

URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

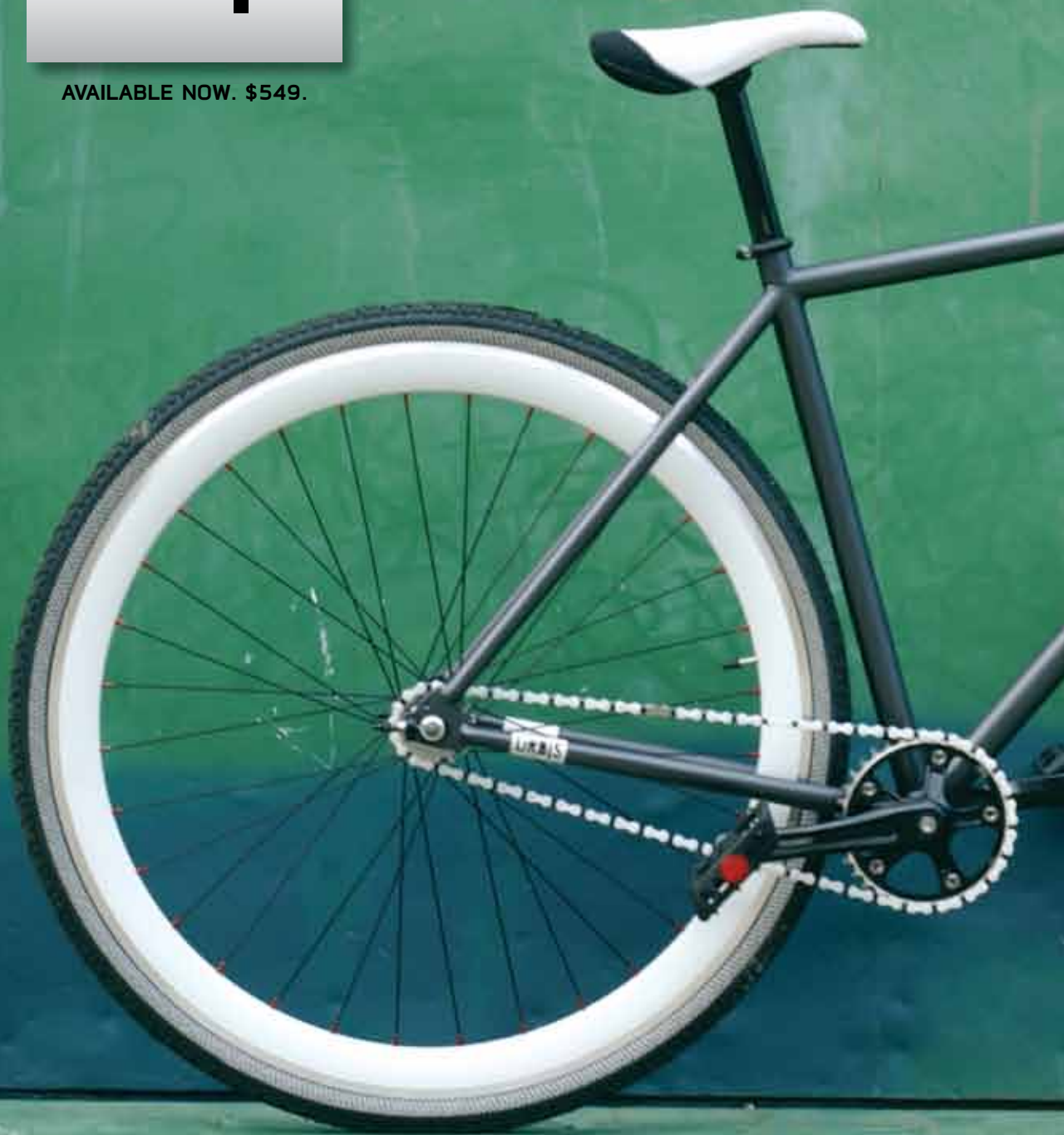
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URBAN VELO
Issue #19

May 2010



Brad Quartuccio

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Jeff Guerrero

Publisher

jeff@urbanvelo.org

On the cover: Shanna Powell pedaling through downtown Asheville NC on her single speed commuter. Photo by Jeff Zimmerman, www.jeffzimmermanphotography.com

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Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

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

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Features



36 **Denver's Courier Veterans**

Jen Hurricane

Three of Denver's most seasoned bike messengers share their wit, wisdom and tales from the saddle.



46 **Aiming for an Urban Cycling Mecca in Asheville, NC**

Jack Igelman

Southern cities aren't particularly known for their willingness to change, but Asheville is not your typical southern city.



66 **Finders Keepers**

Janet Matthews

Different people discover cycling for different reasons, but in the end the fact remains the same—we all benefit from the experience.

Players from all over made the trip to Kentucky for Lexington's 2nd Annual Bike Polo Spring Invitational. Photo by Jeff Guerrero



10 **Editor's Statement**

Brad Quartuccio

12 **Publisher's Statement**

Jeff Guerrero

14 **I Love Riding in the City**

Readers share their tales of city cycling.

56 **Gallery: 2010 NAHBS**

Brad Quartuccio

Photos from this year's Handmade Bicycle Show.

64 **Residue**

Roger Lootine

70 **The End of Favoring Motorized Transportation**

David Hoffman

A look at the bike advocacy movement, past and present.

76 **Red Hook Crit**

Ed Glazar

Part road race, part alleycat, this yearly fixed gear rally takes place on the dark streets of industrial Brooklyn.

80 **Book Review: The Lost Cyclist**

Lynne Tolman

Frank Lenz disappeared on an 1892 round-the-world bicycle journey, and his death has remained a mystery.

82 **Freewheel Removal**

Brad Quartuccio

Tips for taking that stubborn freewheel off.

86 **Get a Grip**

Brad Quartuccio

Different ways to keep those hand grips from slipping.

90 **Bicycle Helmet Evolution**

Andy Singer

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Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



Something I hope we can all agree on is that we'd like to see more people on more bikes. How to get there isn't so clear, with layers of problems with sometimes circular or even conflicting proposed solutions. Take dedicated bike lanes and facilities—they clearly increase bike usage and safety, but without adequate people giving cyclist's a voice at the table in the first place how do such public works projects first get off the ground? Even with infrastructure improvements, how do we get more bikes on the road when the entry level seems so expensive, and so far from the bikes that people really want or need to urban riding?

Through decades of advocacy efforts, funding at the federal level for bikes and other non-motorized transportation has been on the rebound after some time, with the United States Secretary of Transportation seriously addressing cycling as legitimate transportation, and its users as legitimate tax-payers, for one of the few times

since the automobile was created. Racks in business districts are full and big-box stores are carrying bikes that only a few short years ago were in the sole domain of those *in the know*. As our numbers and visibility has grown, so has the influence of the urban cyclist's dollar and it is something that even the most stubborn are being forced to recognize.

Besides Merckx or Coppi perhaps, few are born a cyclist. People turn on at different times, through different means. As the numbers grow and urban cycling moves out of the sphere of the underground faster than ever it's my feeling that it's important to embrace rather than fight the growth through false bravado or a sense of ownership of the scene. We're all in this together. The kid on the Walmart bike today could be the local fast guy or ace mechanic tomorrow—better to be the one who encouraged them along the way than to be remembered as the jerk that thought they invented two wheels.



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



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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero



Last weekend I took a group of high-school students on a field trip in downtown Pittsburgh. Since the students regularly take public transportation, we arranged to meet on Penn Avenue near the convention center. When I showed up five minutes after the planned destination time, several of them chided me for my tardiness. Though it was all in good fun, when one of them pointed at my bike and quipped, “Oh, I see why you’re late,” I was taken aback.

“Bullshit,” I thought to myself, noting their implication that if I had driven a car like a *normal* adult, I would have been early. I know from experience that it takes nearly as long to drive as it does to ride into town, and I would still have had to deal with downtown traffic and parking.

In truth the real reason I was late was that I couldn’t decide which bike to ride. But another small part was that I saw a friend out on the street and stopped to say hello. A real hello, replete with handshakes and well wishes. Which is something you really can’t do in an automobile.

But I didn’t make any excuses for myself, nor did I lecture the kids on the merits of “active transportation.” Instead, I went with the proper schoolyard response, which is to feign ignorance and act superior at the same time. Because you can’t expect to influence the younger generation if you ram your ideology down their throats. It takes a lot more tact.

Thankfully, the subtle approach is working. Last summer I was approached by a student who wanted to learn how to commute by bike instead of taking public transportation. And quite a few graduating seniors have come to me asking for bicycle advice in preparation for their upcoming year of college. One of my former students rides everywhere she goes in a city of 3,000,000 (she did the illustration on page 66) and yet another has gone from commuting by bike to racing at the collegiate level.

At the conclusion of the field trip one of the students approached me as I turned the key of my u-lock.

“Can I try your bike?”



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i ♥ riding in the city



Photo by Annamarie Cabarloc

NAME: Tina Tru aka Tinaballs

LOCATION: San Jose, CA

OCCUPATION: Elementary School Teacher

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

I live in San Jose. It's amazing and fun to ride around downtown with SJFixed. I can actually say I'm thankful and appreciate the fact that I live really close to downtown. There aren't any hills at all but it's a nice area to chill and tarck around all day/night. We have awesome shops (IMinusD) located downtown that just opened, city lights, tall buildings, a human size monopoly board, museums, and beautiful parks and trails to ride through.

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

As of lately, I would have to say San Francisco. I love the city! I love to ride around crazy small streets with busy cars and buses all around. It's also a great feeling to climb the hills out there. It gives me an extremely exciting and heart-racing feeling that makes me just want to smash through all the red lights. I know it's very dangerous, espe-

cially if I don't have a helmet on, but I'm a daredevil. I'm looking forward to riding in New York City in the spring-time with a couple of friends. It will be my first time there so I hope that experience goes well. I'm super stoked and can't wait!

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love mashing through the lights at night, I enjoy passing up all the cars in traffic, and being surrounded by tall buildings. I dislike the careless drivers and drunk people screaming nonsense. But I would rather be on a bike and stop global warming than in a car stuck in traffic and trying to find parking.

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

Life is like riding a bicycle—in order to keep your balance, you must keep moving. —Albert Einstein



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NAME: Maxime Sorin

LOCATION: Paris, France

OCCUPATION: Bike Messenger

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

I live in the downtown southwest of Paris, 10 minutes from the Eiffel Tower by bicycle. I was born here, grew up here and still live here. I'm a real *Parisien*.

