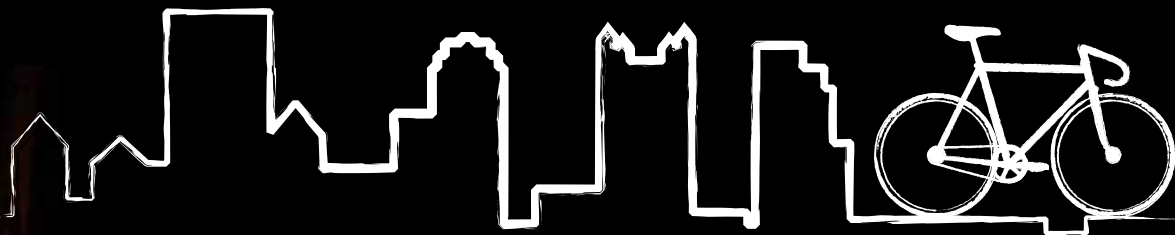


BICYCLING ACROSS LOS ANGELES • DO IT BY BIKE IN DENVER



URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #21 • September 2010



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URBAN VELO

Issue #21

September 2010



Brad Quartuccio

Editor

brad@urbanvelo.org



Jeff Guerrero

Publisher

jeff@urbanvelo.org

On the cover: Fixed freestyle rider Mike Schmidt doing a wallride in Queens. See more on page 50. Photo by Ed Glazar, www.tedwardglazarphotography.com

Co-conspirators: Lenny Maiorani, Eric Matthies, Chikara 'Riki' Taniuchi, Jennifer Nordhem, David Hoffman, John Prolly, Martec, Zack Schwartz, Roger Lootine and Andy Singer

Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

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

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Jennifer Nordhern

There's more to Denver than thin air and a great view of the Rocky Mountains. Our author's got the lowdown on how to get around and get down in the Mile High City.



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John Prolly

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68 Countywide

Eric Matthies

Los Angeles County is home to more than 10,000,000 people, including countless cyclists. In his most recent film, being shown at the 2010 Bicycle Film Festival, Eric Matthies gives the world a taste of cycling in LA.

Denver is home to over 260 parks with 9,000 acres of open space for getting extreme or just chilling out. Read more on page 38. Photo by Lenny Maiorani





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Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



Community bike events can be a good litmus test of the health of the entire scene, with year-to-year growth on display for all to witness. In the case of the 2010 BikePGH Bikefest fundraiser party (pictured above) one couldn't help but notice the difference between it and the inaugural 2005 event. "Back in the day" said event was certainly a different beast, held in a warehouse space shared with Free Ride, our local recycled bike cooperative, and accompanied by punk rock and a crowd of urban cycling misfits that spilled into the dark parking lot. I remember sweeping the floor beforehand, filling Nalgene bottles with beer, and the high-fives that went around when the cash box reached \$1000 on the evening. The five years since have seen an explosion of growth in urban cycling across the land, including here at home. The party has grown, the

scene has changed. Where once things flew under the radar, today city councilpersons pay the door fee to get into the party along with hundreds of others from across the bike world.

New shops have opened and prospered, public bike facilities have been put in place, Free Ride has placed thousands of bikes on the street through their volunteer wrenching programs. The day-to-day progress can seem frustratingly slow and full of hurdles, but looking back to that first Bikefest party and where we stand today, the growth is impressive. Rome wasn't built in a day, but as urban cycling continues to grow in scope and popularity it may only be a relatively few short years until we all look back on the "good old days" and hope to never return to the days of knowing every face at the party and every bike on the street. 

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

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Publisher's Statement


By Jeff Guerrero



Two or three times a week, my friends and I get together at an inner-city playground. Canned beer is passed around freely and cigarette smoke wafts in the air. Trash talk and dirty jokes are not only appreciated, but encouraged. And anyone who shows up with a new component, messenger bag or any sort of bicycle accessory becomes the object of a “show and tell” inquiry.

The game is hardcourt bike polo, a mutation of the original sport “Sagol Kangjei” from northern India, played on bicycles on unused basketball, hockey and tennis courts, so commonly found in urban areas. The fact that there are so many of these sport-specific facilities being repurposed by an emerging underground activity is remarkable. It’s at once an indicator of modern society’s wastefulness, and a testament to the creativity and resourcefulness of everyday people.

But as I sit and contemplate bike polo, I find it truly interesting how sports have the potential to both align and divide people around the world. On the one hand, many people in the nearby cities of Pittsburgh and Cleveland genuinely dislike each other because of the rivalry between their respective American football teams. On the other hand, there’s not a single bike polo player from Pittsburgh that doesn’t think of the entire Cleveland crew as friends. And vice versa.

And so when I recently saw a forum post advertising the first annual Japanese Hardcourt Bike Polo Tournament, I made the executive decision to sponsor the event with t-shirts, hats and magazines. It’s something that we can barely afford to do, given our upstart status and the struggling economy, but I know that without even meeting Riki and the Tokyo crew, we’re already friends. 

Urban Velo issue #21, September 2010. Dead tree print run: 5000 copies. Issue #20 online readership: 55,000+

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Olivier Chen

LOCATION: Taipei, Taiwan

OCCUPATION: Sales Engineer

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

Taipei is a city that never sleeps—you can find many interesting things to do from dusk until dawn. It's a challenge to ride in our city because of all the motorcycles, but more and more people ride bicycles as a sport or means of transportation. We even have a bike messenger company now, Prodorapid, which started in 2009.

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

Taipei, especially at night. Whether you're searching for dim sum or something to read, we have "le petite

snackerie" (providing Chinese dim sum until 6 AM) and 24-7 bookstores.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Riding is hell of fun! I can ride to work at my own pace. When all the cars and motorcycles are stopped at the traffic light, I do a track stand in between them. I've devoted myself to pedaling from one place to another.

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

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Sponsored rider JAKE RICKER ("The Revival") shot by MATT LINGO. PAKEBIKES.COM say "paa-kay"

i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Mitch Ryan

LOCATION: Baltimore, MD

OCCUPATION: Server/Student/Retail Slave

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

I proudly live in downtown Baltimore, MD. Riding around here is truly unique because of the bike culture. We do everything from gigantic mass rides to some pretty intense allycats. Baltimore is a fairly hilly city with almost no bike lanes so it's a workout too! Did I mention it's beautiful here? Being the Quirky City, it's best viewed by bike.

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

As cliché as it may sound, riding through Times Square, NYC was my favorite experience. It was at 2 AM and the

lights made it seem like daylight. Flying through streets jammed packed with taxis is purely exhilarating.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding downtown because of the focus it requires. Anything else that may be weighing on you has to be forgotten about as you dodge obstacles and maintain your speed.

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

Baltimore is hot y'all. Watch out!

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The annual July 4th Freedom From Pants ride is a Minneapolis tradition. Photo by Garrick Yoong

NAME: Nicole Weiler

LOCATION: Minneapolis, MN

OCCUPATION: Nonprofit Program Director

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

I was born and raised here in Minneapolis. I know the city better than I know my apartment in the dark. We were recently named the #1 bicycle city in the nation by *Bicycling* magazine and we live up to that with our many advocacy organizations, commuters, awesome local shops and gridded street system.

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

My first visit to San Francisco, I used social media to line up a bicycle to borrow. Unfortunately, that hook-up fell through and the only ride I could manage was a BMX bike. I think my leg muscles grew exponentially that week. If you ever want to feel like a bad ass, ride hundreds of miles uphill on the worlds tiniest bicycle.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Riding in the city allows me to see and interact with my streets in a way riding in a car never could. I can invent new paths, socialize with other street pedestrians and be fully aware of my surroundings because THEY are what are surrounding me, not the doors of my sedan.

