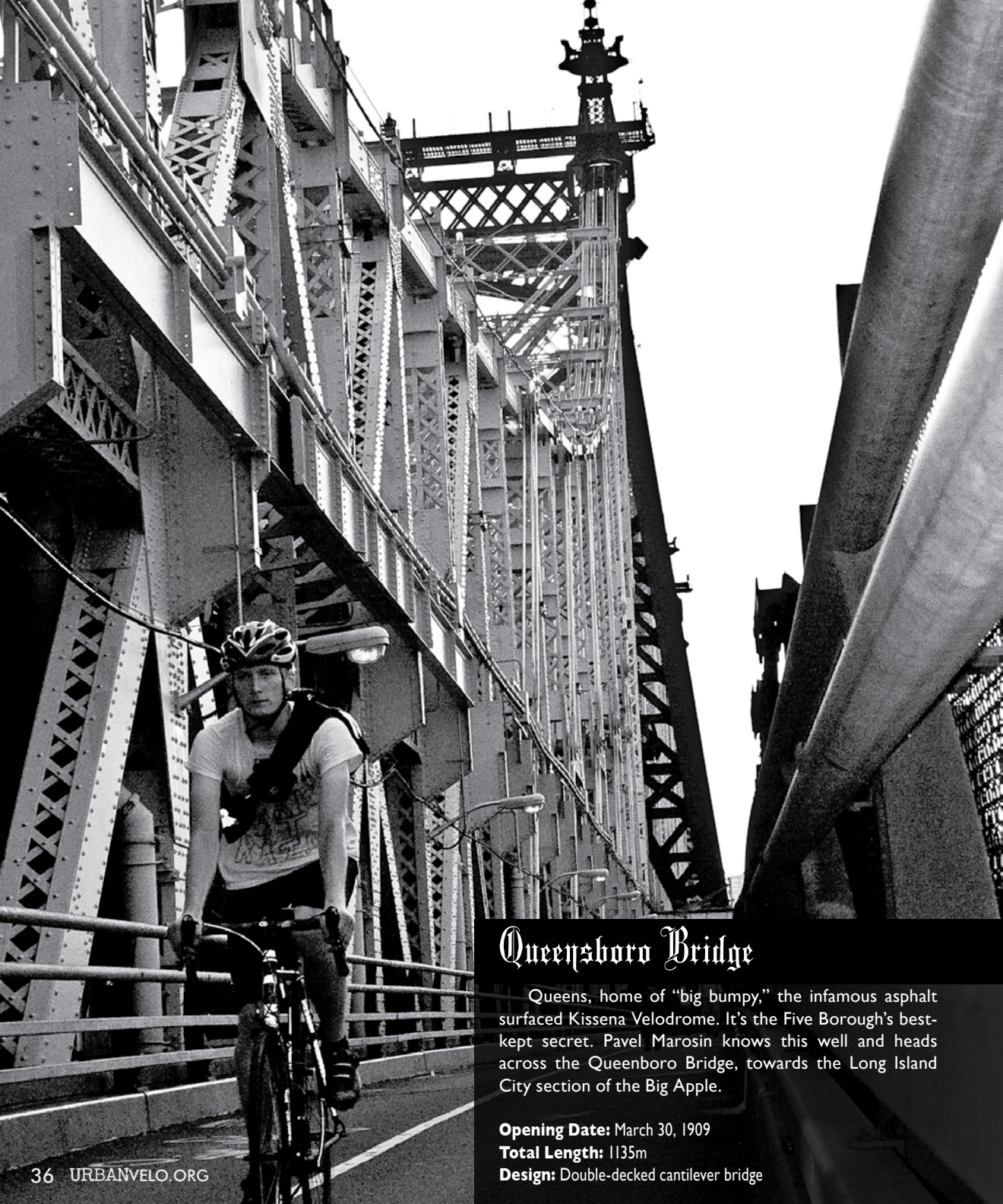
Design: Suspension bridge with truss causeways



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Queensboro Bridge

Queens, home of “big bumpy,” the infamous asphalt surfaced Kissena Velodrome. It’s the Five Borough’s best-kept secret. Pavel Marosin knows this well and heads across the Queensboro Bridge, towards the Long Island City section of the Big Apple.

Opening Date: March 30, 1909

Total Length: 1135m

Design: Double-decked cantilever bridge

Continuum Cycles

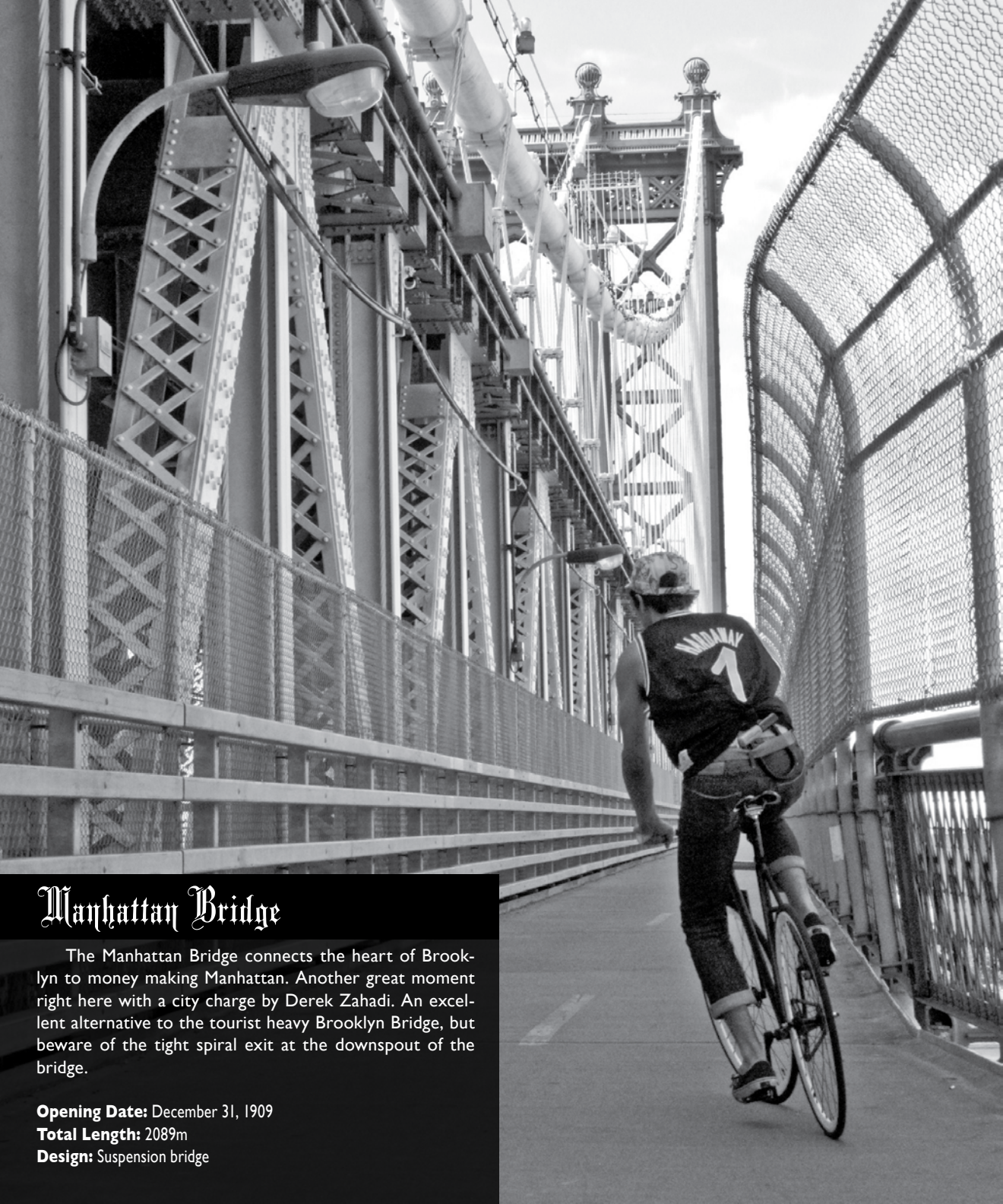
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Manhattan Bridge