I've commuted by bike since 2003. I saw a big change in the city when the Vélib' free bike service started up two years ago. People rediscovered the pleasure of riding a bicycle, and car drivers changed their ideas about bicycles a little bit. Although Paris now has a growing bicycle lane network, it is still a jungle for the daily urban commuter and especially bike messenger. Riding in Paris is very nice, the city has not been built for cyclists, but this is a very charming and historic place that has a very

nice atmosphere. I recommend a bicycle to visit the city instead of taking the subway or renting a car. The city is not very large compared to London or many North American cities, so you can cross Paris from north to south and east to west in less than 45 minutes riding.

What was your favorite city to ride in and why?

Melbourne, without hesitation. Aussies are very cheerful and kind people on the roads, they were very talkative and respectful. And the city is just a huge playground for messengers. There is an atmosphere mixed between the UK and the US that is very unique.

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NAME: Miss Sarah

LOCATION: Edmonton, AB

OCCUPATION: Musician/Teacher

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

I live in a northern Canadian city. We get four very distinct seasons so it goes from sunny, dry and hot to cold, wet and dark. We also get everything in between.

I find that riding in Edmonton is bittersweet. The bicycle commuter culture here is growing slowly, but not without the pains of inexperienced riders and exasperated drivers.

Despite all this, riding in this city gives me a new appreciation for the local businesses, the river valley, and the warm people who live here.

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

I think it would be difficult to make presumptions of riding in other cities as a tourist, which may not be indicative of cycling in any given city on a daily basis.

I really loved riding in Vancouver because the drivers there are more aware of cyclists, which made it easy to navigate in traffic. Also, the lack of snow was nice too.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It's healthy, convenient, and I never have to deal with parking.

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NAME: Peter Duran

LOCATION: Algeciras, Spain

OCCUPATION: English Teacher

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

I live in the extreme south of Spain, across the bay from Gibraltar and 15 km from Morocco. My city, Algeciras, is super hilly and has quite a few one-ways and narrow streets. It's a lot of fun late at night and around 3pm when people are at home eating their big daily meal. I try to take advantage of low traffic times since people here seem to have little to no respect for cyclists. There is always something beautiful to look at since we are situated between the ocean and the mountains. I'm looking forward to taking my bike with me on a few trips in the near future to other parts of Spain and a few other cities in Europe.

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

My experience is pretty limited with other cities, being as I've lived in Michigan for most of my life and I have

recently relocated to Spain. But, I'd have to say Grand Rapids, MI has quite a few fun spots to ride. There are some awesome hills to climb up and bomb down, a great cycling community and diverse scenery with museums, a big river, old and new buildings, etc.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because it shows cars that cyclists are a legitimate form of traffic, that many of us are concerned about our environment and our health, and that it doesn't take a 4x4 to get to work. It can be pretty fun to weave in and out of cars that are stuck at lights just to show them what they are missing out on. It's also nice to get off the road bike and country back roads and jump on the fixed gear and cruise town to go from the store to the bar to wherever.



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NAME: Baudman

LOCATION: Melbourne, Australia

OCCUPATION: Training Analyst

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

Melbourne is great. Inner burbs are quite flat, with plenty of bike paths and lanes (although not always where you want them to go). Traffic is, largely, quite understanding of cyclists. However there's always morons out there wrecking it for everyone (whether on two, or four wheels). The press seem to have a field day with the cars versus bikes war—but honestly, I don't see it.

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

Melbourne—just the diversity of bike cultures here.

A great semi-unofficial event is the annual Melburn-Roobaix (pictured above) held around Paris-Roubaix time. Makes great use of our many cobbled alleyways.

Why do you love riding in the city?

See above.


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Photo by Tyler Bowa, www.peoplesbike.com

NAME: Sandy Ley

LOCATION: Shanghai, China

OCCUPATION: Art Director

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

I'm originally from San Francisco but am currently living in Shanghai, China after moving here from NYC.

This is probably the craziest city I've ever ridden in—you have to be constantly on the lookout for spitters, random elderly people walking into you, crazy taxi drivers and livestock falling from trucks alongside of you.

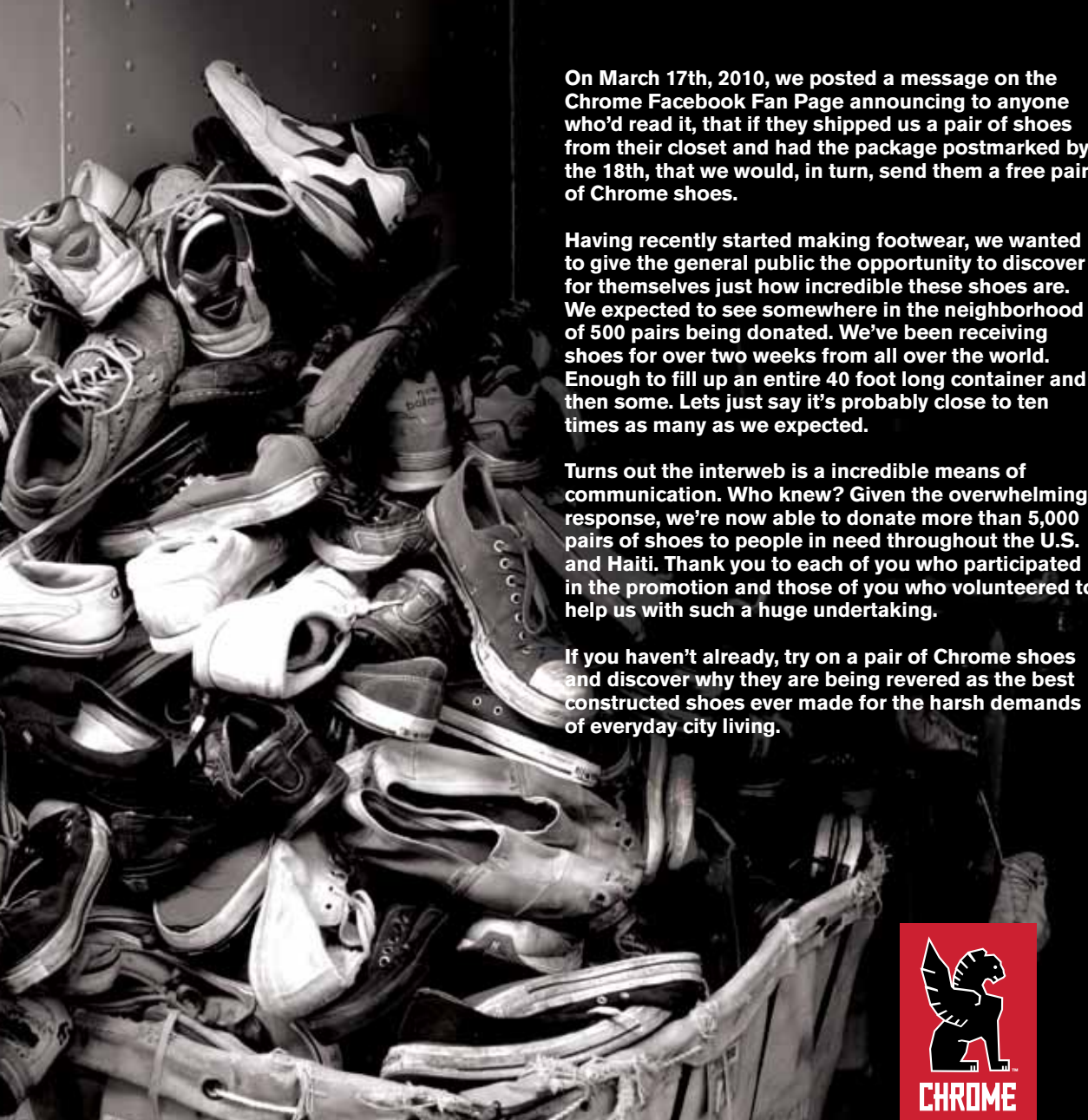
Once a guy with a 10 ft steel pole attached to his motorscooter came out of nowhere and nearly got it stuck in my spokes—so dangerous! But somehow, the traffic just seems to flow naturally in this city... almost like a choreographed dance.

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

NYC always makes for an interesting ride. I love the traffic, the bridges and the beautiful sights. It's the only city in which you can ride for 40 minutes and end up in a neighborhood that feels like a completely different country. My favorite ride was from Williamsburg to Fort Tilden—from the 'burg to the beach!

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in Shanghai because it's made me a much better cyclist. All the abrupt stopping and tight squeezes have really helped me gain better control over my bike. Plus, there's just something about riding 45 deep with motorscooters, tuk tuks, wheelbarrows and electric bikes that reminds you that you're a long way from home.



On March 17th, 2010, we posted a message on the Chrome Facebook Fan Page announcing to anyone who'd read it, that if they shipped us a pair of shoes from their closet and had the package postmarked by the 18th, that we would, in turn, send them a free pair of Chrome shoes.

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Turns out the interweb is a incredible means of communication. Who knew? Given the overwhelming response, we're now able to donate more than 5,000 pairs of shoes to people in need throughout the U.S. and Haiti. Thank you to each of you who participated in the promotion and those of you who volunteered to help us with such a huge undertaking.

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NAME: Tim Wilhelm
LOCATION: Akron, OH
OCCUPATION: Pedicab Driver

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

I live in Norton, OH but I ride my pedicab in Akron. I'm the only pedicab in town so I get special treatment. Everyone in town seems to like what I'm doing. The bus drivers and cab drivers all wave to me like I'm one of them. The store, bar and restaurant owners regularly stop me on the street and talk with me. I don't charge for my rides but am always happy to get a tip.

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

I never really rode in a city since I lived in Houston, TX way back in 1979, so I guess you can say my other favorite city to ride in would be Houston. I would love to live in a city where biking was a normal mode of transportation.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because I really like the downtown atmosphere. I like everyone knowing who I am. I get stopped all the time so people can have their picture taken with me. Everyone in town knows me as Rickshaw Willie. I put on a show for the people. I try to make it fun. When you work all week and you get a chance to get out you want to have fun.

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

"You can't lose when you take a cruise on a Rickshaw." There is another saying that I really like but I don't know who wrote it, "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

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NAME: Craig Collins

LOCATION: Boston, MA

OCCUPATION: Student/Explorer/Salesperson/Freelance
Bicycle Repair Man

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

Boston! It's pretty friendly, mostly flat, usually breezy, and has okay traffic. There are long, flat, straight broad-ways to rocket down and plenty of curvy side streets to cruise along.