Poetry anyone?

two wheels and some spokes
the whirring sound of freewheel
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NAME: Francis Chu

LOCATION: Singapore

OCCUPATION: Product Designer

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

I live in Singapore, and have been riding a bicycle to work every day since 2003. Non-cyclists believe Singapore's weather is hot, humid and not suitable for cycling. However, cycling in the morning and evening's fresh air is lovely in Singapore all year round!

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

My favorite city to ride in is Eindhoven in Holland, where I used to live. You feel very safe riding on the well-connected bicycle lanes. Osaka is another lovely city to cycle. The cycling facilities are not as good as in Holland, but the people are very polite to each other.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Cycling in the city is liberating and empowering. One can go five times as fast as walking, yet it's possible to pause at any point to check out the local goodies or snap an interesting photo. I like to bring my folding bike everywhere I go, including overseas trips. The bicycle empowers me to explore a new place with great speed and details.

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

As a product designer, I need quality thinking time. Cycling in the city allows me to distill my mind and come up with innovative ideas. The SuperCool mask and the Cyclist Wing are examples of such innovative ideas.



What if every bike rack looked like this?

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

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25%
mission

i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Sara Marshall

LOCATION: Columbus, GA

OCCUPATION: Cosmetology Assistant

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

I live in Columbus, GA. It's a fairly large town with its share of hills and ignorant drivers, which makes for a very interesting ride no matter what. We have a 22-mile river walkway that is a popular spot for cyclists as well. A new bike trail (used to be a railroad) opened up that cuts through Columbus, so that's an added convenience, and perfect for quiet weeknight rides.

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

I loved riding in Atlanta, because the drivers we encountered were more considerate and used to cyclists on the road. The bike lanes were an added bonus.

Why do you love riding in the city?

In Columbus, there is a lot of urban sprawl, but at the same time a variety of wildlife makes its home close to civilization. Some nights you come close to hitting an armadillo, and others you have to avoid possums and snakes. My friends and I even spotted an alligator one spring night. I love having something interesting to look for when I'm out on a ride.

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

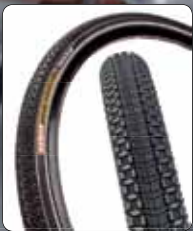
A bicycle shop named Incognito that specializes in fixies opened a little over a year ago in downtown Columbus. I love the people there and the willingness to share parts and ideas, plus it's the gathering spot for nightly rides.

Check out social.incognitobikeshop.com



Life in Motion!

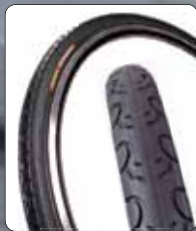
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NAME: Gde Threesna

LOCATION : Yogyakarta, Indonesia

OCCUPATION : Undergraduate Student in Economics

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

Yogyakarta is the home of cycling culture in Indonesia. Long before cars and motorcycles flooded the city, the bicycle was the favorite mode of transportation. Yogyakarta is also one of centers of education in Indonesia. Students from all over Indonesia come to Yogyakarta for undergraduate or graduate programs.

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

Definitely my hometown of Singaraja in Bali. Singaraja is a small city located on the northern coast. I got my first bike when I was seven years old and I've been riding since. Sometimes I rode my bike to the beach to hang out with friends... I miss the good old times.

Why do you love riding in the city?

If you know the right way or a short cut, you can beat the fastest motorcycle or car.

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

Riding is not about having the coolest or the most expensive bike. After all, the bicycle is just one of mode of transportation. It's supposed to be fun, so don't let anyone tell you what to put on your bike. Make it personal. Asking for advice is ok—it's actually good for a beginner—but don't let someone's advice keep you from building a bike that really suits you. Everyone has their own taste, preference, and personality. Let your bike represent who you are. You are what you bike. And fix your own bike!



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Caroline Hamilton

LOCATION: Pittsburgh, PA

OCCUPATION: Scholar and Poet

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

I live in Pittsburgh, which has been developing an impressive cycling scene, even though there are still those who don't grasp the notion that biking is a means of transportation. One summer Sunday afternoon I was coming back from a really idyllic ride downtown, along the rivers, when a guy yelled at me, "Get a car!" Either he couldn't tell that I was having fun or he didn't like it.

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

I've biked in Paris, London, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, New Orleans, Florence and Berlin. My sentimental favorite is Paris: I biked around the Eiffel Tower at dusk, over the river, up and down the Champs Élysées at night, all around the Left Bank, and through the Marais at rush hour. I bought a French leather saddle—an Idéale, like a Brooks—at a flea market for about \$5, cleaned it up, and brought it home. It's on my Rivendell Atlantis.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It took me a while to realize this, but I enjoy the way you have to stay alert when you're cycling in an urban environment.

Poetry anyone?

Biking Through the Streets on a Summer Evening
(after Robert Frost)

This evening, as the dusk moves west
into its shadow, people rest,
kick back, watch baseball, pour a beer.
Nobody sees me cycling here.

My little bike must love these rides
as fishing boats love ocean tides.
We coast and swerve and slowly swoop
in an expanding, endless loop.

It gives its copper bell a ring
as if to tell me I should sing.
The only city sound I hear
is fire engines, far yet clear.

The streets are lovely, black and bright,
but I should go inside. It's night,
and all the bridges are alight,
and all the bridges are alight.

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Name: German Karp

Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Occupation: Bicycle and motorcycle customizer, builder and pinstriper.

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

I live in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Riding is a pleasure but there's too much traffic—drivers don't respect us.

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

There are no hills in Buenos Aires, so it's a fixie friendly city. And overseas for sure—Barcelona, Paris or any city in the USA where drivers respect the cyclists.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Riding in traffic is an adrenaline shot—I like skidding to stop and avoiding cars. It's dangerous, but exciting!

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

Thanks to the Argentina Fixed Gear crew, Stooges for the bike, and Jenna for bringing copies of Urban Velo to Argentina.



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NAME: John
LOCATION: Washington, DC
OCCUPATION: Analyst

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

I live in Washington DC, which is not sure if it wants to be a wonderful biking city. There are days when you come to an intersection and find 20 cyclists at every cross street, courteous drivers, and ample bike parking; there are other days when the city feels very unfriendly to cyclists. It all depends on where you are and where you are going. Fortunately, the city government has a very forward thinking DOT, and they are rolling out new bike lanes and an expanded bike sharing system at a breakneck pace.

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

Not including DC? Probably Munich, Germany. I found it to be incredibly intuitive and easy. German engineering is really a marvel to behold at all levels. I was a little nervous that I would not be able to adhere to the manner in which Germans bike in Munich, but the engineering is so simple and straightforward that it was second nature to me in manner of minutes. No wonder people so quickly turn to bikes!

I really do enjoy riding in DC, though. We have a great network of trails and bike lanes, and I appreciate that I can be a vehicular cyclist when I want to be and a slower cyclist when I don't.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It is so much faster than driving! I almost feel guilty blowing past traffic, but I can make a cross town trip in 20 minutes vs. the 45 minutes to an hour it takes when driving. DC has a great subway system that accommodates bikes, but it can get so jam packed that it often feels claustrophobic. I love the freedom and convenience of biking in a city, especially when there are enough cyclists out so you don't feel like a pariah.

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

The attached photo was taken by a friend when I was en route to a wedding downtown. I really like that cities enable you to quickly get where you need to go and arrive ready for whatever awaits you, all while improving your health and conserving energy.