The Manhattan Bridge connects the heart of Brooklyn to money making Manhattan. Another great moment right here with a city charge by Derek Zahadi. An excellent alternative to the tourist heavy Brooklyn Bridge, but beware of the tight spiral exit at the downspout of the bridge.

Opening Date: December 31, 1909

Total Length: 2089m

Design: Suspension bridge



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Brooklyn Bridge

The Brooklyn Bridge, a hot spot for tourists and West-side bike path roadies alike. Antoine Sanders knows the passage well, maneuvering across the rickety wood planks and dodging the photo-happy visitors.

Opening Date: May 24, 1883

Total Length: 1825m

Design: Suspension / cable-stay hybrid bridge

MIS



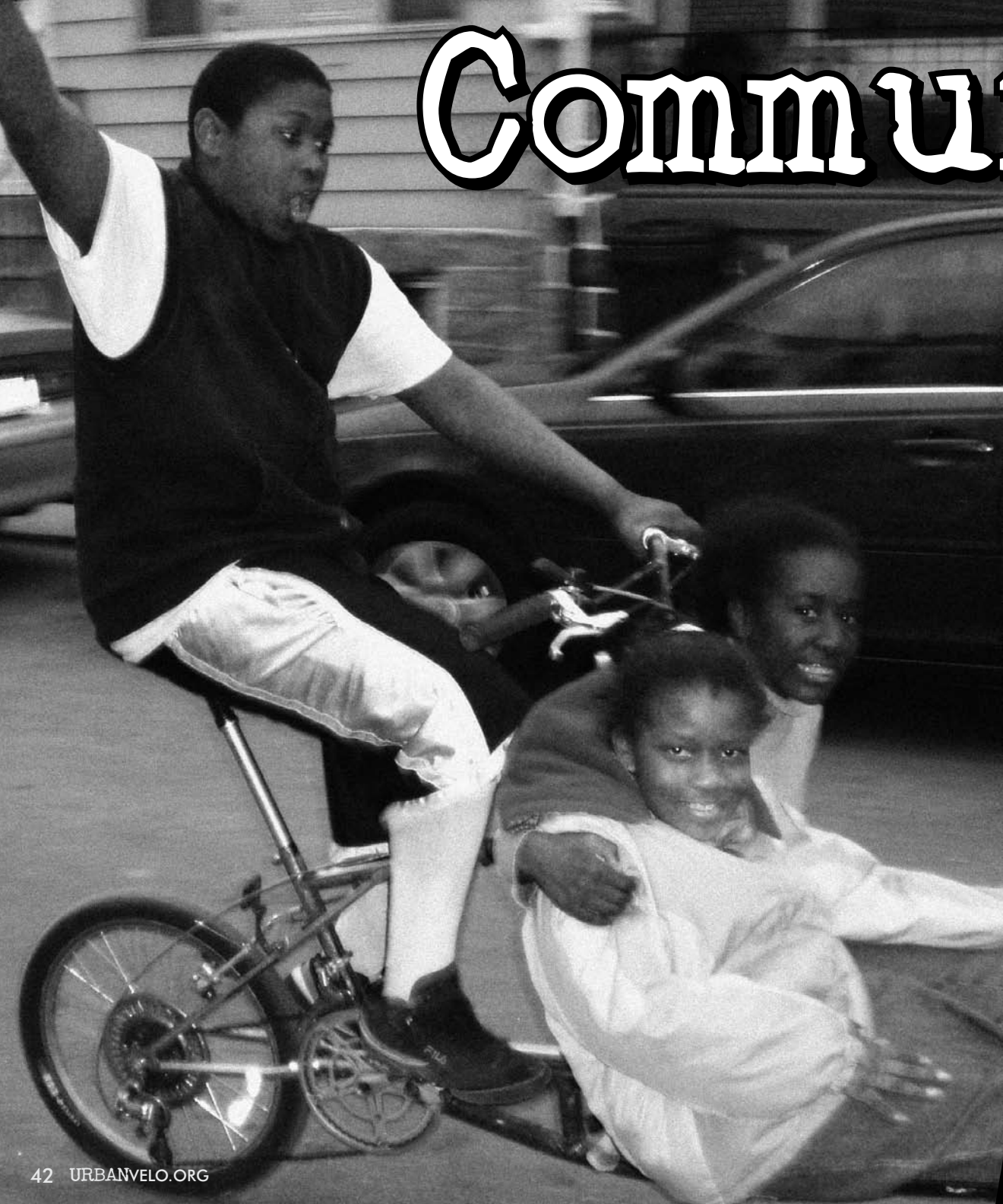
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Communi



Community Cargo

By Leonard Bonarek

Two winters ago, my friend Ricky implored me to buy into a group purchase.

“Why do I need to spend \$60 on bike tubes?” I asked.

“So you can build a cargo bike,” Ricky replied as if he was uttering the simplest of logics,

I didn’t know what that meant, but it sounded interesting. I still needed some convincing.

“I already have a trailer.”

“Listen, trailers ain’t shit. You need a cargo bike, you just don’t know it yet.”

Eventually I ponied up, using the logic that even if I didn’t want a “cargo bike,” I could sell the frame for a healthy profit and it would be a fun project in the meantime. Ricky had talked a half dozen others into the same thing.

Not long after I caved, two 8’ long bundles of 4130 steel arrived.



Listen, trailers ain't shit. You need a cargo bike, you just don't know it yet.

One cool evening in March we met up. Ricky and several friends rent a corner of a huge space in West Philly, which they operate as a loose collective. "The Warehouse" has all the amenities one could desire to build a bicycle, or just about anything else out of metal: drill presses, MIG machines, oxygen and acetylene bottles, torches, vices, and a 3000lb milling machine.

Each of us first cut about a 5' length and filled it with cement mix. This would ensure that the tube wouldn't kink when bent. Next we put it in a pre-made jig and bent until the tube roughly matched the big drawing on the big table Ricky had set up for us. We had now completed the first step in fabricating the main tube of the bicycle, "the boom." Later, I learned how to miter a joint, then to braze—heat the joint until it's just hot enough, add brass. Melt it in and watch the molten blobs smooth out and flow to the places with the greatest heat. Learn to make the brass go where you want it to go.