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

Boston is the largest city I've ever ridden in, and definitely my favorite. Other than that, I've ridden in a few towns and cities in Maine, my homeland. The basic reason I like Boston more is that it's larger, simply with more places to go and more things to see.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love the adrenaline and thrill of riding with traffic. I love racing cars out of stoplights, down streets, and skid- ding and weaving through traffic. Also, one of my favorite times to ride is late at night, when there's no one on the streets and I can use the city as my personal playground, enjoying the quiet and peacefulness.



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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?

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NAME: Woody
LOCATION: Philadelphia, PA
OCCUPATION: Director of the Pedal Cooperative/Food Delivery Boy/Intern at Bilenky Cycle Works/Research Engineer at University of Pennsylvania

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

Philadelphia. Fun, since I usually ride with a seven-foot long trailer behind me loaded to the hilt. I receive great comments and many smiles and thumbs up. The city tends to have a bad reputation for not being bicycle friendly but hopefully the times are changing.

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

Favorite city to ride in is Philly since I am essentially from here. But looking back in my youth, I fell in love with the ride from Narragansett RI to Jametown Island over the bridge, such a beautiful ride.

Why do you love riding in the city?

The intensity is what draws my love for biking in the city. Sometimes you lose all sense of sanity and instinct kicks in. The challenges of buses pushing into the bike lane along with the college students always makes cycling in the city challenging but fun.

NAME: Lydia Brownfield
LOCATION: Columbus, OH
OCCUPATION: Singer/Songwriter

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

I live in Columbus, OH. The city is great for cyclists! With miles of paved and dedicated bike commuter paths, I can be downtown having a drink at the Tip Top or eighty miles out into the country from a single path. It's very green, with mile after mile of scenic, rivers edge path to cruise along.

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

I was living in Victoria Highlands in Atlanta when my music career began to take off, and it was great because I could ride my bike to almost every show in the city. It's a little hilly, but the weather is great and the city's different districts have great vibes. Atlanta is, without a doubt, my favorite city to ride in... with Avalon Harbor being a close second.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I have lived in New York, Atlanta, and Columbus, but spend a ton of time in Los Angeles as well. The city is just so alive, and the battle between good and evil lies around every turn.

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NAME: Natalie Newberry
LOCATION: Murfreesboro, TN
OCCUPATION: Waitress at Macaroni Grill

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

I live in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It's a suburb of Nashville, where its citizens aren't used to a lot of cyclists riding around. We have a tight-knit crew of bikers called CHIRP! Another group spawned from it, BIKE NITE, in which we meet up on our college campus and ride around the city every Thursday night. At first we were just expecting it to be the normal group of about 15 or so people, but after a while it caught on. We have had 60+ people show up, which was amazing. BIKE NITE is quite a sight for people, seeing 60 people on bikes isn't an everyday thing here.

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

Murfreesboro of course! Although riding experiences differ from day to day, all of my fellow riders stick together like a family. We don't ride to show off fancy bikes or prove that we can ride fast—we ride for togetherness.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It makes me feel free. It makes me feel like I'm actually doing something. It raises awareness to motorists saying, "We're not blocking traffic, we ARE traffic."

NAME: Empidog Reynolds
LOCATION: Oxford, England
OCCUPATION: Freelance Cartoon Artist

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

I live in a sleepy quintessential English village then cycle into the madness which is Oxford in self defense mode. As you enter Botley it starts—taxis, buses, unaware pedestrians, dogs and other cyclists. Mad, but great fun. Take a run up into Jericho to Zappi's Cafe (Flavio Zappi, ex-Giro rider) for a well earned cappuccino then it's off up north to BMW and Audi country to avoid school run mums and dozy kids... Heaven.

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

Oxford, for its diversity. You can daydream around the back streets absorbing the history and culture or you can go into East Oxford to the best bike shop (Beeline) and fight with the door openers, random pedestrians, cycle haters and be sworn at in a multitude of languages

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NAME: Josh Estey

LOCATION: Jakarta, Indonesia

OCCUPATION: Photojournalist

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

Jakarta, Indonesia.

"It's fun riding bikes with friends but my favorite thing is riding through the *kampung* (slums) and exploring new places. Besides it helps the environment." —Diva, 8

"My fixed gear bike is so much fun. I can put my friends on the back. When my dad takes us on the Xtracycle I can relax and watch the city. It's nice because we don't make pollution or noise." —Xenia, 6

"I like bikes. I can go fast like Superman." —Nic, 3

Why do you love riding in the city?

Despite the heat, humidity, pollution, traffic, poverty and general discomfort, Jakarta is a magical city where the simplicity of a bike can make you feel like a kid again. The Big Durian, as it's affectionately known, is ranked as one of the world's most polluted cities, with choking smog, unimaginable traffic jams, horrific poverty and obscene wealth.

My bike made me fall in love with this city. Riding my bike makes me happy.



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Denver's

COURIER

VETERANS

By Jen Hurricane

Photography by Lenny Maiorani

The life of a bicycle courier—seems as though they don't have a care in the world. Riding with cup of coffee in hand, saying snarky things in the elevator, slicin' it through every nook and cranny of the city. Denver's finest hustlers recently sat down for some tales from decades spent in the business.





MARCUS GARCIA AGE: 44
Native to Denver, Marcus has spent 22 years as a bicycle courier and has seen it all.

On The Job

Marcus Garcia: Craziest delivery? I had a delivery for one of the partners of this law firm, which shall remain nameless. It was some anti-itch medication and a box of condoms. One in the afternoon or so, and I was like, “Who’s the freaky deaky, itchy scratchy!?”

Punchy: I used to carry a harmonica in my bag and every time it’d go through the scanner they would think it was a clip of .22s or something.

Marcus Garcia: I got stuck in this elevator at 1225 with this chick and she was just trippin’. I didn’t know what she was trippin’ about, she had a to-go box, I had a bunch of weed on me, we could have hung out. You know, smoke some weed, she could finish her lunch, it’s okay, it’s all gonna work out! But she wasn’t having that, so I pried the doors open, like “Look see, we can get out.” She still wasn’t having it and I had a bunch of packages on me, so I dumped it down and jumped off. People waiting for the elevator were all like “Whoa,” like I was on some super hero shit.

Sam Turner: I think everyone has had the food exploding in their bag experience...

Marcus Garcia: “Are you just the runner?” “Only if you’re just the receptionist.”

Marcus Garcia: There’s nothing I dig more than when you’re completely worked, it rarely happens now, but there’s nothing more brutal than on a Saturday where you want none of your bike. The weather starts to get nice out and you see fools, you see *packs* of [people] riding. The streets are yours! But when they’re *paying*, I’ll see you down there.

Punchy: How I first started was on a Huffy with no brakes, no gears, combat boots and a duffle bag as my courier bag in the winter in Chicago. Now, when the kids start they have to have the sweetest gear, that’s cool, whatever your style is! But I came into this job broke! I was working construction and one of my homies that was a messenger told

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me, "You got a bike, you know your city, you got a lock, go make some money."

Sam Turner: There was this guy who was standing in the elevator door, just holding it cuz he's talking to his buddy. And there were people in the elevator with me, we all want to get somewhere, so I said, "HEY! Get in or get out!" He just stared me down, like, "You've got the balls to say that?" I said to the girl next to me, "Lets get off on the next floor."

Marcus Garcia: WHOA!

Sam Turner: No! 'Cause she was pissed off too. Then I pushed all of the buttons and said "Later," and we got off. She was laughing.

Marcus Garcia: I remember wildin' out in the 90's like, "I'm raising babies on this shit!"

On The Bike Scene

Marcus Garcia: I grew up blue collar, and it just happened to be on a bike. That evolved into now, if you've got enough cheddar, you can get your Urban Outfitters kit, you can look like that messenger type and there are kids who come out of that who kill it, and they may become that next wave.

Sam Turner: You can hate on anything when it gets popular, but I just think it's cool that more people are riding bikes.

Punchy: It was culture shock when I came out here! People have nice bikes! These are real bikers out here. Back home, we ghetto, running on rims!

Marcus Garcia: You see heads that are poor or maybe homeless, or even your kitchen fare. Riding around on a way too big stolen mountain bike with a buried seat post with the checkered pants... gotta get to work! The fact that I could make money just dicking around on my bike, to me, was an amazing thing.

Marcus Garcia: Chrome is some shit, Bart and Mark, they came into the mix in the late 80's, early 90's. If you were a Denver kid and you were about it, they'd hook you up! And they loved doing it.

Sam Turner: In case you don't know, they sold it and they're Mission Workshop now.

Marcus Garcia: Their bags killed it, they killed it, they were super supportive and they made us feel like champions. That was during the time when you could drop 50, 60 tags a day. You wanna roll the whip? Get it. "Awesome you called early, here's these runs, do this!" Chrome was a good thing for the Denver scene, for sure.

Sam Turner: I counted the number of track bikes I've had, around 15.



SAM TURNER

AGE: 41
Known as the artist behind some of Denver's finest alleycat fliers, Sam has 12 years of experience working deliveries.

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Marcus Garcia: Cumulatively, 60-75 bikes, I've had em all, except for the 'Nago.

Marcus Garcia: When the alley cat thing started in Colorado, there were a lot of kids who were hella sick road racers, cross racers, mountain bike heads that would come out. It's a bitch to ride a mountain bike, strong mountain bike racers kill it. And there were kids tricklin' down who wanted those messenger jobs, and they could flex on the messenger world. They would race and drop tags, and a lot of those kids in the end would be in the yard around the keg feelin' the same burn. Those kids were cool. I remember rocking it with kids who were sick ass sponsored semi-pro, pro racers; what they got from the bike downtown and getting paid to do the wild thing was some shit that they didn't get in the pack. I'd look around and realize, if it wasn't for the bike, I would never know these kids.

On Partying

Sam Turner: I'd be at Republic Plaza with my bike locked to my ankle, taking a nap.

Punchy: There's nothing that heals you more than the bike! When you're sick, when you're hungover, mind ya, two o'clock sucks for everybody.

Marcus Garcia: I had a court file from Friday and I had to drop return the filing on Monday by 9AM. Over the weekend the court filing stayed in my bag, of course, and at one point there was a bottle of Jager' in there too. It broke in my bag! It had this weird brown steeze over the whole thing and was super sticky. I copied it and took it to the fucking deal and they didn't even care. They were like, "Thanks! Cool!" The amount of damage control that went into that was unreal.