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NAME: Capt. Jake Newborn
LOCATION: Milwaukee, WI
OCCUPATION: Safe Routes to School Program Manager

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

I live in Milwaukee, WI and biking here has been improving every year. Each summer I see more and more cyclists on the street. Used to be you knew 90% of the people on bikes you saw, now more like 10%. Milwaukee has seen a 250% increase in ridership in the past 5 years and I expect to see it continue to rise. The city is relatively flat except for in and out of downtown because of the river. The road condition is pretty bad, but with the AARA funding we have construction on tons of major bike routes and city streets right now so by this time next year it should be smooth biking!

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

Its almost clichéd by now, but this past May I was in Minneapolis for the Midwest Bike Polo Championships and it truly was fantastic to ride there. Cars were actually relatively respectful of cyclists from what I experienced.

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

I have never ridden in the country so I can't compare. The city has it all and you can do it all by bike. It also doesn't usually smell like cow shit.

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

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

Why do you love riding in the city?

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

Email your responses to jeff@urbanvelo.org

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i ♥ riding in the city



Photo by Terry Bentley, www.urbanproductions.com

NAME: Votske Fuccit

LOCATION: Arnhem, The Netherlands

OCCUPATION: Unemployed

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

I live in Arnhem, a small city in the Netherlands most people might know from the WWII movie, *A Bridge Too Far*. It's a nice and hilly city to ride in, enough hills to bomb and lots of spots to do tricks. You can get anywhere you need to be in less than 30 minutes.

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

Paris, no doubt about that! The traffic is so intense, and unlike here in the Netherlands, you're actually part of the traffic in Paris, dodging cars, mashing on highways. It's a real thrill!

Why do you love riding in the city?

Since I don't have a car, or driver's license, I have no other choice than to ride my bike. Even if I go to other cities, I still take my bike with me, you can see so much more when riding your bike, and can get everywhere so much quicker than walking, and you don't need to find a parking spot for your car! Besides all the handy points, riding your bike is healthy! It keeps my body in shape and keeps you in touch with the traffic surrounding you. Just go with the flow!

Check out: www.fuccit.com

NAME: Terry Bentley

LOCATION: Lexington, KY

OCCUPATION: Photographer

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

The local advocacy organization, Bike Lexington, is making incredible progress in making our city more bike friendly. Their monthly "2nd Sunday" events are great! Last month we got to spend the day on our new runway at the Bluegrass Airport!

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

Lexington, KY. We have the World Equestrian Games coming in September so the city is creating many more bike trails. The Legacy Trail is under construction and will take riders from downtown all the way out to The Kentucky Horse Park. Beautiful scenery.

Why do you love riding in the city?

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LAARGEER LARGE

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NAME: Cap'n Black (aka John Fleischman)
LOCATION: Saxonburg, PA
OCCUPATION: Artist

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


I live in a small town that is growing. No more than two lanes anywhere in town. You get to know when it's cool to bomb the streets—and when not to. Mixture of farmers and yuppies clogging the narrow main street, so if I want a thrill I go for a ride when lots of them are coming home from work. Basically it's cool and quick—no long blocks here.

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

Used to commute to work thru a few small metropolitans; Lower Burrell, Tarentum, and Brackenridge, PA. Got to ride in traffic in spots, and then had “avenues” to get away from it. Zooming to work in the early morning I got

to see quite a few awesome sunrises. Just loved being on my bike I guess, as for why.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I think it has something to do with constantly being in motion—even if I'm stopped at a light, I'm still looking, anticipating, ready to blast off again. It's always *zoom zoom* for me. Love the urban assault type thing, always picking a line thru and/or around whatever. Also, I like showing stupid motorists how they should be driving—I love seeing the reactions of people when I stop at stop signs. They seem surprised that I actually stop. I love the challenge of the “obstacles” and the keeping moving aspect, plus the fact that it's just me and my bike being one. 



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Berlin – 7:34 AM.



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IF Product Design Award Gold Winner 2010.





Do It By Bike In DENVER

By Jennifer Nordhem

Photos by Lenny Maiorani, www.lennym.com

Welcome To Beautiful Denver, Colorado

We are smack-dab in the middle of the United States at the foothills of the magnificent Rocky Mountains. Denver is a short drive from many cycling destinations like the epic Mt. Evans, the city of Boulder, and Winter Park, just a short 15 mile ride from the city you can climb Lookout Mountain or ride around Cherry Creek Reservoir, all via bike path. If BMX strikes your fancy, just wait until you see our skate parks, they'll blow your mind.

Besides the killer landscape, Denver's full of creative people making this land locked city a gem in the rough. Listen to the brilliant musicians of Paper Bird and Snake Rattle Rattle Snake, get inspired by artists Mario Zoots, Evan Hecox and Scot Lefavor, and support local by shopping at eclectic pop up stores YesPleaseMore and The Fabric Lab.

Whatever you ride, whatever you do, you'll love it here.

From A To B

Getting around is a breeze with over 21 miles of shared bike/car lanes, 35 miles of designated bike lanes, and 60 miles of multiuse trails within Denver's parks. No bike? No problem. Denver B-Cycle is one of the first stateside, large scale municipal bike sharing programs with dozens of stations throughout downtown Denver to pick-up and drop off bikes. With over 300 days of sunshine and flat roads you would be crazy not to ride. The hard work of advocacy organizations Bicycle Colorado (www.bicyclecolorado.org) and Bike Denver (www.bikedenver.org) help the vibrant local cycling community here stay ahead of the curve.



The Fuel Up

You have to love Crema Coffeehouse. This place not only serves the best damn coffee in Denver, it's also the meet up for the weekly urban bike ride, LOOPS. Coffee not your thing? They serve fresh, organic juice, delicious tea, as well as an assortment of fancy pastries. Local art rotates the walls monthly, making this a popular destination for Denver's creative professionals.

Notable neighbors include NOVO Coffee Roasters (served at Crema), Denver B-Cycle, Larimer Lounge, Meadowlark Bar and Lisa Kowalski Gallery.

Pit Stop

The Plastic Chapel rocks for gifts and fun trinkets. This East Colfax shop participates in the Second Saturday art walk every month with its neighbors Big Hairy Monster Hair Salon, Hooked On Colfax and The Shoppe. If you like dancing, don't miss Rockbar to close out the night.

100 1" CLASSIC

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





Park It

Denver is home to over 260 parks with 9,000 acres of open space for getting extreme or just chilling out.

Deflate

Broadway & Ellsworth Ave is a hub for a number of businesses. Sweet Action Ice Cream is the jam for a post-ride treat! Try their vegan ice cream made with coconut milk or just a regular old scoop to curb that sweet tooth. Rather finish your ride with a cold one and some grub? Hit Sputnik up, they serve beer from Denver's Great Divide Brewery and the tastiest sweet potato fries you'll ever lay your greasy fingers on. Broadway has a little bit of everything, don't miss the rock venue Hi-Dive, Fancy Tiger Crafts and Clothing, Illiterate Gallery, and Indy Ink Screen Printing.



About the Author: Jen loves living in Denver and teaches indoor cycling classes at Breathe, a yoga and cycling studio. You can find her on Twitter @mshurricane

Denver B-Cycle provided rental bicycles free of charge for this article. Visit www.denverbikesharing.org for more information.

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PLANNING YOUR BICYCLE NETWORK

Words & photos by David Hoffman

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.*
—RAY KINSELLA

At least, that's the hope of many a bicycle and pedestrian planning professional. This article explores a typical planning process for bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as stops along the way where people such as you can get involved.