Seven months passed. I worked on mine when I had a free night, which wasn't often. During this time, Ricky had finished his. Anyone who knows the experience of owning a new bike knows how you ride it everywhere at first, regardless of whether it's appropriate. This phenomenon is magnified when you have built the bike yourself, and magnified further when you've built a crazy head-turning machine. For that first month, whenever I rode with Ricky, it was me on my Pogliaghi alongside him on his cargo bike. I remember thinking how unlikely this would be in the car world—two guys out for a drive, one in a vintage Italian sports car, the other in a dump truck. Bike world beats car world again.

I borrowed it, first occasionally, then more and more often. My trailer broke several times until I finally gave up on fixing it. Back at the warehouse, the piles of rusting rolled steel, boxes of scavenged parts, and the remains of a wrecked mountain bike were finally joined as one. I got lucky one day volunteering at Neighborhood Bike Works (www.neighborhoodbikeworks.org) when a nice mountain bike came in with a broken frame. I bought all the parts from it, which made a nice upgrade. I spray-painted my new creation, put in a plywood bed, built it up, convinced my dog to get on, and we were off. I didn't realize it at the time, but a new chapter in my life had started. A chapter





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RIDER: MARTIN MALANA
PHOTO: RUSS ROCA



in which the prospect of owning a car seemed totally out of the question.

Before we got two blocks from my house on my inaugural ride, the comments began. This bike is one serious ice-breaker, so much so that it's sometimes hard to get anywhere without constantly stopping to answer questions. I now have conversations with total strangers on a regular basis, people that I would probably have no other context to talk with. I stand straddling my bike on the side of the road, chatting while the dogs eagerly wait for the wheels to start spinning again so we can get to the park. Cargo bikes build community! It seems nobody can let one of these things pass by without saying something. Each of the comments I heard that first month got me thinking about the story of this bike:

"Ain't that creative? No seriously, that's creative as shit!"

A cargo bike is any bicycle that can hold large amounts of, well, cargo. The creation of this particular type was a result of brainstorming between Juan Martinez and

Ricardo (Ricky) Perez. Juan came to town with a half built prototype—BMX frame, 12" front wheel, shopping cart cargo-box, no braze-ons, no paint, totally gangster. Ricky worked with him to create something more suited to the masses. The result was the "Number Juan," the first version of which Ricky still rides all over town. It's based on a mountain bike platform, with a 16" front wheel that sits under the cargo bed. Since then, Ricky has made several NJ's for paying customers under the moniker Philadelphia Cargo Cycle Company (www.phillycargocycles.com).

"Can I get a ride?"

Hell yes! I am a youth mentor, and my work amounts to being a surrogate soccer mom. My machine has become an essential tool to my organization. I ride at the head of a bike caravan hauling gear for baseball games, kids who are too young to ride, food for trips to the zoo, kids who are hurt/disabled, everything you'd normally cram into a mini-van. I have added some kids to my organization due to the bike. Cool stuff attracts kids. This thing can eas-



ily handle up to three of them, or two adults if you want to punish yourself. Recently, I have put it to work as an ambulance—at a Philadelphia Critical Mass ride, I hauled a cyclist four miles home after he dumped it at a train crossing.

“Now that is some slick shit.”

I thank you, elderly gentleman, for your compliment. I also feel that it is pretty slick.

“Why are you tearing that down?”

I was standing on the bed of the bike, using it as a ladder so I could reach a “Cash For Your House” sign to remove it. I wound up in a friendly conversation with two young bejeweled dudes in a luxury SUV, stopped in the middle of the road. We discussed the ins and outs of gentrification, and the exploitation of poor people who don’t know what their houses are worth. As they drove away and complimented my bike, I realized that I had just experienced my first positive interaction with an SUV driver since I started riding bikes.

“That thing must be hard to ride.”

Not really. There is definitely a learning curve though. Having a tiny front wheel 4’ in front of your handlebars takes some getting used to, but anybody can operate one of these. They aren’t that heavy (similar to an old cruiser),

and handle quite well once you get really comfortable with the size and turning radius of the bike. Any moderately experienced rider can learn to ride an empty one in about five minutes. Heavy/oversized loads take more time. I’m still learning as far as that goes, but I haven’t wrecked yet!

“What do you carry in that?”

Just about anything. I myself have variously carried: six cases of coffee mugs, eight Christmas trees, and 200 pounds of firewood, but usually I am seen hauling 130 pounds o’hound around the neighborhood, bringing smiles to all kinds of faces along the way.

I have heard too many comments to even try to remember them all, but my favorite was uttered by a shocked motorist after I swerved around his just-opened door. He put one foot in the street, turned to stand up and saw two panting pit-bulls whirring by within inches of his face while sitting on a bicycle:

“Whaaaat?”



Leonard Bonarek is the director of The Tender Bridge Philadelphia (www.tenderbridge.org) and a volunteer supervisor for CASA of Philadelphia (www.casaphiladelphia.org) when he’s not biking his dogs to the park.



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By David Hoffman



Baton Rouge, LA. Lisa Perkins, www.BRsafeststreets.org



Washington, DC. Photo by Eric Gilliland, www.waba.org

Setting the “Seen”

In preparation for this article, I recently asked a friend what she thought of the “Share the Road” signs that were along a stretch of road near her house.

She replied, “What are you talking about? What ‘Share the Road’ signs?”

I described them in detail, and then went on to ask if there were lots of cyclists in her area.

“Sure.” She added, “All the time. But this stretch of road is a bit narrow for them to safely ride on, don’t you think?”

I asked what the speed limit was along this stretch of road. She immediately knew.

“Cops hang out all of the time. You can’t speed here.”

I asked her to take a careful look for the prominently posted signs time that she was out. A few days later I got a call.

“So, yeah, I saw those signs you were talking about. I’ve lived here seven years, and have never seen them.”



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Near the village of Kefalas, Crete, Greece. Photo by Chris Kouklis

Dynamics of Share the Road

Most people don't like sharing things of value. Sharing their money. Sharing their chocolate. Sharing their time off with unwanted family members. And most importantly, sharing the road with other users that may slow them. So when a driver sees a sign that tells them to "Share the Road," there is a voice in the back of their head that whispers, "But I don't want to." It's the same voice that says, "Why do I have to go 35 miles per hour on this straight road in the middle of nowhere? I could totally do 60 and get away with it." "Share the Road" is a message aimed at drivers who need to be reminded that their behavior can be aggressive and reckless. These same people rarely like to be told that they don't own the road.

Getting back to my friend who didn't see the "Share the Road" signs near her house, I did a little bit more thinking and asking around. As it turns out, most drivers pay attention to just two types of signs when they're driving: speed limits, and control signs (stop, turn, yield, etc.). "Share the Road" signs fall into a third, less noticed category: environmental signs. These might include information like "Entering National Forest," or "Soft Shoulder." These signs are often missed, because there is almost no penalty for missing them. You don't get fined for entering a National Forest, but you will get cited for failing to stop at a stop sign. Additionally, images are easier to process while driving than text. If you saw a picture of a tractor on a sign you would immediately know that you should expect to see farm equipment along that particular stretch of road even without reading any text on the sign. It is, in effect, a "Share the Road" sign for cars and farm equipment.