Marcus Garcia: In the alleycat days, it's not the kids stretching or doing push ups you gotta watch out for. It's the other guys across the street killin' that twelve pack you gotta look out for. The kids you sleep on.

Punchy: "Wow, I bet your job keeps you in shape!" "Yeah, but it's the blow, weed and booze that are fucking me up!"



PUNCHY

AGE: 35
Originally from Chicago, Punchy has spent some 11 years in the game.

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Advice For The Kiddies

Punchy: You gotta learn it just like I learned it, I ain't got shit to tell ya! Just remember it's still a job.

Marcus Garcia: Ride safe, keep your head up, pay attention to what you're doing, it's not a fashion show, and maintain your bike a little bit. And stop mean muggin' me!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Hurricane is an ex-courier and used to throw races and write for Cycle Jerks. She is the Denver producer of the Bicycle Film Festival & can be found on twitter @MsHurricane

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Aiming for an Urban Cycling Mecca in ASHEVILLE NORTH CAROLINA

By Jack Igelman

Photography by Jeff Zimmerman

On a warm night in the summer of 2008, nineteen year-old Jeremy Johnson was cycling home after an evening shift in the produce department at the Walmart Supercenter in Asheville, North Carolina. Johnson, a father of three and cyclist out of necessity, cut through a hilly residential neighborhood before darting through a traffic light at the crossing of a commercial boulevard. While there was little traffic at the late hour, according to a witness, Johnson pedaled through a red and was fatally struck by a car.

When local cyclist Mike Sule heard of the death several days later, he was rattled. Though a stranger to Sule, Johnson's death was at an intersection that he, a bike commuter, passed often on his way to work. He is also the co-founder of Asheville on Bikes (AoB)—an urban cycling advocacy organization. While AoB's efforts were initially aimed at promoting a culture of cycling, Johnson's death was a slap in the face and a realization that urban cycling isn't just the property of a minority of bike enthusiasts. "Usually when a cyclist is injured you hear about it right away," says Sule who recalls very little press about the accident. "The fact that this kid could be killed and virtually ignored really got me thinking about my responsibility."





It was a year later that a violent incident on the same roadway elevated the cycling movement in Asheville to the next level. On a Sunday morning in July, Alan Simons was riding with his wife and his three year old son in a child seat. A driver, Charles Diez, was upset that Simons was riding with a child on the four lane road. Diez confronted the biker in a parking lot, and as Simons walked away, the off duty fireman aimed a .38 caliber pistol at Simons' head and fired. As luck would have it, the bullet penetrated the outer shell of his helmet but missed striking flesh by less than an inch.

Sule was travelling on the day of the shooting, but this time he found a dozen messages on his phone immediately after the incident became public. Sule was taken aback because the act of road rage from a public servant was so egregious, but at the same time he wasn't shocked. That's because confrontations between cyclists and motorists aren't uncommon in this small city in the southern Appalachians where an acceptance of urban cycling has struggled to take hold. While Johnson's death drew very little attention, it was the Simons' shooting that drew the ire

of riders and those who see bicycles as an obstruction. While the edge of roads everywhere are often the battle ground between cyclists and motorists, the tension here has boiled over, making Asheville seem more like a hotbed of anti-cycling hostility rather than an urban cycling mecca.

On the other hand, the shooting, argues Sule, added a sense of urgency to the fledgling urban cycling movement, springing it from a grassroots campaign to a cohesive political one. And despite the setbacks, Sule will tell you that urban cycling in Asheville may be on the verge of a breakthrough.

It may be true that progressive ideas take longer to take catch on in the south, but Asheville isn't a typical southern city. After all, there are few places in this NAS-CAR mad region willing to allow the permanent transformation of its only stock car oval into a velodrome. The city has a century old reputation of embracing unconventional lifestyles and attracting a counterculture of misfits, artists,



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It may be true that progressive ideas take longer to take catch on in the south, but Asheville isn't a typical southern city.

and free spirits. That quirky tapestry of people has created an alluring and trendy mountain city of 70,000 with a funky and progressive vibe that is in blunt contrast to the typically rigid traditions of the south.

And for road bikers and trail riders, Asheville's a five-star destination on the cycling atlas. The city is surrounded by large swaths of public land, scenic by-ways that unravel like tickertape, and a well developed system of trails. For that reason, cars with cycles on roof racks are as common as daisies in springtime. But for a city that loves its bikes so, cycling as a viable mode of urban transportation is an afterthought. Just try bicycling to the office, to school or

the grocery store, and it's clear that cyclists here are still on the fringes of cutting-edge urban transportation. With few metro riding lanes and bike paths, two wheelers must wrestle for scarce space on hectic bridges and dodgy boulevards.

Yet all of the parts for a thriving urban cycling culture are here: the enthusiasm for the outdoors and healthy lifestyles; a passion for sustainability; and of course, the bikes. So what's keeping Asheville's urban cycling scene in low gear?

One of the obvious challenges is the topography. "We have coves and ridge lines everywhere," explains Barb Mee, a City of Asheville transportation planner. From above, Asheville's footprint is like a cross, with two primary corridors running east/west and north/south with downtown at the center. "If you want to find an alternate route or connector, you often have to go miles out of your way, or sometimes there is no alternative," she says, adding that the city seldom has the right-of-way to widen roads which makes it costly to add bike lanes and sidewalks.

In fact, cycling facilities and infrastructure are woe-

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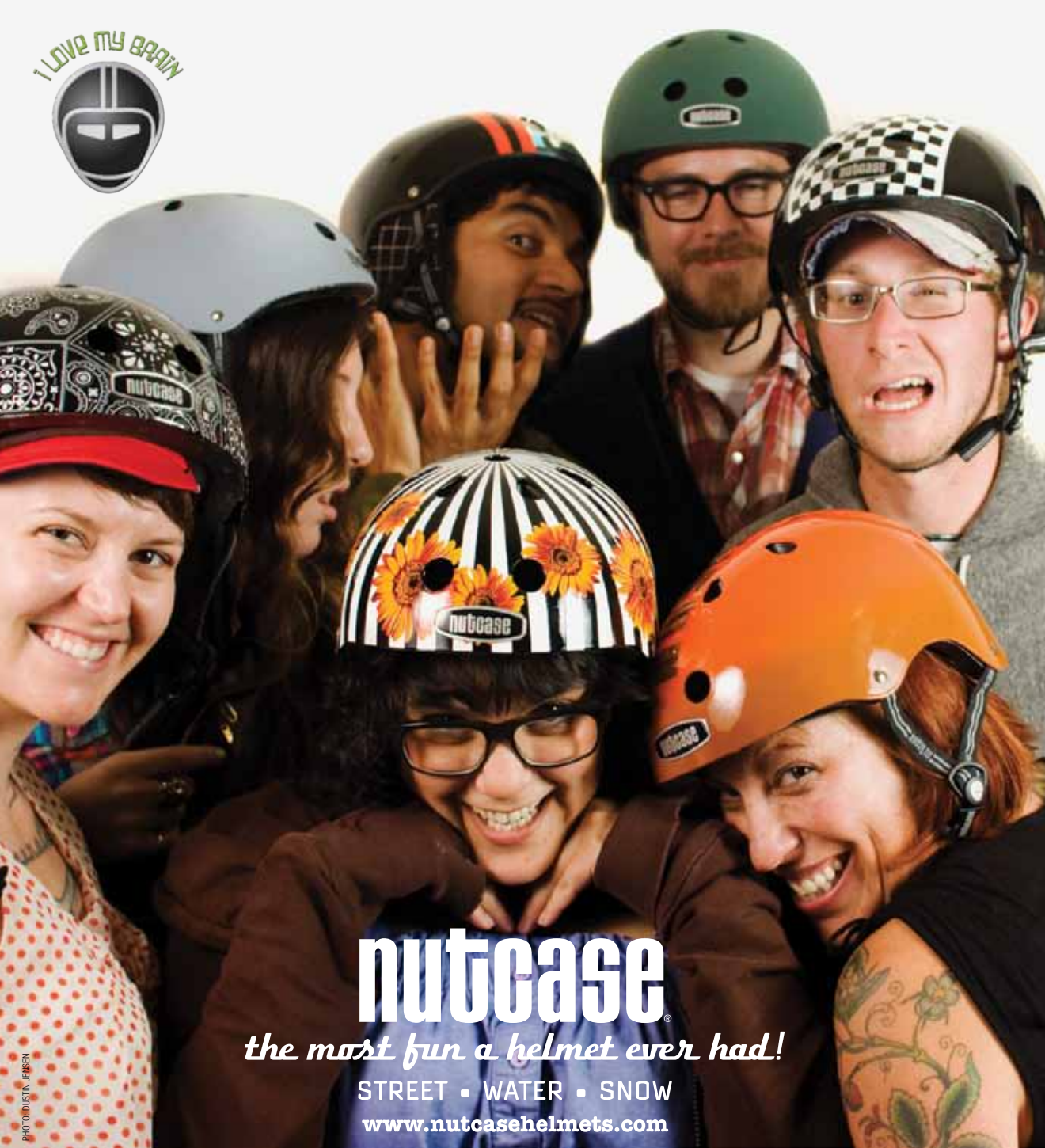
fully needed—Sule mentions that the nearby town of Erwin, Tennessee, population roughly 6,000, has more greenway than Asheville. Discouraging as it may seem, solidifying Asheville's urban biking culture isn't just applying more white paint and asphalt—progress here depends on putting more people in the saddle.

Sule came to Asheville in 2003 and sold his car soon after. While on a bike tour in Oregon in 2006 he was so impressed by what he saw in Portland that on his return he challenged himself to cultivate a similar cycling way-of-life at home. "I really wanted to establish that culture; cultivate it; and highlight it. That was my initial goal," says Sule who founded AoB on the logic that urban cyclists should focus their energy at the grassroots level.

One strategy was to promote events and community rides—which are sometimes flamboyant, spirited, and eclectic. The events may draw attention to cyclists that could come across as counterproductive, reinforcing a perceived lack of seriousness and the notion that urban bicycling is a fringe culture and stuck in the same place that organic food was a decade or two ago: the domain of a sub-culture. But Sule wants urban cycling here to reach the mainstream, which is why putting more people—all sorts of people—on two wheels is a key variable to make this town a seriously biker friendly city. "I think our urban biking culture is as passionate as Portland's; it's just younger. We want to reign it in and develop it," says Sule who has faith that the universal connection to bicycles will inspire more people to opt for two wheels as a primary mode of transportation in the future.