I've been watching bicyclists climb a long hill from the lower neighborhoods to the upper neighborhoods. The road is fast and narrow, and the cyclists sometimes ride the sidewalk, dodging mothers with wheeled shopping baskets, young children, and joggers. The cyclists struggle up the hill—it's hot and humid here making the extra physical exertion all that much more difficult. In the center median are colorful, oversize, metal silhouettes of bicyclists and pedestrians trapped in effortless poses of biking and walking ease. I see a bicyclist—he is dressed in a long black coat, curls of hair hang from the sides of his face. A broad black hat is bungeed to his panniers that carry books, a computer, and the assorted objects that help him to get through his day. I am in Jerusalem, Israel. And I am witnessing the birth of a biking boom.

As I watch the cyclist make his way up the hill, I think how little difference there is between Jerusalem and any place that I've worked in the United States where bicycling and walking rates have been going up. In almost all cases the locals begin to make the choice to bike and walk despite the (usually) abysmal road conditions for them. Advocates, planners, and politicians take note, and a process is set into place that will help to support the changes that the locals are already making.

There are three basic parts to the process of imagining a new facility (the cradle) until it is completed and in the ground (pave): Design, Public Process, and Funding. The first two are actually the most important, as wherever there is political will, the funding will eventually follow.

* Yes. We know. The actual quote from *Field of Dreams* is, "If you build it, he will come."

“IT IS A TRUTH UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, THAT A ROAD IN POSSESSION OF A GOOD ROUTE, MUST BE IN WANT OF A BICYCLIST.”

FREELY ADAPTED FROM JANE AUSTEN, “SENSE AND SENSIBILITY”

CONCEPTION

All cities and towns must have a Master Plan. Master Plans contain within them the plans and codes for how the municipality will be built. For example: maximum building height, acceptable levels of delay at intersections, zoning codes for residential, commercial, and mixed use, etc. Master Plans contain a section typically called the “Transportation Element”—this is where the municipality’s policies

pertaining to land use related to transportation—cars, trucks, bikes, transit, pedestrians, etc. are spelled out at a high level. Sometimes plans will undergo a “check in” at the 5-year mark, especially during times of high population growth, building, and/or economic upturns.

→ Master Plans are public documents, and as such can be found at your local library and City Planning department for review.

If you are fortunate, your municipality will also have a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP), or sometimes separate Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans. These documents move in to the detail of where and what types of routes currently exist and/or should exist in your town. BPMPs are typically developed by a citizen-based committee that helps to create and then maintain the plan. These committees can be found under a variety of similar names—Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees (BPACs), Traffic Advisory Committees (TACs), Bicycle Advisory Committees (BACs), Bicycle Advisory Groups (BAGs), etc. BPMPs are updated more frequently than Master Plans due to the project-specific information in the plans.

→ Find out if your municipality has a BPAC, and if so, who are the committee members. Just ask your local Planning Department.

→ BPAC meetings are public meetings; find out when the BPAC meets and attend to provide input.

→ If no BPAC exists, work with your local advocacy group to get one started. If no local advocacy group exists, consider meeting with your local officials to get a BPAC started. More information on meeting with your elected officials can be found in Urban Velo #16, “*Persuasion – A Political Primer*”.

→ BPMPs are also on file at your local library and/or Planning Department.





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GESTATION

BPMPs are planning documents. Their sole purpose is to capture the current conditions, describe desirable future conditions, and lay the groundwork for acquiring funding to build the projects described therein. The BPMP is the place where you can become most directly involved with the planning of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in your town.

It is very important to note that while Urban Velo focuses mainly on bicycling, that the planning and funding world is rapidly moving towards a more holistic, or complete approach to building non-motorized transportation projects (“Complete Streets”). Funding sources just for bicycle projects are few and far between. However, funding sources that can be applied to projects that incorporate multiple modes of transportation are increasing, with multi-modal projects scoring higher than just bicycle projects. Or better put by recycling the mangled *Sense and Sensibility* quote,

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that an agency in possession of good funding, must be in receipt of more projects than it can fund.”

→ Find out if you can join or advise the BPAC. Start one if one doesn’t exist. BPAC terms usually last two years, with half of the members rotating off the committee every year.

→ When you review the plan, do a reality check—do the current conditions reflect the routes that bicyclists are taking now? Do the future plans accurately reflect the needs of bicyclists? Are there routes that are missing?

→ Provide written comments to your local municipality in care of the Chair of the BPAC. (If no active BPAC, then to the Director of Planning.)

→ Don’t stop there. Now that you know what routes may be planned, work with your local advocacy group and/or elected officials to prioritize the routes for construction.

BIRTH

Once a project has been defined in the planning process, the last step is to find and allocate funding to build it. Funding for a single project can come from as many as a dozen or more sources, including Federal, State, County, Local, Air Quality District, Flood Management, Safe Routes to Schools, Safe Routes to Transit, etc. Each

one of these funding sources may actually be an aggregate of funding from other multiple sources. Despite the complexity of funding sources, all projects in a municipality are aggregated and prioritized each year in a City plan called the “Capital Improvement Program,” or CIP. CIPs are developed and passed by the City leaders at the end of the fiscal year in preparation for the next fiscal year. CIPs contain all types of projects, from small repaving projects, sidewalk improvements, and painting, to much more complex projects such as bridge replacements, road widening, storm water management, etc. CIPs are public documents, and can be reviewed. Sometimes they can be found on the City website, and if not, a request to the Planning Department should do the trick. Most “regular” people don’t ever consult the CIP; so don’t be surprised if you encounter a little resistance.

→ Review the CIP, and compare it with the BPMP. Despite what your local municipality will tell you, they do not always consult the BPMP before they pave a road. I have encountered countless instances where a road was scheduled to be repaved but did not include any bicycle facilities. Yet, the BPMP indicated that when a road was to be repaved that it would then include some on-street bike lanes, striping, sharrows, etc. Countless opportunities are lost at this point in the planning process because nobody consulted the BPMP.

→ Be aware of when the “birth cycle” is. For instance, most painting projects take place when it isn’t the rainy season. If you see the crews out painting the streets and then decide to check the BPMP, it is very likely too late!

→ Finally, find out if your local advocacy group is involved with any of the processes described above—creation and maintaining a BPAC, creation and review of BPMP document content and projects, and lastly review of the CIPs early on so as to identify any opportunities to include bicycle and pedestrian projects that may not have been included in a larger project.

Ask if they want your help. Hopefully, they will. If not, you are a likely catalyst to help make change happen. After all, you’ve read this far. Why not pick up the phone or get online to find and start reviewing these planning documents. Now think of the cyclist that I saw struggling up a hill with fast-moving traffic and narrow lanes. That cyclist could very well be you in your hometown.



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FIXED FREESTYLE

EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

By John Prolly

Photography by Ed Glazar
www.tedwardglazarphotography.com



A person wearing a red cap, a colorful plaid shirt, and dark pants is performing a bicycle stunt. They are riding a green and black bicycle on a surface of corrugated metal. The person is leaning forward, holding the handlebars, and the front wheel is lifted. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the person and the bicycle. The corrugated metal surface is highly reflective, creating a grid-like pattern of light and shadow.

It's no secret that cycling is an ever-evolving sport. When broken down into specific species of bicycles, one can track their phenotype by a time period. Rigid mountain bikes, steel road bikes and tank-like BMX bikes are all signifiers of their place in history. Evolution in cycling, just like in nature, occurs when natural selection takes hold.



Sometimes things change so fast that it's impossible for the industry to maintain their grip. Grassroots companies take over and evolution is facilitated through experimentation. Take the 700c fixed freestyle bike for example. Many feel as if it's a dying breed, a soon-to-be forgotten mode of transportation and trickery limited by its fragile wheel diameter. After a two or three year presence in the cycling industry, is the 700c fixed freestyle bike the last of a dying breed? Some say yes and others continue to embrace their track bike ancestry.