There is also the issue of sign pollution. Studies have shown that we can only process so many things while we're driving. If there are too many signs, many of them simply fade in to the background and are never seen by us. Dense urban environments are classic areas for sign pollution. And these same dense areas often have a burgeoning bike population with little room for bicycle-specific facilities such as bike lanes or paths. Instead, cyclists are often in a shared use environment—replete with "Share the Road" signs.

What's In A Name?

I got my start in bike advocacy back in 2002 when a local ran me off the road while the passenger yelled out the window, "That's what sidewalks are for!" Thus, Bike Pittsburgh (www.bike-pgh.org) was born out of my frustration for the lack of respect that cyclists were getting on the road in Pittsburgh, PA. I talked to a reporter at one of the local newspapers and got my story published. The reporter asked what I wanted from my fellow cyclists, and I responded that I hoped they would join me in a "concerted 'Share the Road' campaign."

Looking back, it seemed like a good idea. I was, after a fashion, only repeating a catchphrase that I had heard many times before. It was all that I knew. The phrase was part of a collection of sayings that my brain had stored over the years—*Only you can prevent forest fires*—*Say no to drugs*—*Give a hoot, don't pollute*—*Take a bite out of crime*—you get the idea...

Now, nearly eight years into a career as a bicycle advocate I'm beginning to question the effectiveness of the phrase "Share the Road". Before we go any further, it is important to separate the passive message of "Share the Road" from the active education and outreach efforts underway, such as teaching drivers and bicyclists how to coexist safely. Specifically, I am questioning the efficacy of the "Share the Road" message.

As it turned out, the "Share the Road" campaign that was my first stab at bike advocacy lasted a few months. Within a very short time, it became apparent to me that nothing would get accomplished in a town as gritty as Pittsburgh if all that I was peddling was a catchphrase.

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Is There an Alternative?

OK. I've made it clear that I don't think that "Share the Road" signs are particularly effective or welcome by most drivers. "That's all well and good," you think. "But you can't just throw that out there and not offer some sort of alternative." And you would be right.

My moment of clarity came one cold and icy January day while I was out with the Director of Public Works, helping to locate where signs would be placed along newly designated bike routes. The ground still had snow piled up on the sides of the road, effectively narrowing lane width, making these already difficult roads even more treacherous for cyclists. Drivers were behaving as aggressively and recklessly on these snow-compromised roads as they would on a sunny day. Sharing the road definitely wasn't on their minds. The Director of Public Works was in his car with a clipboard, noting locations for bike route signs. I was on my bike pointing out good locations.

He asked me, "Where should we place the 'Share the Road' signs?"

It wasn't a question of "if," but merely "where." I thought for a moment, and said, "Nobody pays any attention to those. What about another sign? How about simply, 'Watch for Bicyclists' with a picture of a bike under the words?"

He thought for a moment, and said, "Sure. We can have the sign shop make those, no problem."



Nara, Japan. Photo by Jeff Zell, www.panaracer.com

Why I Like "Watch for Bicyclists"

While "Watch for Bicyclists" falls into the same category of environmental signs, there is a subtle difference between that and "Share the Road." First, it isn't asking the driver to share anything—so no subtle hints that their driving experience will somehow be diminished. Second, it has a reasonably neutral tone to it—similar to "Caution, Children at Play" or "Pedestrian X-ing." It imparts the idea that they should simply expect to see bicyclists along this stretch of road, as they're already there.

But what I like most about "Watch for Bicyclists" is that it helps to convey a cultural change in the way that we think about how roads are used by people. A colleague, Jim Baross, often signs his emails with "Roads are for people, not just people in cars." I think that "Watch for Bicyclists" conveys this idea perfectly.

The signs were met with enthusiasm by both bicyclists and motorists—both of whom thought the new signs struck a mildly positive tone. Of course, all of this data gathering and polling has been informal. And, it's all just one person's opinion.

It's time for a change. Don't just share the road with us, be sure to look for us, as we're out there!

What do you think? Send your thoughts to advocacy@urbanvelo.org.



San Francisco, CA. Photo by Sherry Schwenderlauf

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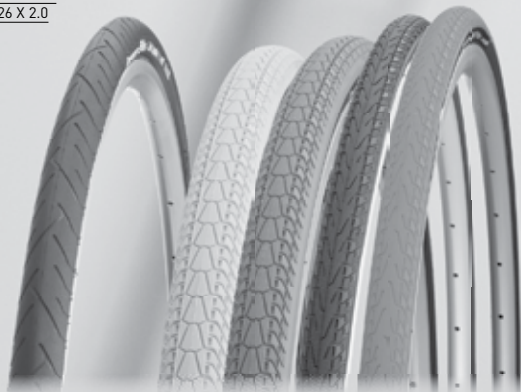
T-Serv 700C TIRE SIZES

700 X 25c
700 X 28c
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BOSTON

By Ed Glazar





Manifest Destiny

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Sustainable

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2009 NACCC

BOSTON By Ed Glazar



Four-Five-Six

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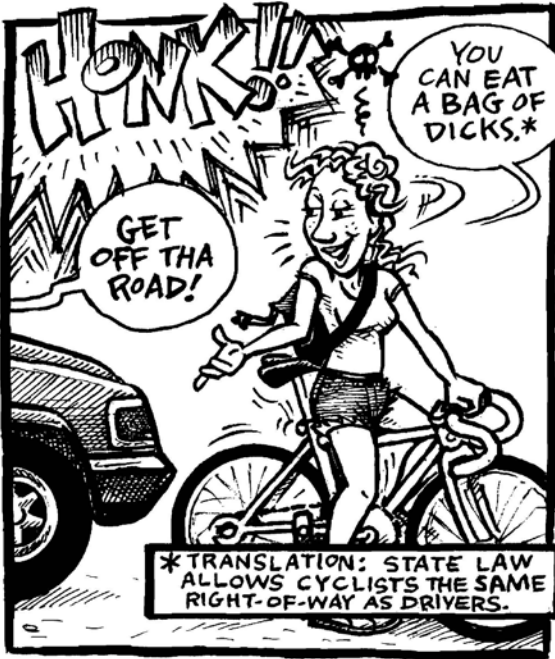


Red Light Report

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CONVERSATIONS HEARD WHILE WAITING FOR THE LIGHT TO CHANGE





Kevin "Squid" Bolger Fernando "Kid" Rivera



Photo Brian Smith

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ON THE ROAD TO Azougui

By Sam Tracy

Transportation options have a ways to go in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. There just aren't so many good ones for such a vast place. Nearly all the roads are dirt, and those few layered with asphalt are often narrow, unlit and crumbling intermittently at the edges. The faded outlines of median strips begin to appear leaving town, but road signs are quite rare—none of the usual half- and quarter-mile reminders we recall from back home.