Many point to Charlotte, North Carolina as a model. Less than three hours from Asheville and with a metro population of two million, the city has made, perhaps, more progress than any in the south. "There are bike lanes in places I would have bet my last penny that there never would be," says state appointed North Carolina Bicycle Committee member Dennis Rash. "Some of that has to do with the extent to which the city commits to planning."

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Asheville, in fact, has multi-modal transportation planning on the radar. In 2008, the city council passed a comprehensive bike plan that projects a network of 181 miles of bike lanes that layered on top of a newly created greenway plan and public transit master plan. Tangible payoffs of the effort are downtown bike lockers, new greenways, signal loop detectors, and signed contracts for the addition of bike lanes on five downtown streets, among other projects in the works.

Despite that success in developing needed infrastructure, Sule thinks Asheville has a long way to go but contends that the incentive to invest and commit to a long-term cycling future may be worth the extra effort. “Relying on a bike focuses spending in the city,” he says. “We want to empower cyclists in Asheville to see themselves as an economic force.”

And as a political force too.

AoB had limited success organizing a candidate bike forum in the 2007 city council elections. Only two candidates attended, however the Simons’ shooting preceded the run up to another round of municipal elections. Get There Asheville, a coalition of citizens who support multimodal transportation, sponsored two public events in the fall of 2009 that attracted city council candidates, the incumbent mayor, and dozens of citizens. The cycling community’s hope is that events like this one will help Asheville accept cycling as a serious long term mode of transportation by developing an influential bike ballot.

Still, plenty of people disagree with cyclists’ view that they should have increased access to Asheville’s road ways. The question is: how do you bridge the gap between those that pedal for transportation and those that do not? The answer is in part education. Claudia Nix, a longtime Asheville cycling activist and Sule’s mentor has helped deliver adult safety classes, bike rodeos for kids, and a “share the road” module in driver’s education classes.

The shooting highlighted the enormous void that currently exists between people who love bikes and the people who hate them—unleashing a wrath of fury from both sides of the windshield. Consider a sample of recent letters to the editor: “[I’ll] continue to blow my horn and to curse at you and others who like to think that you are helping prevent global warming by bicycling. Ride your bike all you want, but follow the laws and rules of the road or get the hell off my road. Yes, my road, since cars and trucks pay the highway taxes and bicycles do not.” (Mountain Express, Craig Whitehead on 12/23/09). “Bike riders in Asheville are some of the most rude and inconsiderate bunch out there. Not all of them, but a big portion of them.” (Mountain Express web site, Barry Summers on 11/12/09).

Sule has also jumped into the editorial fray, authoring several op-eds in local papers. “I understand the dichotomy. We all have to use the space and cyclists have to be able to deal with a certain amount of harassment,” concedes Sule, but adds with emphasis that “an automobile is a large, slow moving bullet, so when a motorist harasses a cyclist, they jeopardize a life—and that’s a fact.” So when Diez was handed a surprisingly dainty 120 day sentence last November for assault after a grand jury dropped attempted murder charges, the indignation among cyclists reached an apex. Ironically, it was an actual bullet that may have ultimately brought cycling as transportation to a higher priority in Asheville.

For Sule, however, that realization came a year earlier: with Jeremy Johnson’s death. “The fact that he didn’t have the support to wear a helmet or use a light—that really shook me hard,” says Sule who ultimately favors a balanced approach—infrastructure, education, policy change—to making cycling a reliable mode of transportation. “It’s been a learning process ever since. I’m starting to understand the policies and how the system works. My responsibility is not to look at what’s keeping us back, but how to move forward.”

Though he hasn’t overlooked his initial goal of developing a vibrant cycling culture. Adding that the test is to not just convince future pedalers that riding in Asheville is a remarkable place to ride, but a safe one too.





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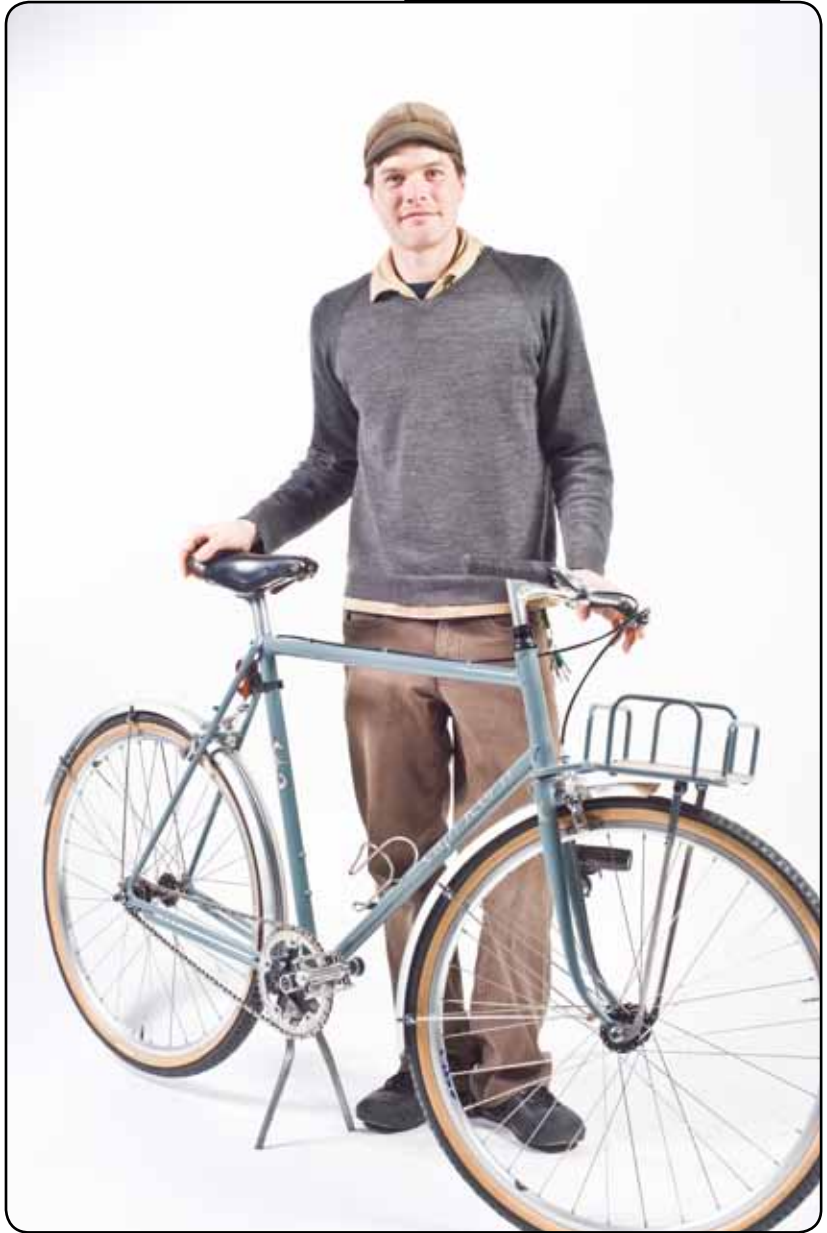
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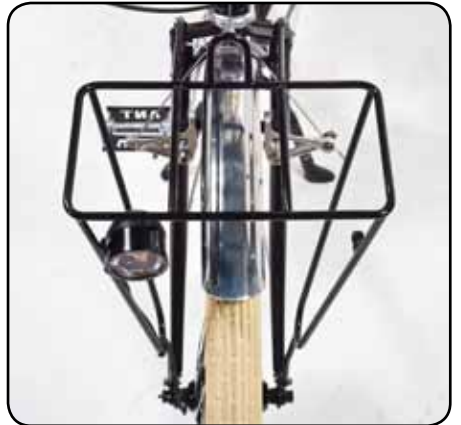
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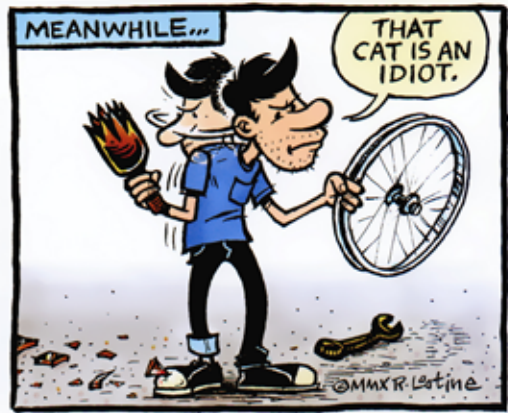