Not too long ago, people were riding on small tires and chopped down bars. Let's take a step back to 2008. Not many people even thought at some near point in time there would be bicycles designed and built specifically for fixed freestyle. Everyone was breaking forks, which lead to after-market quick fixes. Soon, the forks were causing the frames to snap. Wheel size was the fixed freestyler's least concern. Shortly after, a few smaller companies designed frames to withstand abuse. Forks quit snapping and frame's lifespan extended to years, not months. Was the problem solved? No, it just opened the floodgate for other issues.

Ed "Wonka" LaForte. Open manhole bunny hop. Queens, NY

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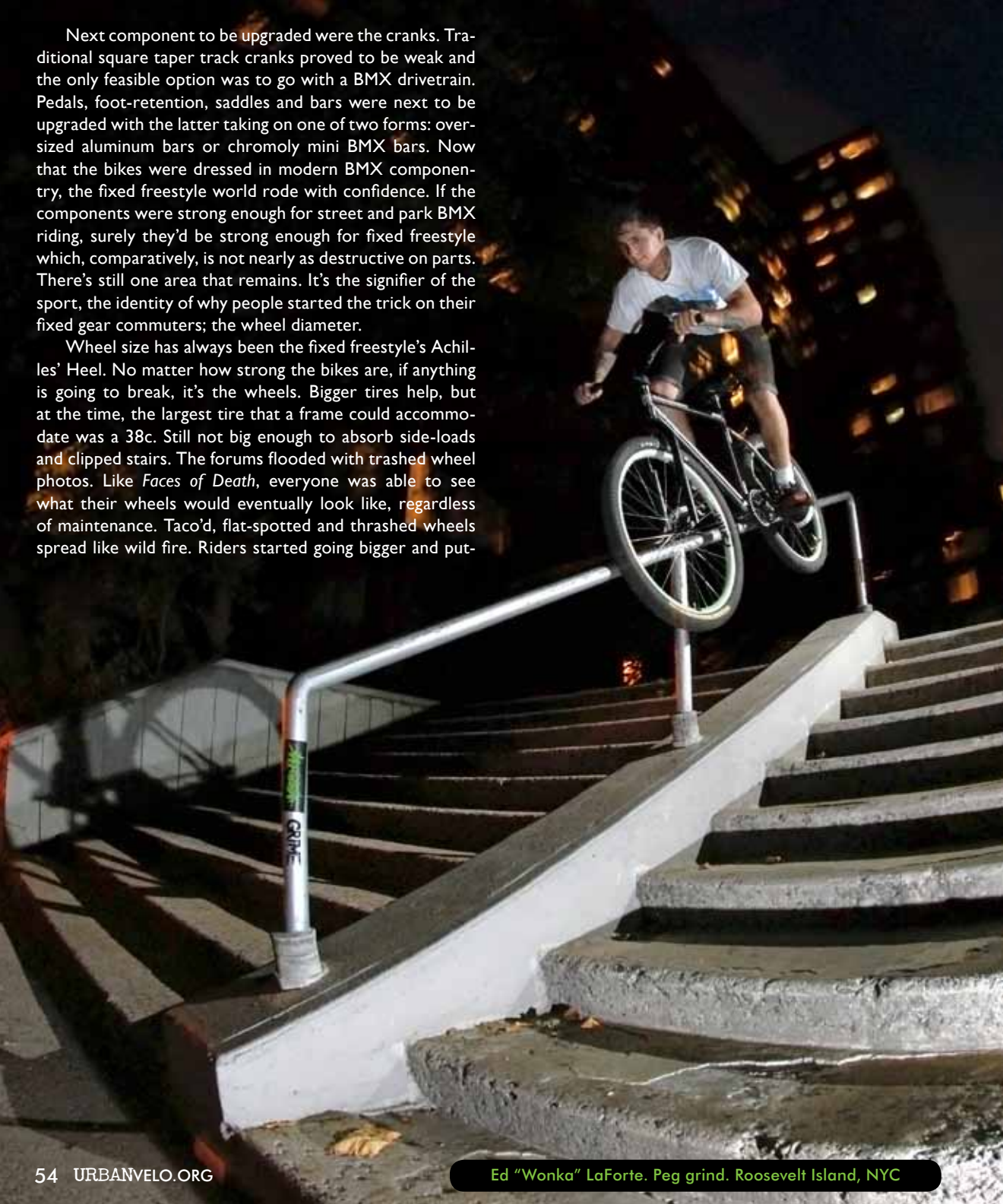
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Next component to be upgraded were the cranks. Traditional square taper track cranks proved to be weak and the only feasible option was to go with a BMX drivetrain. Pedals, foot-retention, saddles and bars were next to be upgraded with the latter taking on one of two forms: oversized aluminum bars or chromoly mini BMX bars. Now that the bikes were dressed in modern BMX componentry, the fixed freestyle world rode with confidence. If the components were strong enough for street and park BMX riding, surely they'd be strong enough for fixed freestyle which, comparatively, is not nearly as destructive on parts. There's still one area that remains. It's the signifier of the sport, the identity of why people started the trick on their fixed gear commuters; the wheel diameter.

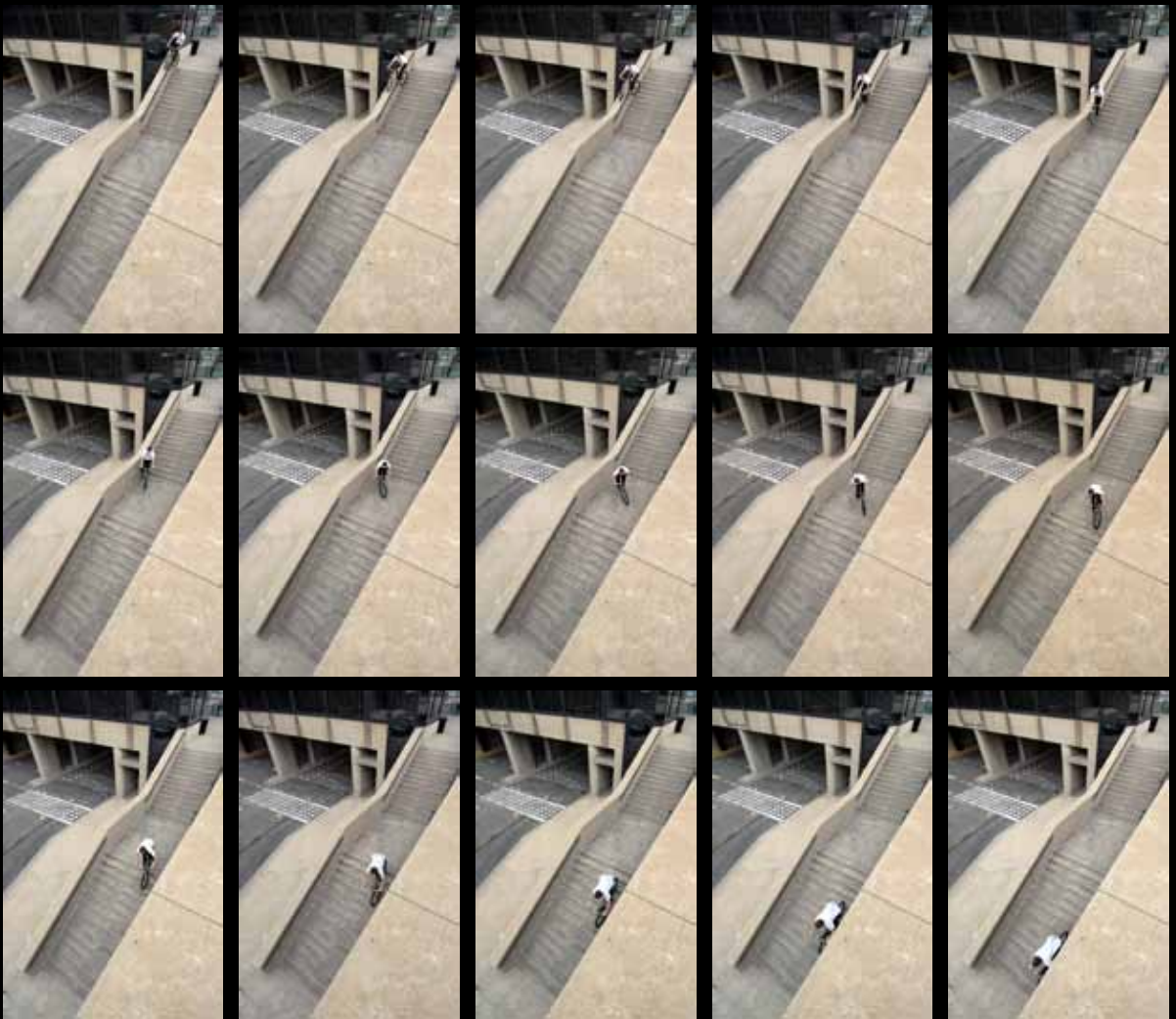
Wheel size has always been the fixed freestyle's Achilles' Heel. No matter how strong the bikes are, if anything is going to break, it's the wheels. Bigger tires help, but at the time, the largest tire that a frame could accommodate was a 38c. Still not big enough to absorb side-loads and clipped stairs. The forums flooded with trashed wheel photos. Like *Faces of Death*, everyone was able to see what their wheels would eventually look like, regardless of maintenance. Taco'd, flat-spotted and thrashed wheels spread like wild fire. Riders started going bigger and put-