Traffic is very light outside the capital, but those cars on the road tend to be very full. That old circus routine, with the legion of clowns climbing out of a car? It is standard operating procedure in Mauritania—a back seat built for 2 or 3 people will be expected to sit 4, unless someone is feeling rich enough to buy up a spare place. Two more persons are generally settled next to the driver, bucket seats or no, and we've even seen the driver's seat itself shared out. (The person actually driving the car sits on the inside, presumably to better shift the gears.) The folding rumble seat in the way back of a Subaru station wagon? It'll fit 3 adults as it turns out. The very same taxi brousse often won't leave until all its seats are paid for, so flexibility with travel plans is also important. Road trips can be long and uncomfortable with safety left to the economic interest—if you make it out safely, eventually you'll need to head back in as well.

One might hope that cycling would be more popular as a transportation alternative given limitations like these, but oddly it's not. The number of bikes on the road feels pretty similar to what we recall from Boston—a presence, for sure, but not often a massive one. The gender bias evident in many other African countries is especially pronounced in Mauritania—it is not considered culturally appropriate for local women or girls to ride bikes. Strange but true. (Westerners tend to get a pass on this.) More

broadly—as a Mauritanian guy put it to me the day after I arrived—bicycles here are considered *plus bas*, very low. More than elsewhere, cars here stand in for modernity and success with life, even the imperative to be taken seriously. If and when a driver taps the horn, the cyclist (or pedestrian) is expected to scurry the hell out of the way.

There aren't so many cars, fortunately. Here in Atar, the northern regional capital to which my wife and I were posted, we see a fair number of bicycles on the road as well, more than we've seen elsewhere in the country. Peace Corps Volunteers in Mauritania were once issued bikes of their own, until a few years ago at least. It seems a previous class of Volunteers voted to terminate the program, favoring a few more dollars' settling-in money instead. And so it was we that we were able to discover a small fleet of poorly assembled and woefully neglected Raleigh M50 mountain bikes upon arriving in Atar. The few parts and supplies required were duly tracked down at local hardware stores, and most of them are now back on the road.

Atar is a tourist-oriented town of 25,000, settled on a plateau between low mountains on the Sahara desert. A quiet, windy and hot kind of a place. The edge of town arrives soon enough, rolling out our front door of our compound at least a couple times each week we'll take the road north, to the edge of Atar's great and barren plain. There the road drops abruptly downwards into Azougui, the first and only village visible across a vast desert valley, framed by enormous outcroppings of dark and ancient rock. It's about 5 miles out to what we've been calling Lookout Point, with not much at all to distract in-between. Plenty of time to think, daydream, zone out as you pedal along... "Traffic" would be far too big a word for what happens along this stretch. On a busy day one might be passed by four cars, instead of two.



The gas company's compound marks the end of civilization leaving town. It's built around a bus-sized tank of propane, stuck up on stilts, beneath a tall roof for shade. The compound is parked some distance beyond the last few houses in town, to minimize disruptions in the event of calamity. Its outsized capsule is mother ship to the countless bottles of gas used for cooking around Atar, which find their way back home aboard slow-moving donkey carts. The bottles themselves, of indeterminate age, are invariably dented and rusted-out—one gets the sense that they've all fallen off the cart a few times. It doesn't seem to matter.

The carts—bare slabs of shiny rusted metal centered over what must be vintage car axles—are usually piloted by young men. But not always; on the way to the gas works and elsewhere, it is not uncommon to pass wholly unsupervised carts, pulled by their donkeys towards destinations unknown. What well-trained creatures they must be! The headless horseman comes to mind. The carts' ancient

tires are inevitably bald; many of them lean outwards from their axles at unlikely angles.

You don't see many camels on the road to Azougui. There's not a whole lot for them to eat—a few thorny bushes, the occasional short and denuded tree scattered across rocky terrain stretching to the horizons. It'd be some tough footing, for meager rewards. But if the road passes through a moonscape, the camels become its crossing guards—enormous, lumbering beasts bearing uncertain trajectories, the greatest of which would take out the windshield and more in a crash. Their presence exerts a salutary effect on speeding vehicles, as if they carried useful signs.

The road itself has little to say. The impressive reign of its asphalt is interrupted only by three short sections of concrete, each of them spanning a subtle trough in the topography, where running water must have once been a going concern. Hard to imagine in such a place, yet it's all the evidence will suggest—the rock all around must

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also extend downwards without intermission, yielding no opportunities for any rainwater's diversion. Much of it looks distinctly old, maybe even volcanic. We understand that the whole panorama was submerged beneath an ocean at some point in the distant past.

Riding at a comfortable speed, the first span of concrete comes just a few minutes past the road's first landmark, a hangar-sized water tank tethered in place by a pair of pipes extending along the road in either direction. The tank sits just across from a few bits of forgotten mining machinery left to rust under the sun, their fading utility guarded by a long and crumbling wall. The scene brings to mind all the other oddly vacant compounds we've seen traveling in Mauritania—large allotments of rock or sand, nothing else, wholly or partially fenced-in by cement walls. Those around the old machines outside Atar are surely decades old, whittled down to the ground in places by the wind and sand, but many of the compounds around the capital are much newer, built of regular cinderblocks. We've heard






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these were built for purposes of land speculation, but their presence seems too random for that. What was it about these pieces of barren desert, miles from anything, which required the protection of formal masonry?

The sand obligingly drifts all around and into them whenever possible. It's as if the compounds stand in as bookmarks, meant to start new chapters, to be detailed and expanded upon as the future permits.

The road's second concrete girdle is unremarkable—it passes under the wheels after some further distance—but the third, arriving shortly thereafter, is distinguished by four squat white posts, marking a small bridge. The bluff's edge, staked out by a pair of tall red and white aerials in the distance, begins to seem more of an attainable distance at around this point. Its remainder can even be counted off on the telephone poles after a while—the road out averages slightly uphill, and the prevailing winds tend to oppose, so there comes temptation to measure progress. But we keep going back, to take in the magnificent views waiting for us at the end of the ride, to coast back in to town with the wind more or less at our backs, to celebrate the possibilities of individual exercise in a place where they're not often appreciated.



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The lookout itself, up a short driveway to the right, is crowded with cabinet-sized boulders. Its massive solar-powered antenna, put up by one of the local cell phone companies, rises above a truck-sized blue shipping container, surrounded in turn by long strips of galvanized metal—leftovers from the tower's construction, perhaps. Its peer across the road, relationship unknown, is ensconced within a newly constructed compound wall, acres wide, artfully assembled from pieces of native rock, as if in reflection of changing tastes. We'll sometime arrive to find the artists themselves working in the distance, finishing up the wall's back sections, silently installing just the right stones to just the right places.

The antenna on the right needs no wall, for it has a guard. He came over to introduce himself one morning, speaking not much French at all—we duly responded with as much Hassaniya as we could muster. An opaque conversation, like so many others we've had here, if an amicable one. We saw him again a week later, walking a bike up the hill from Azougui. Its bright red hubs and rims brought to mind all the ridiculously expensive wheel sets I used to build at the old Freewheel bike shop on Hayes, in San Francisco—brightly-colored Velocity Deep V rims, laced with Sapim spokes to matching anodized Phil Wood track hubs, perfectly tensioned and true. But this was a mirage—the guard's wheels, as it turned out, had only been painted bright red. We see a fair number of hand-painted bikes in the RIM. Not in the exotic Landshark sense of the phrase, just made different colors.