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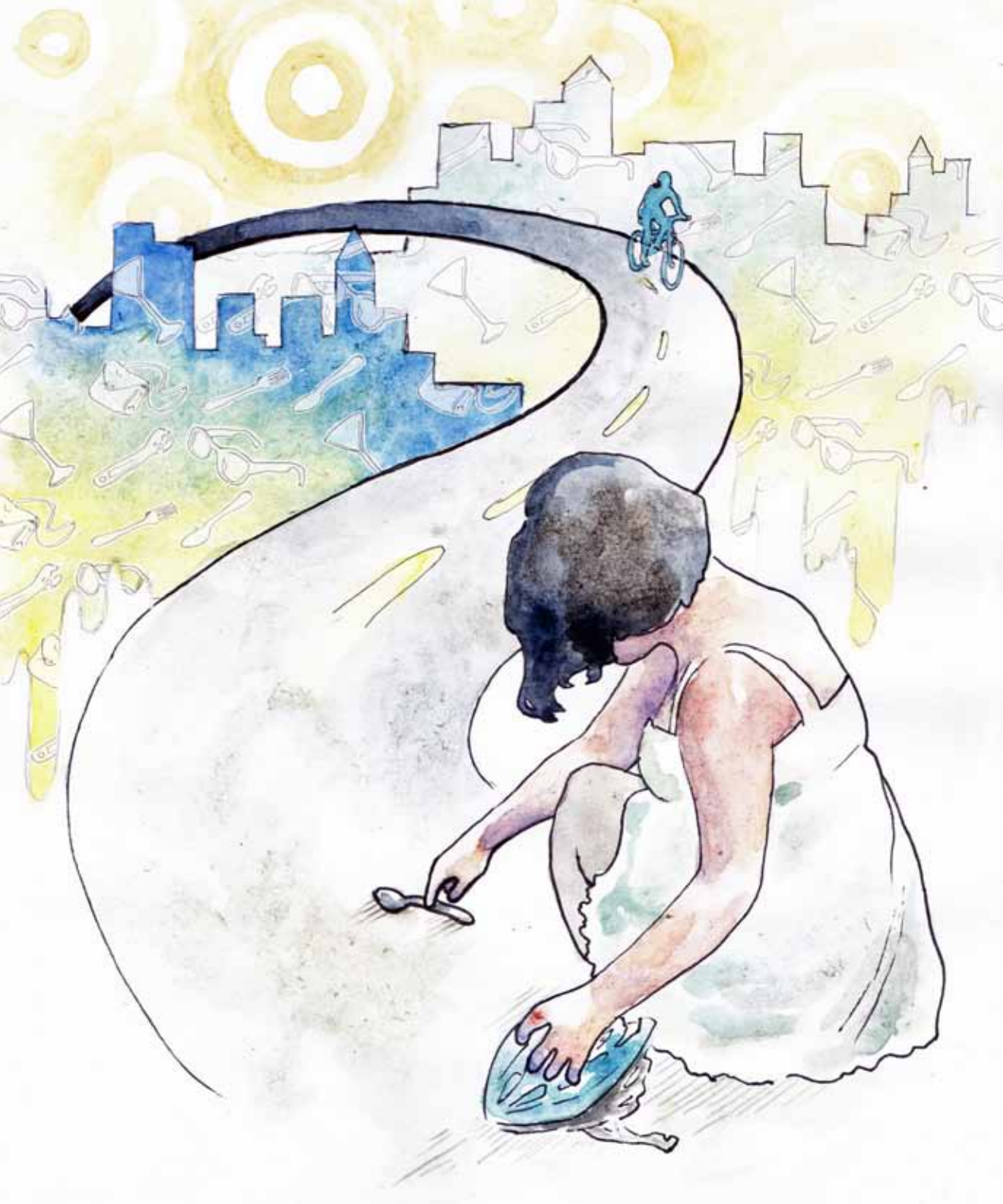


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Finders Keepers

By Janet Matthews

It was in the early 1990's when we started riding bikes, specifically for my husband's health. His couch potato life style was literally killing him. We lived on the high plains in Texas, home to abundant sunshine (inexhaustible source of Vitamin D) and strong winds (great for developing strong cardio and calf muscles), which became a definite negative when the spring sandstorm season arrived. Even though there were ample ribbons of flat paved roads to ride, we opted to purchase mountain bikes, based on our doctor's suggestion. We were embarking on a sport we knew absolutely nothing about.

Not unlike lots of folks, we started out with department store bikes. As our skills improved, so did our equipment. Our first "real" mountain bikes were aluminum frame, front suspension hardtails. Our bikes carried us

over sandy flatlands full of thorns as well as trails in the canyons of our home state. We rode singletrack most of the time, and felt that mountain biking was our ticket to better health.

Our biking lives changed when I received a promotion that took us away from our home of 33 years. Our new location boasted weather that was conducive to riding almost year round—no more sandstorms! Even though mountain biking was still our first love, we decided it was time to take a shot at the local roads. There were a number of road cycling clubs at our new location, providing a variety of rides throughout the week. With the addition of road bikes to our stable, we spent many weekends riding back roads and some urban areas that included paved trails and streets designated for bicycles. Life was good!

Life can throw you some curves, however. In January 2005 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Because my fantastic docs caught the disease in the early stages, I got by with surgery and a dose of radiation five days per week for six weeks. Radiation takes its toll on your energy level, and sleeping late on Saturdays felt like Heaven. Sundays were designated urban bike riding days. A routine ride covered anywhere from 10 to 20 miles, however, riding drop bars proved to be uncomfortable for me, prompting a switch to flat bars.

My recuperation also included short and eventually long walks around our neighborhood, but exploring the urban areas around our home by bike was what we enjoyed the most. Then a funny thing happened. Almost without knowing it we became aware of all sorts of “stuff” on the streets, in gutters, on sidewalks and along designated bike paths. We started to accumulate treasures such as loose change, hand tools, sunglasses, “cheater” glasses (with rhinestones around the rims, no less), metal spoons, knives, and forks, a new baby blanket with tire tread marks on it, and an occasional bar glass or paper bill. An exceptional find was two purses discarded in a drainage ditch (containing driver’s licenses, credit cards, and car keys). We called in the local cops on this find and learned that the purses had been stolen from a bar. Another exceptional find was five tickets to a well-known theme park, which we rescued from the brink of a city gutter drain. We gave the tickets to a single mom with four kids. Coincidentally, the day we handed the family the tickets was the mom’s birthday. How cool was that!

Almost accidentally we came across a book by Jeff Ferrell, entitled “Empire of Scrounge,” which further piqued our interest in scrounging. This pastime has become a unique part of our lives and helps us keep up with our fitness routines—urban bike riding and walking—with an eye open for treasure. Scrounging has also turned into a competition between my husband and me. At the end of our rides/walks we assess our bounty; my husband tends to find more coins, but I hold the record for discarded cutlery.

Since we began to ride or walk daily after work, we

decided that we should give ourselves a title: Urban Trekkers in Search of Random Treasure. We also decided to build what we considered to be the ultimate urban bike. We purchased some older steel cyclocross frames, flat handlebars, and installed single chainring cranksets. To make it much easier to climb steep hills, we opted for 10 speed cassettes and long cage rear derailleurs. This combination really works for us.

Recycling is also a part of our lifestyle, extending to the goods we find along the streets and roads. Examples: a like-new tennis skirt found in a parking lot (you really wonder about that one!), 15 articles of gently-worn children’s clothing stuffed into the trash bin at the local car wash (laundered and given to one of the local children’s homes), t-shirts, work-out clothing, several pairs of slightly worn flip-flops, and aprons all washed and taken to homeless shelters. Shirts not up to shelter standards are laundered and stuffed into our “rag bag” in the garage, where we can use them for bike repairs and house cleaning.

Although you might not think it, the pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters add up over time. Tucked away in a cupboard inside our home are 3-quart jars brimming with loose change scrounged from the roadside. These fruits of our labors are not totally philanthropic; at least once per year we treat ourselves to a biking vacation. One of our favorite destinations is in New Mexico where we visit our favorite non-smoking casino. Almost without exception, what we have gained through scrounging, the slots taketh away. Such is life.

Bicycling will always be a factor in our staying active and healthy, whether it is our now favorite urban riding, mountain biking or an occasional club road ride or tour. Our cycling wardrobes have changed dramatically. We no longer wear spandex shorts and colorful roadie jerseys with graphics and such. Our urban riding and walking wardrobe now consists of high visibility polyester t-shirts and baggy bike shorts or knickers with lots of pockets for treasures.

And the best news to date—I’ve just had my 5th annual check-up and I am still cancer free. Urban scroungers ride on!



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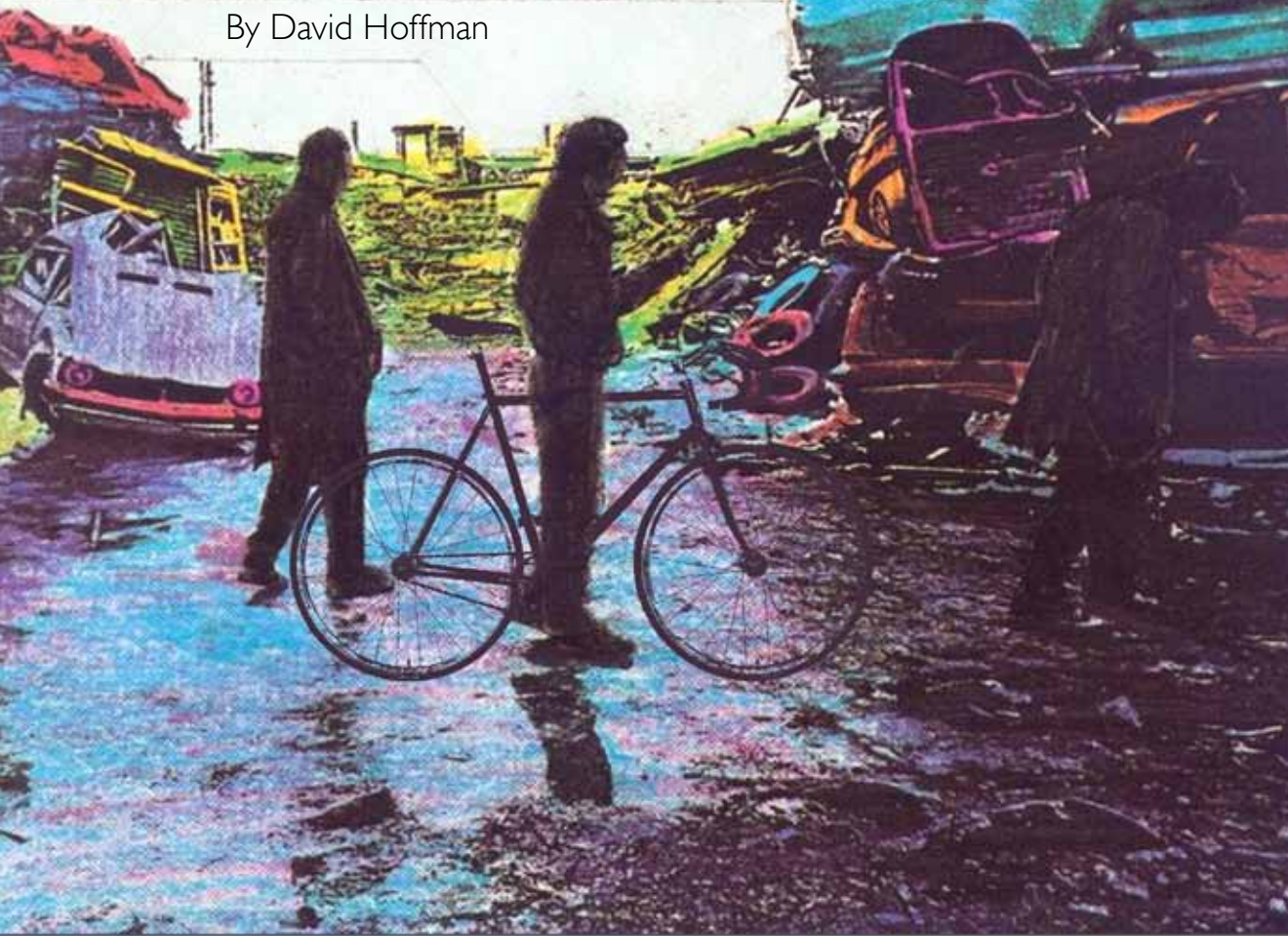
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THE END

OF FAVORING MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

By David Hoffman



As a profession, bicycle advocacy hasn't been around that long. Yet over the last ten years or so, the changes in the type and breadth of

work that we do as advocates has been great. This article explores the origins of bicycle advocacy and makes some predictions on where we are going.