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ting themselves and their bikes on the line. The whole “go big or go home” movement that died out in BMX and MTB in the late 90’s had found a resurgence in the world of fixed freestyle.

Shortly afterwards, a forbidden concept began to pop up here and there. Just mentioning the phrase “26 fixed” to some would cause debates and heated discussions. “Well if you’re going to go 26” why not just ride a dirt-jumper?” People liked their 700c wheels and they argued that it wasn’t the wheel size that needed to change, it was the frame’s clearances. Bigger tires had to be the answer. Unfortunately, design, research and development and production of a new frame can take months and people don’t have that kind of time to wait around. Riders found they

could fit 26” wheels into their frames designed for 700c with ease. Even with a 2” tire, most framesets at the time could fit the smaller-diameter rim just fine. So what’s stopping these riders from going with it?

The frames. Like an on-going cycle, the fixed freestyle bike had once again reverted back to zero. Issues like bottom-bracket drop, wheelbase and angles made the new 26” fixed bikes ride terribly, especially when compared to the 700c native-wheels. So now what? Once again, the smaller grassroots companies had the manpower, resources and foresight to address this market. Within weeks, a few companies had made 26” specific bikes, addressing the demand for 26” fixed. Where there is a demand, there’s money to be made—economics 101. Within the blink of

EIGHTHINCH
FREESTYLE




Photo by **Jerome Love**

an eye, these companies had sunk a nail in the market and the riders were given an option. Does that mean the entire fixed freestyle camp shifted to 26" wheels? No. It just meant that while small companies took the initiative to design 26" specific fixed frames, the other companies were working on 700c bikes that fit up to 3" tires. A new motto was born for the 700c camp, "700c don't limit me."

From one base species, one bicycle spawned many. All in a matter of a couple of years. Like the evolution of mountain bikes, BMX bikes and other forms of intense cycling, the fixed freestyle bike has many faces. Many designs will come to fruition and will influence the riding styles world-wide. Riders are now doing handrails and gaps that even gain an ounce of respect from some of the most hardened BMX riders out there. With a smaller-sized wheel diameter, these riders can push themselves and their components to the limit. But even with the smaller wheels, the

same issues plague riding; popped beads, busted spokes and other destructive weaknesses are still evident. No matter what your wheel size, constant maintenance is the only saving grace.

If the nature of fixed freestyle is evolution and the bikes keep moving towards larger BMX bikes, it begs the question: at what point will the fixed wheel drivetrain drop off? When will the freewheel take over? There's no definite answer to that question. As long as people enjoy riding a fixed gear on the street and find pleasure in its nuances, fixed freestyle, whether 26" or 700c, is here for the haul. How you build yours is all dependent on your riding style. Like evolution in nature, the bikes have evolved to address specific riding styles and soon their smaller-wheeled cousins will influence the bikes in more ways. Fixed freestyle has undergone constant changes since its inception. There's no reason why it will cease now. 



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On July 11, 2010 the city of Guadalajara, Mexico hosted its first ever hardcourt bicycle polo tournament. The photos on the following pages tell the story of the event.

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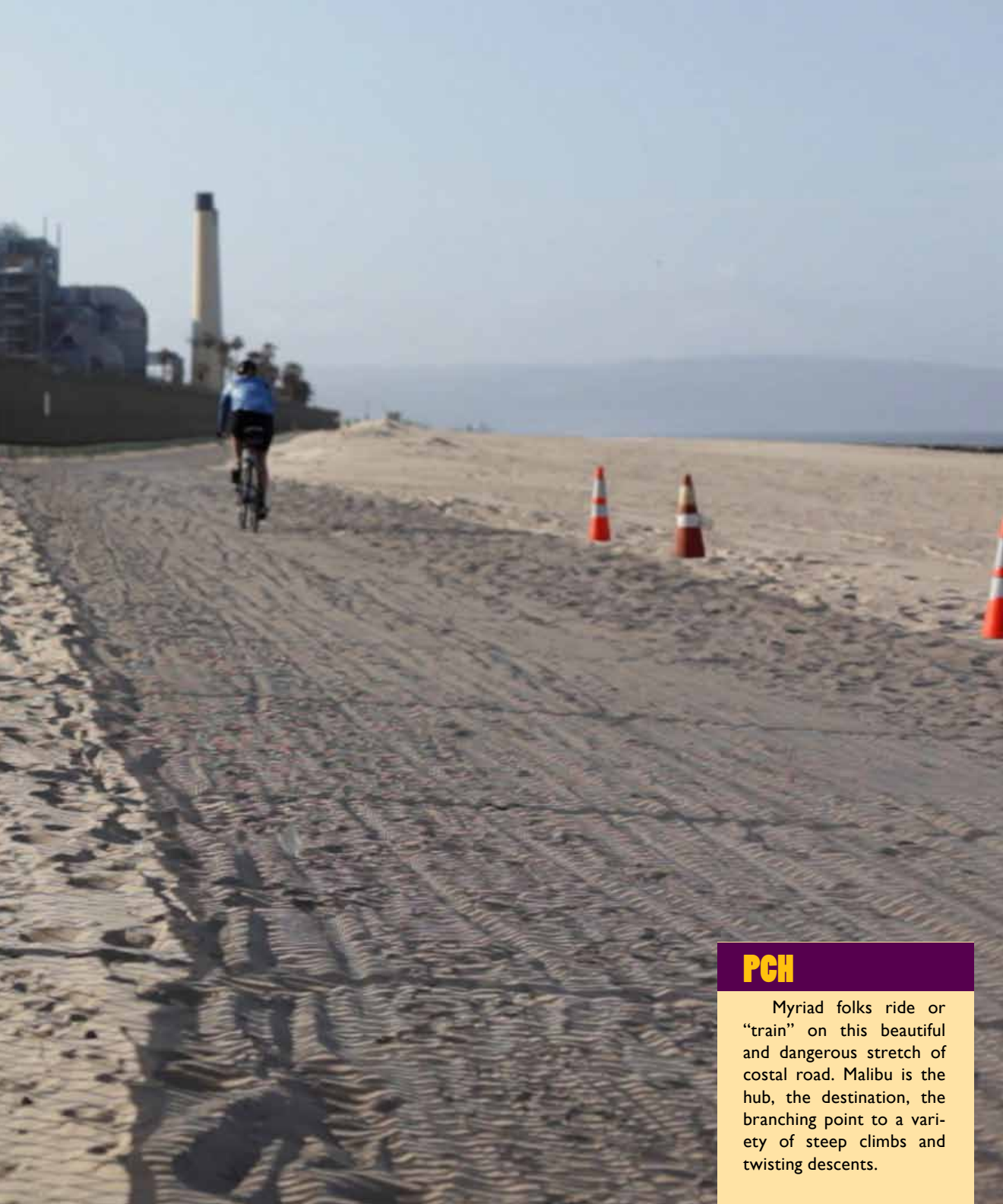
durobike.com