The antenna guard waited for us to leave that morning, then mounted his bike and rode after us. Our Raleighs roll back down the first few miles of slight incline without much prompting, but his wobbly old city bike wasn't as easygoing. The guard compensated by pedaling faster. I eventually

drifted off the front, being heavier than the other two riders, and our new friend became determined not to let my wife, Kerri, pass him, pedaling furiously despite the fact that she really wasn't pedaling at all—not unlike a lot of the male riders back home, as she was later to observe. He peeled off to join a group gathered at a nearby utility station, just short of the bridge with the white posts.

We finally made it down to see Azougui just the other day, when our friend Mohammed took us to observe the opening of a new hotel. The road's asphalt ends about where it meets the desert floor as it turns out, continuing only as a dirt track. Further differences between town and village also become apparent—dwellings of neatly squared stonework become exceptional, replaced by scatterings of domed thatch huts, fenced in with whatever could be found to keep the goats at bay. The auberge and its proprietors all seemed nice enough. They showed us all around, highlighting the unique features they wanted us to notice—there was a surprising amount of green in the midst of so much sand—the oases really do bring life to the desert.



*Sam Tracy is most recently the author of **Roadside Bicycle Repair: A Pocket Manifesto** (www.fulcrum-books.com). He and his wife Kerri Spindler-Ranta served as Peace Corps Volunteers in Mauritania in 2008 and 2009 until the deteriorating local security situation forced the program's suspension—their adventures are chronicled on their blog, *Sand Cats & Camelbert* (camelbert.blogspot.com). The second edition of Tracy's **Bicycle: A Repair & Maintenance Manifesto** will be published winter 2010.*

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Working Bikes

Words & photos by
Brad Quartuccio



Nowhere is the power of two wheels more evident than in the stories from developing nations of how such a basic machine can transform everyday life for impoverished people. From simple transportation and cargo use to providing further reaching medical care and educational opportunities bicycles can have a large social and economic impact for people born into a reality different than ours. The North American bicycle industry and community has come to recognize this need over the years, with a number of programs across the land working on the same basic goal to get more bicycles into the hands of people who can really make use of them. One such long-standing project is the Working Bikes Cooperative in Chicago, IL that now transfers thousands of unused and discarded bicycles each year to new owners who are transforming their worlds and pulling themselves out of poverty.



Jesse Hautau



Jonathan McMills

Working Bikes is a not-for-profit, government recognized 501c3 organization that is completely funded by their retail operation and donations, with no outside foundation support. The system is beautiful—donated bikes are taken in and categorized with the highest quality bikes slated for repair and eventual sale through the retail operation and others funneled to various groups in need. Low-end ten-speeds are given to local charities that help the homeless and working poor, kids bikes are given to Chicago youth programs, and department store and other lower end mountain bikes are slated for shipment overseas. In the developing world the simplicity and relative durability of low-end mountain bikes, not to mention that many repairs can be made with a stick-welder, lead to these being the bulk of the bikes and parts loaded into shipping containers for destinations such as Ghana, Guatemala, Tanzania, Ecuador, Angola, etc. Working Bikes partners with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the world that then work to repair and distribute these desirable fat tired models.

By any measure, Working Bikes is experiencing significant success in fulfilling its mission with 6-8 shipping containers of bikes heading overseas each year, totaling some 3000-4000 complete bicycles plus as many other parts as can be jammed in to fill space. Countless other bikes have been put back into service in Chicago, saving them from landfills or general neglect in a nameless garage. On weekend mornings when the retail operation opens it is not uncommon for the line to stretch around the block, and all bikes to be sold out by early afternoon. In the spring of 2009 their new location was opened, ushering in a new era for the Working Bikes operation as everything is now housed under one roof, whereas in the past it was split between various locations. Five full time employees and a volunteer base of roughly 30 make it all happen, cranking out repairs and moving focus from container to container of bikes destined to a new life.

Some ten years on, Working Bikes seems on solid footing to continue serving their community and those abroad. Their model is simple and powerful, with an impressive track record of successes. Working Bikes Cooperative is located at 2434 S. Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60608 and can be found online at www.workingbikes.org.



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Bikes on Film

By Jeff Guerrero



Rad


To be frank, *Rad* is one of the worst movies to ever become a cult classic. The 1986 film exemplifies the cheesy love stories of the era, complete with lackluster acting, a predictable storyline and an absolutely awful soundtrack. Although *Rad* was Hollywood's attempt to cash in on the BMX craze, the biggest star they managed to cast was Talia Shire (she played Adrian in the *Rocky* movies). The movie also starred Bill Allen, who has yet to live down his leading-man role as Cru, and Lori Loughlin who later found fame and fortune playing Rebecca on the TV show *Full House*.

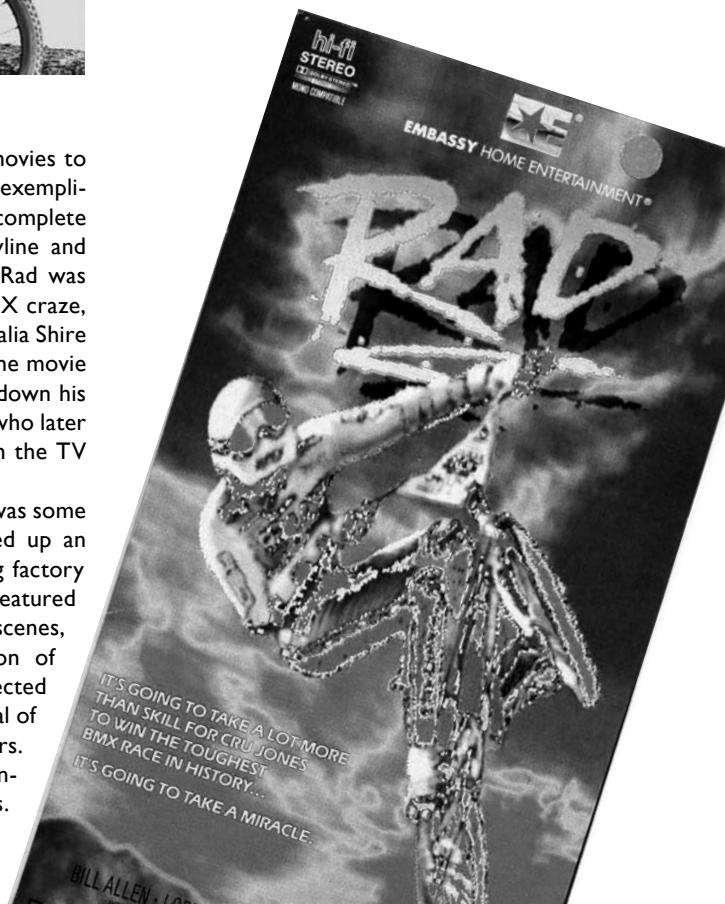
The one thing *Rad* did have going for it was some awesome BMX riding. The producers lined up an incredibly talented pool of riders, including factory pro riders Eddie Fiola and RL Osborn. *Rad* featured extended flatland, vert, street and racing scenes, which helped inspire an entire generation of cyclists. Perhaps because the film was directed by a former stuntman, Hal Needham, several of the BMX stunt riders were cast as characters.