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Birth of a Movement

Some of the very earliest bicycle advocacy took place in the 1890's as part of the "Good Roads" movement. The movement was aimed at improving rural roads for bicyclists, who at the time had to contend with mud that could be inches deep when it rained or cracked and rough when it dried, or had to contend with cobblestone streets in the days before pneumatic tires. This movement paved the way for the automobile in the years ahead, and in fact, many motor advocates joined the movement as early as 1902. Another famous example of early bicycle advocacy took place in San Francisco in 1896. Known as "The Great Bicycle Protest of 1896," in which local advocates were lobbying to have roads improved in a city that was then supporting 360,000 residents but was designed for 40,000. Advocates staged a rally on Market Street, and one local merchant actually put down tarred wooden blocks in an effort to demonstrate what a "paved" street would look like. The rally was a huge success, with thousands of cyclists turning out Critical Mass-style, resulting in a paved Market Street by 1898. (More on early efforts at bicycle advocacy in Urban Velo #11, "Good Roads Great Protests.")

As the 20th century rolled on the automobile rapidly pushed bicyclists to the margins of transportation. While never completely gone, the bicycle was largely the plaything of children, vehicle of choice on college campuses, and occasional curiosity on the road. Under the Eisenhower administration construction of the National Interstate System commenced as cars reigned king. Gas was cheap, tailfins grew large and Americans fled to the suburbs in search of the American Dream and a patch of green lawn that they could call their own. Imagery from this time period puts bicycles under the Christmas tree, little girls with pigtails riding tricycles on the sidewalk, and dowdy Ivy League types pedaling around campus in a tweed jacket while smoking a pipe.

Europe never really gave up the bicycle. Being much older than America, Europe had most of their cities built by the time the bicycle and then the automobile came into existence. As such, there were no suburbs to build, and few roads within the cities that could be widened. On top of that, gas has always been more expensive in Europe than in the U.S. Finally, as gas was such a scarce commodity before, during and after World War II in Europe, the use of bicycles remained (and continues to remain) very high relative to that here in America. So what caused some folks to take the road less traveled and face-off against the dominant car culture?

The answer isn't simple, but like today, it likely involves multiple factors that led folks to rethink the way that they are getting around. Here in the U.S. there was a mini bike-boom in the 1970's where European-style, drop handle, skinny-tire, racing-type bikes were all the rage. This boom lasted only a few years after which most of these bikes were parked in the garage and forgotten. By the mid-70s the gas shortage in the U.S. helped people to find these same bikes, re-inflate the tires, and use them for transportation. The only problem was that the roads were no longer friendly to bicycles. Some of the nation's oldest grass-roots bicycle advocacy organizations were formed at this time including: the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (www.sfbike.org), the Active Transportation Alliance (formerly the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, www.activetrans.org), and the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia (www.bicyclecoalition.org). During this time, bike advocates focused on creation of bike lanes, bike parking and bicycle pathways. Research in California showed that the State of California had its first statewide bicycle plan in 1974. Marin County (where I do most of my work) had a countywide bicycle plan from the mid-70's as well. It is interesting to note that the covers of both of these documents show the dominant bicycle sold at the time—that same European-style road bike—wasn't particularly well suited for transportation, unlike many of the current commuter and utility bikes which are the current trend in the bicycle industry.

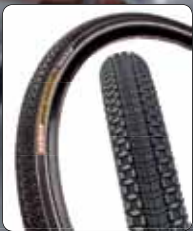
Bike advocacy organizations continued to occasionally sprout up through the 1970's and 1980's—mostly still focusing on the creation of urban facilities. In general, partnerships with other organizations outside of riding clubs were rare, and progress to build new bicycle facilities was relatively slow. All of that changed in 1991 when Congress passed ISTEA (pronounced "ice tea")—the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act—in which millions of dollars were available for the first time for bicycling at a Federal level. Bicycle advocacy organizations began appearing with more frequency as there was now more available funding to help build some of the facilities and trails that had been planned in the previous decades.

By the mid-90's bicycle advocates were really beginning to coalesce, finding each other through new electronic mediums. Additionally, the potential reauthorization of ISTEA was just around the corner, and advocates were beginning to look for ways to increase funding for bicycling. In 1996 about twenty leaders of bicycle advocacy organizations from all over the county met at the Thunderhead Ranch in Wyoming to discuss strategy around

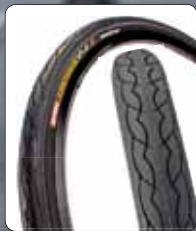


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Europe never really gave up the bicycle. Being much older than America, Europe had most of their cities built by the time the bicycle and then the automobile came into existence.

the upcoming reauthorization. Out of this seminal event came the Thunderhead Alliance (now the Alliance for Biking and Walking, www.peoplepoweredmovement.org). One of Thunderhead's objectives was to help create and empower local grassroots advocacy groups.

TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century) was the first reauthorization of the Federal transportation bill in 1998 and included even more money (\$285 million) for bicycling. In 2001 the first Safe Routes to School programs began to appear in the U.S. (based on the U.K. program with the same name). This program, now a national program in all 50 states focuses on enabling children to walk and bike to school (see Urban Velo #14, "Safe Routes Revolution"). Bicycle advocates were now sometimes working as pedestrian advocates... and the benefits of shifting the narrow focus from just bicycling to non-motorized transportation as a whole were becoming more apparent. Pedestrian advocacy groups also started appearing in greater numbers. By 2004, the Thunderhead Alliance began to include pedestrian advocacy organizations. The change to include pedestrian advocacy groups in Thunderhead was made right after ProWalk/ProBike—a biannual conference for transportation planners and advocates working in non-motorized transportation.

Growth and Evolution

The National Complete Streets movement (see Urban Velo #1 "Complete Streets") picked up real momentum in the mid-2000's. A "complete street" is a street that is safe, comfortable, and accessible for all roadway users including the most vulnerable, such as bicyclists and pedestrians. Advocates now had additional tools to help them have streets designed to include the needs of non-motorized transportation from the beginning, or to have them included when a road was resurfaced or retrofitted. Complete street elements could include a wide variety of items such as narrowing lanes to slow traffic, accommodations for public transit, bike lanes, improved intersections and crosswalks, street trees, curb extensions, etc.

Advocates found themselves aligned even more strongly with transit advocacy groups as a result of the Complete Streets movement.

The last several years has witnessed the public debate on Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) and global warming as well as the obesity epidemic here in the U.S. Pressure on consumers from rising energy costs is causing some people to once again rethink their transportation choices. A new term is now being used within the circles of non-motorized advocates—"Active Transportation." This phrase accurately reflects the changing attitudes of many bicycle advocates who see how bicycling is just one component in a much larger effort to get us out of our cars and back in to an active lifestyle.

If not already incorporated into some part of the work that they do, bicycle advocates these days find themselves increasingly working alongside pedestrian, transit, and public health advocates. Doctors are beginning to actually prescribe bicycling and walking as a way to work with health issues such as obesity and diabetes. This phenomenon actually has a name—"Active Prescription"—and it's being picked up by many of the major healthcare providers. In perhaps the strongest pointer to the direction that bicycle advocacy is headed, the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation recently changed their name to the Active Transportation Alliance. Will other advocacy groups follow? In fact, many groups now simply incorporate more than bicycling in to their organization name such as Walk Oakland Bike Oakland (www.walkoaklandbikeoakland.org) and Bike Walk Connecticut (www.bikewalkconnecticut.org).

The Future of Active Transport

Looking into the future, I see Active Transportation advocates becoming intimately involved with land use planning. I envision stronger ties to healthcare advocates and healthcare organizations. As this country ages the demand for safe and accessible streets and facilities will continue to increase. I predict that money to help bicycle initiatives around GHG, global warming, the obesity epidemic, and intelligent land use will become increasingly common and part of the work that we do.

We are now at the end of the second reauthorization called SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users), and are heading into what we hope will be a third. In March 2010 at the National Bike Summit the current Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, announced while standing on a table in front of a sea of hundreds of bicycle advocates that, "This is the end of favoring motorized transportation at the expense of non-motorized."



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RED HOOK CRIT

Words and Photos by Ed Glazar



Spectators gathered as racers snaked through the Otsego chicane. The 2010 Red Hook Criterium drew a large amount of spectators that could be heard cheering on racers from several blocks away.

Roode Hoek was a village settled by Dutch colonists in 1636, named for its red clay soil and point of land projecting into New York's East River. Two hundred years later it became Red Hook, one of the busiest ports in the country. One night per year this post-industrial neighborhood becomes a new Brooklyn legend, as 50 cyclists race fixed-gear bicycles at breakneck speeds through its pitted and cobbled streets.



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Crihs Thorman and Dan Chabanov lapped slower racers coming into the chicane.

Race organizer, David August Trimble, started the Red Hook Criterium as a sort of birthday party for himself three years ago as a way to bring cycling obsessed friends together in social context. “Most of my cyclist friends wouldn’t come out to a social event unless it involved a chance for personal glory on their bikes.”

The Red Hook Criterium is a bastardized alleycat or hybridized crit race depending on perspective that pits some of the world’s best street riders against talented local road and track racers. The course hurls racers through

narrow city streets with infrequent, but inevitable, car traffic in the dark of night. With average lap speeds in the high 20’s the race demands handling skills and a powerful engine.


Two previous winners, Kacey Manderfield, former state track champ, and Neil Bezdick, former bike messenger, have both gone on to sign pro racing contracts. This year’s winner, Dan Chabanov, wears two helmets: he makes his living as an NYC bike courier and competes on the local road and cross circuit. 