COUNTY WIDE

A Film By Eric Matthies


Words & photos by Eric Matthies

LA County has a flavor that everyone tastes differently. We all come to it for different reasons, united by the bicycle. For some, LA might be a Bukowski poem or a passage from Fante. For others, it's a Tom Waits song. It can be punk rock, it can be competitive, it can be political. It's serious road racing, hot and sweaty mountain biking, the birthplace of BMX and a frontrunner in fixed gear trickery. From El Segundo, Glendale, Hollywood, Whittier, Alta Dena, Santa Monica—the county holds power over the city itself. The LA bike scene is vibrant, full of good times, activism, participation, community and it's own cottage industry. Cycling offers escape from the daily grind of Los Angeles, and a way of accessing different views of it. This film is a smattering of those perspectives; a documentation without the subjectivity of interviews or agendas. The imagery was approached photographically, the narrative unfolding within the context of each sequence. This is a film of people met through shared passion in locations familiar to those who ride here. The music was created to form a soundscape that compliments the naturally occurring whirs, pings and voices found in the images. Countywide is a celebration of cycling in LA and of Los Angeles itself. It is not attempting to speak for every corner of “the scene,” nor is it meant to exclude anything. It highlights some variations that our scene has to offer, and glimpses the unique aspects to cycling here that I've rolled across over the years.



PCH

Myriad folks ride or “train” on this beautiful and dangerous stretch of coastal road. Malibu is the hub, the destination, the branching point to a variety of steep climbs and twisting descents.



COUNTY WIDE

BICYCLING ACROSS LOS ANGELES

GRIFFITH PARK

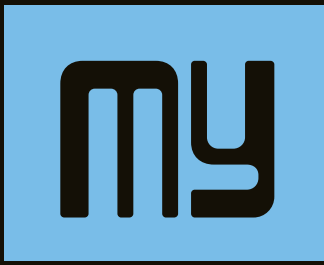
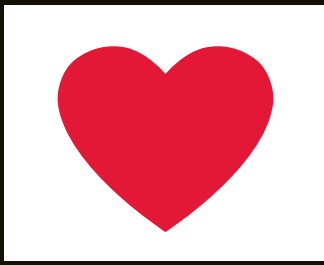
Lots of folks use these hills to ride. You can't go "off road" here, it's against the law to mountain bike or cycle the horse and hiking trails, but there's plenty of busted up service road to traverse. Mostly I see weekend warriors and cat.4's training, but also older guys who might be riding to work at a restaurant over the hill.



THE BICYCLE MART

Bill's got hundreds of bikes in storage, each of 'em tells a bit of LA cycling lore. He's got old Coors and Motorola team rigs and can tell you the history of the famed Montrose Ride. Classic crusty shop, full of dust and memories and spare tubes. Folks like to bitch about The Mart, but it's packed with legend and worth listening to a story or two.

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MOTH ATTACK

When Brendt Barbur of the BFF and I started talking about this project one of the ideas was to include as much of a female perspective as possible. I spoke with the guys at Orange 20 and they immediately told me about Megan Dean. Track-star, raced the Furnace Creek 508 and builds wicked steel steeds in a neighborhood that has become a hub of cycling culture here in town.



LACBC

Another place where the girls shine in LA is the local bike coalition. Of all the top admin and get-it-done folks in this great organization, around 90% are women. They've pushed for safer riding, gone up against the mayor and police chief for cyclists rights, and implemented a sharrows program to make the roads safer.

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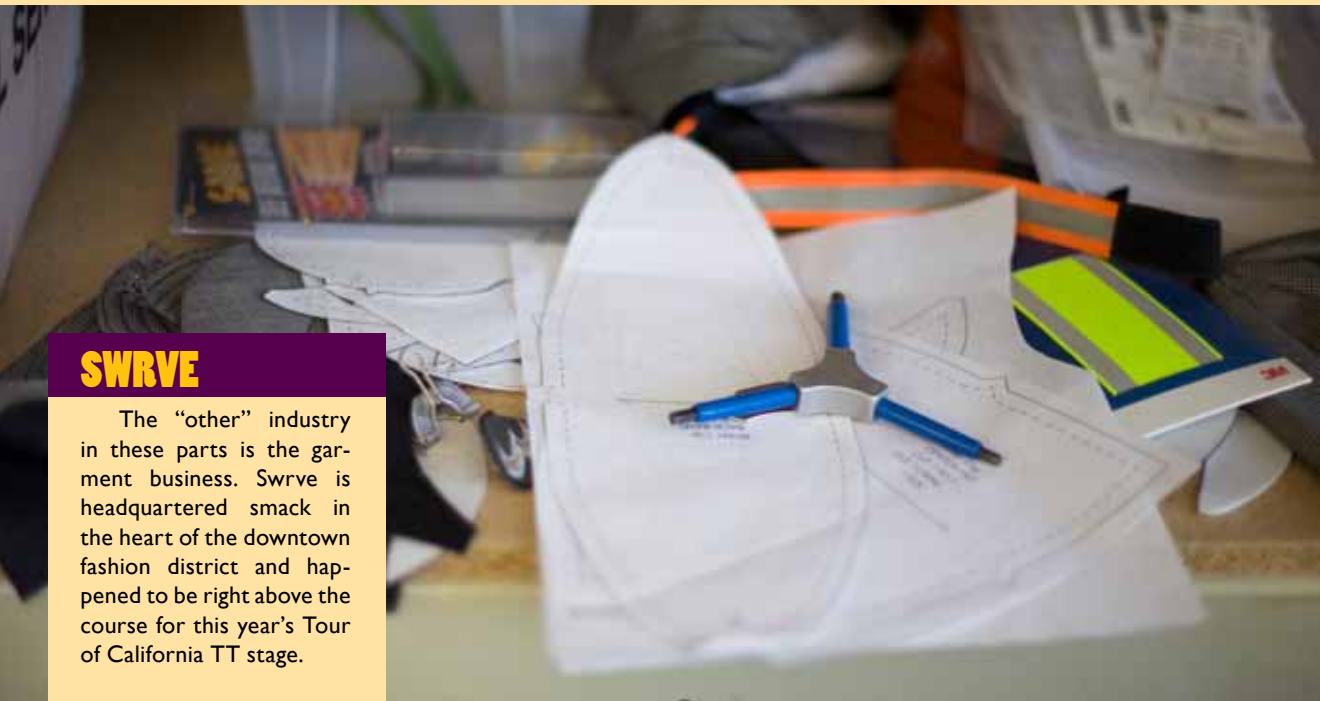
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ROSE BOWL

Another staple LA spot —whether it's doing laps around the path, entering into the Wednesday night unofficial crit, or as a meeting point for other group rides through the area, The Bowl is central to most cyclist's awareness here. For Countywide, it was the site of our local Ride of Silence.