Another high point for *Rad* was the cinematography—at least the action scenes.

Artsy shots of flatland riding contrasted dramatic aerial shots. The director of photography was Richard Leiterman, a Canadian cinematographer who's best known for his *cinéma vérité* documentary work.

Interestingly, *Rad* is not currently available on DVD. At least not officially. Bootleg discs are available, but because the movie rights are in limbo, nobody has stepped up and released an official DVD. Fans have organized an online petition to have the film officially released on DVD, which more than 22,000 people have signed.

Additionally, Bill Allen is still active in the BMX community. He maintains a fan site, www.billallen-rad.com, and makes appearances at numerous events every year. Watch for Supercross BMX to release a Bill Allen signature model later this year. 





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Real Life Tool Kit

By Brad Quartuccio

Most articles describing tool kit contents seem to want you to carry everything necessary to shop-tune your bicycle and then some, completely missing the point of the roadside repair. This is a situation ruled by necessity; the goal is to ride rather than walk, not tune your bike for race-day. Kits vary between rides and riders as much as bike choice but should follow the basic tenet of prioritizing the consequences and likelihood of potential failures, and the relative pain of walking home from where it may occur.

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Quite obviously a flat tire is the most likely roadside bicycle ailment, and only the shortest rides should even be considered without a pump, tire lever or two, spare tube and patch kit. The pump will need to inflate to the correct pressure for your tires, and the spare tube should be of the correct size and valve type (considering that deep-section wheels require long valve stems). This flat kit paired with a good multi-tool is heading in the right direction for the majority of simple repairs, but every bike has a few tool interfaces to consider before shoving off.

If you choose to use bolt-on wheels, you'll clearly need the appropriate wrench to remove the wheels—otherwise that spare tube is nothing but a fancy rubber-band. Crank bolts are an oft-overlooked piece of the puzzle when it comes to roadside tool kits. Being that a bicycle doesn't go very far with only one crank arm, it's worth having a wrench that not only fits the crank bolts but provides enough leverage to actually turn them. Checking over every bolt on your bicycle and making sure you have the tools to fit it a worthwhile exercise that can save some serious headaches down the road—you don't want to find out that your brakes need a 2.5mm allen key in the pouring rain. While cone wrenches and a locking tool may be overkill for even long rides, as the miles pile on and rides turn into overnight tours those same tools may not seem such a bad idea to carry. Many people find that combining multiple small tools can be more effective for their particular bike than trying to find one multi-tool that does it all.

In addition to the actual tools to turn the bolts, a few other bits can really round out a toolkit. That chaintool on your multi-tool is many times useless without a few extra links of chain to replace a damaged one, especially in the case of singlespeed drivetrains with a fixed chain length. Necessity is the mother of invention, and a few plastic zip-ties and a small roll of electrical tape have bailed many people out of a hairy situation.

Toolkits are a constantly evolving project, growing and changing as an individual's riding experiences, mechanical skills and miles add up. Avoid the long walk home at all costs, but we've all got to learn somewhere.



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Repairing a Sidewall Tear

By Brad Quartuccio



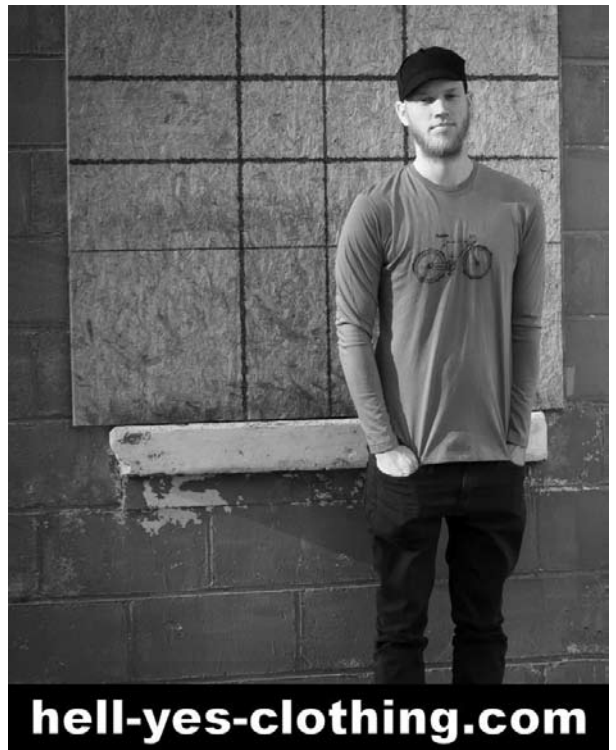
Sidewall tears are an inevitable part of cycling, with a knack for showing up at just the wrong time. Brand new tires far from home seem to be most prone to sidewall tears in my experience, leading to a not only inconvenient but expensive problem. Errant screws, sharp rocks and broken glass can all slice or puncture a tire sidewall, rendering the tire useless until fixed as the tube will inevitably bulge out of the breached sidewall casing. There are two basic repairs for a sidewall tear—the field-fix tire boot and the more permanent needle and thread method of stitching it closed. Conventional tire patches will bond to the inside of most tires and are admittedly a tempting fix, but they don't work to hold anything but the smallest of sidewall tears in place, and even then not for long.

On the road the quickest and most effective way to deal with a sidewall tear is an improvised boot jammed between the tire and tube—dollar bills and foil junk-food wrappers work near perfectly. Fold either one up so you have a few layers over the tear, leaving plenty of overlap with the rest of the tire. If you have some tape handy it can be useful to keep the boot in place during inflation, but once up to pressure friction will do the job. The boot spreads out the pressure from the tube across the inside surface of the tire and prevents the tube from poking through the slice and bursting. This fix will work for a surprisingly long time for small tears, but isn't recommended for the long term.

Back home, or roadside for a well-prepared touring cyclist, sewing the tire sidewall closed can be a permanent fix, extending the tire's life to its usual tread wear limit. Long standing practice is to use dental floss or a similar synthetic thread and a standard sewing needle to stitch the tear back together. Not being much of a tailor myself, I just make sure there are a lot of stitches spread around the tear and a strong knot.

There comes a time though when a sidewall tear is just too big to be stitched closed or extends to the portion of the tire in contact with the ground and a new tire is the only fix.