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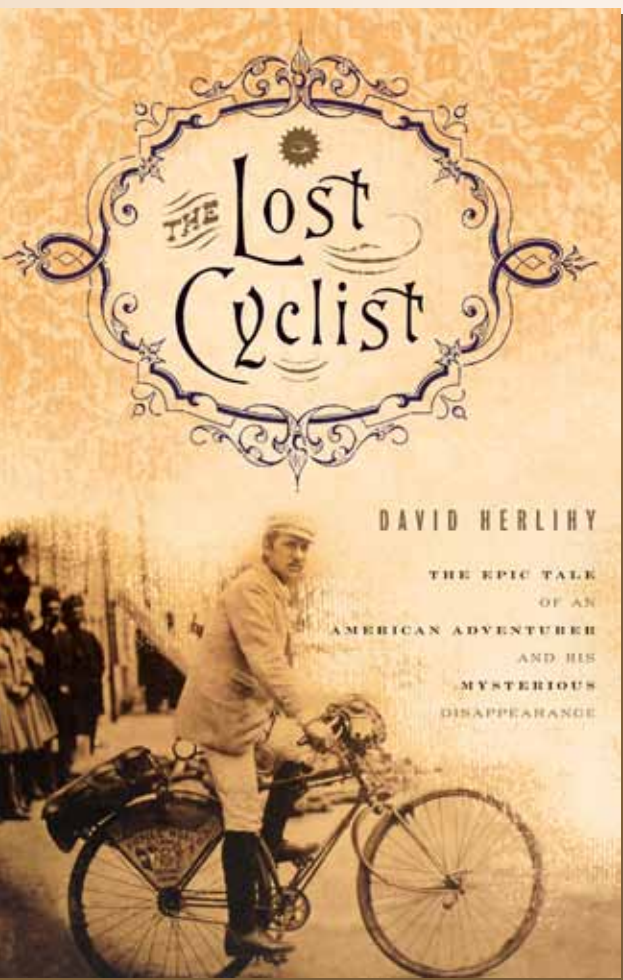
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THE LOST CYCLIST

By Lynne Tolman



“The Lost Cyclist” by David V. Herlihy

When David V. Herlihy was researching his encyclopedic 2004 volume, “Bicycle: The History,” he kept coming across dispatches from Frank Lenz, a young bookkeeper from Pittsburgh who set out in 1892 to tour the world on a newfangled “safety” bicycle with inflatable tires.

Lenz wasn’t the first or the fastest cycling “globe-girder,” but his trip took a disturbing turn in Turkey, and therein lies the tale of “The Lost Cyclist,” Herlihy’s new book, due out in June from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Herlihy traces Lenz’s travels across North America, Japan, China, Burma, India and Persia. To his credit, the author avoids making this a tedious recitation of the cyclist’s itinerary. Instead, he highlights episodes that illuminate Lenz’s habits and character traits—information that later becomes crucial in exploring the rider’s mysterious disappearance.

The book also chronicles an earlier global bike trip, by William Sachtleben and his college chum Thomas Allen. Sachtleben ultimately gets sent to Turkey to investigate what became of Lenz.

Part travelogue, part murder investigation, “The Lost Cyclist” is a clear-eyed look at bicycle travel in the days before paved roads and automobiles. Herlihy mines myriad press accounts, not only to track the trips but also to explain the sometimes testy relationships among cycling clubs, the media, government officials and the riders’ own family.

Cyclists are not the only ones who will enjoy this street-level view of a world undergoing dramatic social and technological upheaval. Historians of photography will be intrigued by the methods and results of Lenz’s amateur picture-taking, well represented among 32 pages of illustrations. Political scientists will gain insight into the workings of the Ottoman Empire and international reaction to the Armenian massacres.

In the end, Herlihy does not seem satisfied that Sachtleben really got to the bottom of the Lenz case. But the author’s meticulous research and smoothly cadenced narration should move the story of the lost cyclist into the “found treasure” category.



An Interview With The Author

Q: Why did cyclists like Lenz and Sachtleben capture the public imagination?

A: They were heading to places that had never seen a Westerner, let alone a bicycle—routinely braving hostile elements and natives. Both were emulating Thomas Stevens, who in the mid-1880s had cycled some 13,500 miles across three continents on an old-fashioned high-wheeler.

Q: How did they take their photographs?

A: Allen and Sachtleben used an early Kodak, a relatively light wooden box camera that took low-quality circular “snap shots.” Lenz insisted on carting a more conventional 25-pound camera on his back. His first models actually used glass plates, though he switched to film for his world tour. He also devised a timer so he could take photos of himself and bicycle among the unsuspecting natives.

Q: What sources did you use besides Lenz’s own reports in *Outing* magazine?

A: It took me five years to collect and cull through all sorts of documents, from newspaper accounts to files from the U.S. State Department and Ottoman archives. Of course the Internet proved a great ally, leading me to quite a few grandchildren of key figures, many of whom provided valuable assistance. I’m sure even more information will emerge once the book is out. Maybe even a chest full of Lenz’s letters home.



Freewheel Removal

By Brad Quartuccio



Single speed freewheels can be a royal pain to remove from a hub. Between the right hand threads that are constantly tightened with pedaling forces and a shallow removal tool interface, freewheels can be pretty stubborn when it comes to changing them. Leverage is key, as is getting that removal tool to stay in place.

Before getting started, remove the axle nut and inspect the freewheel removal interface. The vast majority of available freewheels have four notches for the removal tool to key into. If your freewheel has a damaged interface, two notches, or none at all you will likely have to resort to destroying the freewheel in order to remove it from the hub.



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Four Notch Method

1 Fit the removal tool into the notches and secure it in place by lightly attaching the axle nut over the top of the tool enough to prevent the notches of the tool from coming free. Do not overtighten the axle nut, you will need the freewheel and removal tool to move slightly as the freewheel unthreads in Step 2.



2 Clamp the removal tool in a bench vise. Looking down on the wheel as shown and with your hands at roughly 3 and 9 o'clock, turn the wheel counterclockwise just enough to loosen the freewheel. It may take some *oomph*, but don't turn the wheel more than a few degrees once it is free or you risk stripping the threads of the hub as the axle nut will not allow the freewheel and tool to move outward away from the hub.



3 With the freewheel now loosely threaded onto the hub you can remove the entire assembly from the bench vise and remove the axle nut. At this point you should be able to unscrew the freewheel the rest of the way with minimal effort.



Destructive Method

With damaged, shallow or non-existent removal notches your only option is to take apart the freewheel and use a wrench or vise on the inner freewheel body, essentially ruining it in the process. Don't fret—if the freewheel does not have four removal notches it is most likely of the lowest quality available and not worth saving.

1 Using a pin spanner, remove the bearing cone. This is a left-hand thread, so turn it clockwise to loosen. As you remove the cone, tiny bearings will fall everywhere.



2 With the cone removed and the internals of the freewheels exposed you can now pull the toothed outer freewheel body off, hiding another line of tiny bearings behind it that will then fall out everywhere, possibly along with the pawls and springs that make it all work.



3 Clamp the inner freewheel body in a vise or use a pipe wrench as shown to turn the remains of the freewheel counterclockwise on the hub to remove it.

Clean and grease the threads on the hub before installing your new freewheel to make this process that much easier next time.



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Get A Grip

By Brad Quartuccio



How To Make Sure Your Grips Don't Slip

Grips that slip can be more than an annoyance, they can be downright dangerous in certain situations. When it comes to slip-on rubber grips there are as many different methods to get them to stick as there are grip designs—every mechanic out there has their own secret sauce. Results may vary depending on the finish and cleanliness of the bars.

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Dry – Many people swear by installing grips dry, using an air compressor to blow them on by inserting the air hose into the hole at the end of the grip, or under the edge of it for open-ended varieties, and covering the opposite end of the bar with their hand.

Rubbing Alcohol – Applying rubbing alcohol to the inside of the grip and then quickly sliding them on the bar works similar to the dry method above, but without an air compressor. Once the grip is on the bar the alcohol evaporates more or less completely and leaves a clean and dry interface between grip and bar.

Hairspray and Solvents – Aerosol hairspray is the classic method—spray the inside of the grip and slide it on as fast as possible. Once it dries, the hairspray acts like glue to keep the grip in place. Some hardware store solvents and cleaners (acetone, WD-40 etc) achieve the same end, but can over time degrade the rubber of the grip from the inside out.

Paint – This is my personal method, using clear spray paint to adhere the grip to the bar. It works similar to the hairspray method, but in the case of heavy rain or dipping the grip in a puddle during a crash the adhesive nature remains.

Glue – Dedicated grip glues are out there, and some people use strong spray adhesive. This can be especially useful, or even necessary, when using classic cork grips.

Wire – Many grips feature grooves on either end of the mold to fit bailing wire. Twist it tight, clip it off and push the end into the grip. It's a fine line between too tight and not tight enough. This method is typically used alongside other adhesives for those particularly prone to twisting their grips off the bars.

No matter the method, it's important not to twist the grips like a gorilla during installation, you don't want to stretch them out as it doesn't take much before no amount of glue will hold them tight. The methods that use some sort of adhesive sometimes mean that you only get one shot to put the grips on, as they may require a utility knife to come off in the case of switching a brake or shift lever. If you find yourself frequently changing your controls or plagued with constantly twisting grips lock-on designs with allen bolts to secure them to the bars are an option, as is wrapping the grip area like a road drop bar.



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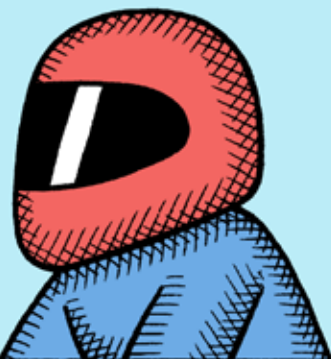
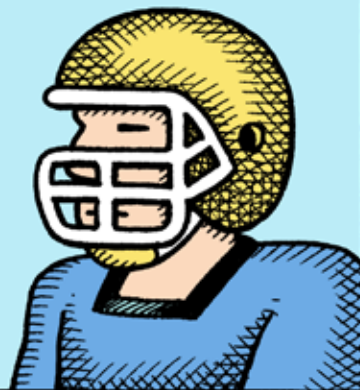
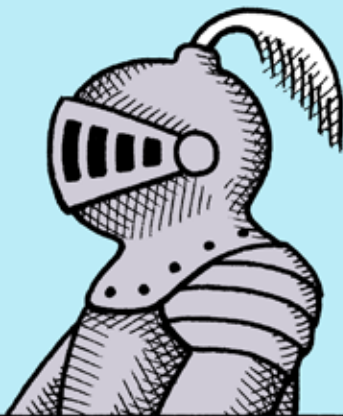
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