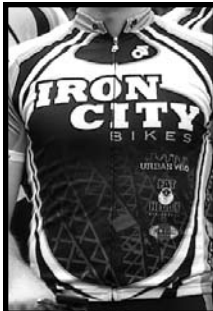




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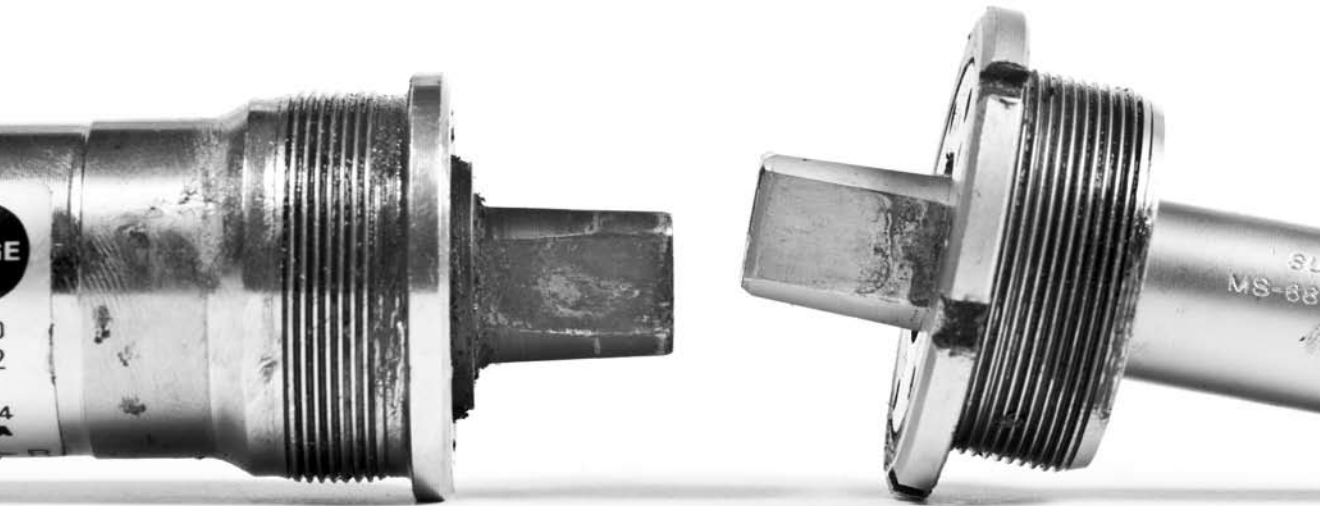



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Bottom Bracket Tapers

By Brad Quartuccio



The square taper bottom bracket is familiar to any and all that have worked on a bike in the past 30 years, it is by far the most common type to encounter even as some newer interface designs have all but eliminated it from the performance road and mountain bike market. Contrary to first look, not all square taper bottom brackets are created equal—there are two different standards used to dictate the dimensions of the taper. While the difference between ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and JIS (Japanese Industrial Standards) specifications seems trivial it is certainly worth understanding if for nothing more than impressing your friends with your vast cycling knowledge.

Both standards specify the same 2° taper, it is the length and starting width of the taper that differs. In practice this means that a JIS crank installed on an ISO bottom bracket will sit about 4.5mm further inboard than on a JIS spindle of the same length and vice-versa. Few people experience trouble with mixing the standards between crank and bottom bracket, as long as the proper spindle length is chosen for chainline concerns. It is possible for a worn JIS crankset to run out of taper on an ISO spindle, but this tends to be less a problem than some would

have you believe. In the days of loose-ball bottom bracket designs that required regular maintenance there was a larger concern with enlarging the crank arm taper through repeated installations, but sealed bearings have drastically reduced the frequency of crank arm removals. That said, when possible it is best to use the taper for which your crank was designed.

The basic rule of thumb is that Italian-made cranks use the ISO taper specification, while most everything else conforms to the JIS standard mainly due to Shimano's power within the market. The exception to this is that some high-end track cranksets (and all bearing the keirin racing approved NJS stamp) conform to the ISO taper design due to Campagnolo's might in 1957 when the NJS standards were codified. When in doubt consult the manufacturer or revert to the old trial and error method of finding the best fit.



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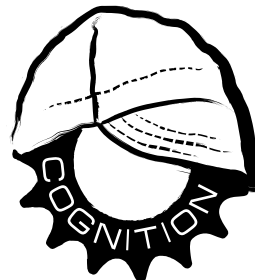
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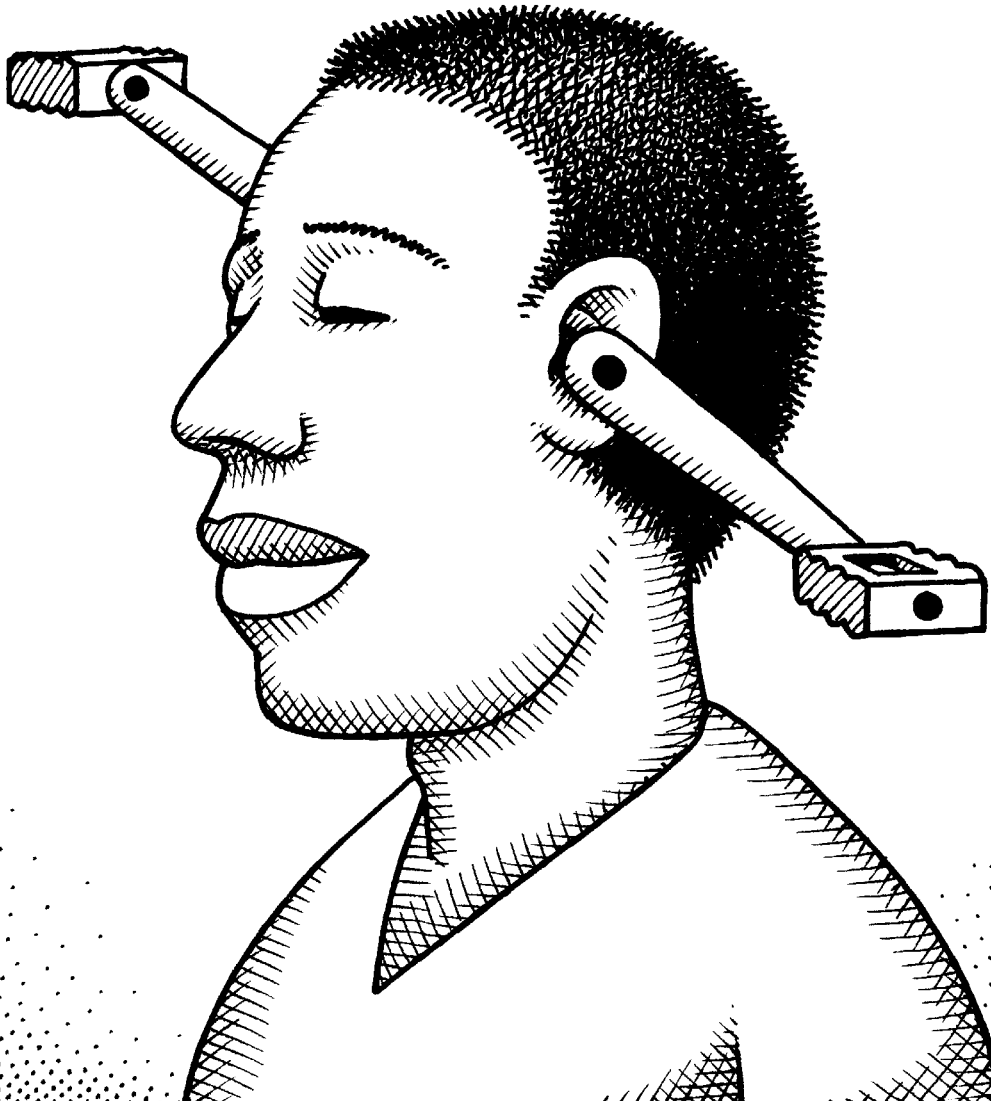


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