SWRVE

The “other” industry in these parts is the garment business. Swrve is headquartered smack in the heart of the downtown fashion district and happened to be right above the course for this year's Tour of California TT stage.



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www.skully.com.tw
by S-Sun

A close-up photograph of a concrete surface, likely a sidewalk or street. It features several pieces of graffiti. In the center, there are four red, stylized human figures in a line, possibly representing a parade or a group of people. To the right, there are blue, abstract, scribbled lines. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more graffiti and a metal fence in the upper right corner.

LA RIVER

A concrete aquaduct would be more accurate than 'river'. It connects downtown to the valley, the harbor to the hills. Used by commuters, consumers, casual civilians and swarthy outcasts. Could be better, has been worse, it's a unique way to traverse a bit of the county and see the sites – just be mindful of what 'hood you might be passing through along it's banks.

A photograph of a man riding a bicycle at night. He is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt, orange pants, a black helmet with a headlight, and a black backpack. He is riding a pink bicycle. The background is blurred, showing city lights and buildings, suggesting an urban environment at night.

DARYL

Daryl works at my friend's restaurant. He's here from the East Coast, trying to make his way. LA isn't easy in some respects, but it will let you in. It can also lead you around like a pack of wild dogs on a chain.





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Words and images by Zack Schwartz



Eighteenth Street is jagged. It's not just the potholes; the pavement is rough like komodo dragon hide, daring you to run your Dove soft skin over it. Fresh mozzarella on a cheese grater at Famous Ray's. I look down and see broken glass, a crushed rat, hard bits of indiscernible dirty trinkets pulverized beneath the churn of New York City.



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I shove my bike lock into my belt, and though it's hot the metal sits cold on my spine. The light is red so I wait, balanced on my bike in the crosswalk. Pedestrians swarm through as I hover, tension building in my legs. A deliveryman pulls up. He hops off his cracked yellow plastic and duct tape scooter and holds it idling. He's wearing a leather jacket, the back of it embroidered with a cigar-smoking Daffy Duck. I give him a nod, but there is no response.

A full-facemask black helmet in the vein of Darth Vader sits above the jacket. He's added custom-cut milk jug handlebar guards for maximum hand protection. This guy is clearly not fucking around. Looking back down at the pavement, I ponder my own under-protected dome and reason he may just be on to something. The black orb bobbing in beat to the cranked headphones leaking Notorious B.I.G. *Things Done Changed*. "Callin' the city for help because they can't maintain, damn shit done changed."

The headphones are cut in half, each earpiece duct taped to a side of the helmet for maximum absorption. He crowds the crosswalk, revving his tiny engine, helmet moving in unison to the popping snare beat escaping the headphones. Clouds reflected off the black sheen of his helmet: white, blue, white.

I've found it's unwise to bite quickly on green lights in NYC. Many of the cabbies routinely charge through a newborn red in hopes of a half second shaved off their fares.

The deliveryman is watching the opposing crosswalk signal as his starting gun and throttling his tiny two-stroke. Suddenly he starts to sprint the scooter through the intersection on foot. A yellow cab plows through the green light, missing the deliveryman by inches. Without a glance back, he jumps on the scooter midstride and buzzes off down Eighteenth Street.

I start out slow and pick up speed as I cross Third Avenue. A FedEx truck is blocking half of the street. The opening is too small for another truck carrying steel to squeeze through, so the driver's just going to town on his air horn—I mean non-stop staccato blasts of rhythm as if he's enjoying it. Maybe he's remembering childhood percussion bouts with his favorite rubber-tipped spoon on his highchair tray? He is really wailing on the horn now, dropping all sense of social convention and it's now just a man and an air horn, creating. The sounds are reverberating up and out off the buildings, reproducing exponentially, a cacophony of frustration for all.

I duck my head under a steel pipe, hoping this guy doesn't retry the spacing and attempt to drive on through, pinning me against a FedEx truck and preserving me in infamy via a bystander's phone camera post to a creepy underground death-video website. To live in the minds of Midwestern metal kids as the source of the "Whoa dude, did you see his head twitching?" comment to their friend

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before they watch the next unfortunate soul.

He doesn't, and I'm through, the lone salmon that has jumped the last of the falls and eyes smoother waters ahead. I sit back, taking my left hand off the bars. Now holding on with just my right forefinger, still just sitting back part way. I need to let go, take both hands off, sit straight up and conquer no-handed riding. I've wanted to do it since I was three years old, watching badass Baltimore playground boys popping tricks on white-wheeled BMX bikes. I didn't think about sex until age ten so one could argue this as a greater attainment of a life goal.

Carpe diem, hike the Appalachian Trail, build a jungle shelter with natives in Laos, hunt bears in Siberia with an unhinged man named Fedor who has the Kremlin tattooed on his chest. Fedor tells me the text below the tattoo translates to "Fate plays with man, but man never plays with fate." All these adventures hinge on no-hand riding. Without mastering this, I fear I may just grow old pondering logistics of the travels I hope to one day have.

Now, here, no travel planning required, New York City riding itself is an adventure. Everywhere I go, I want to travel by bicycle, moped, motorcycle, rickshaw. Life is better viewed from two wheels: all the speed without the steel and airbag protection heightens the sensation; the zoo without cages. Immersed in the ebb and flow of uni-

versal living, you become an insider.

I raise my right arm and whip down Eighteenth Street, the cars blockaded behind me. Watching my front wheel spin over the blacktop, my back is straight, shoulders free from tension. Look, Mom, no hands!

Picture your arms outstretched, welcoming the sky, the fading light and scurrying clouds corralled into a narrow corridor by the glass canyon walls of the city. The breeze of momentum tugs your cheeks. Close your eyes for a second. One Mississippi. There, skimming over that aforementioned pavement at twenty-five miles an hour on tiny rubber tubes built in some Far East factory by nine year olds. "Divesting myself of the holds that would hold me."

The thing about no hand riding is it can't happen just barely hovering your hands over the bars. You have to lean back and sit up straight to obtain the balance. The instant you release the bars causes that jangle of nerves so many memorable moments demand. The classic lesson of letting go to grasp your desires rings loudly. The exhilaration is addictive, like a new flame licking the tiny kindling of the soul, a calf tongue on a salt lick, demanding more and more. Freeing in the ability to now create it, a secret unlocked.

The light is changing up ahead, and I break my rule. I



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have at most half a second head start on the rush-hour traffic of Second Avenue. I hit the turn fast and low, begging my tires not to skid-out, delivering me scraped and prone to the oncoming stampede. After the turn a hard right to the supposed bike lane, whose real purpose is a handy double parking area for everyone from fish deliveries, to lounging NYPD cruisers, to greasy haired men in greasy black cars always plugged in and murmuring into worn prepaid cell phones. The cheapest way to keep one's mind five thousand miles away.

Behind me, Second Avenue seems to curve with the earth over and around, as far back as the eye can manage. The cogs never seem to stop or wear out as this city always spins, constantly replacing as it goes. King Kong of the coast, roaring out its bellow across the eastern seaboard.

It's all yellow cabs all the time at the intersection of Houston and Second. I slide between two and wait for the green to let us loose. I see a giant backhoe scoop of a pothole directly in front of me. If I hit it my entire front wheel might just disappear. The cabbie to my right, his eyes closed, is singing along to the Tom Jones theme from Thunderball. It's beautiful in that glimpse of other's personal space that NYC offers every millisecond.

Green light! Tom Jones cabbie is fucking crowding me right towards that asteroid divot of a pothole. I jump my bike pedals forward hard and just miss falling off the left edge into it, marveling again at its size. Cabs all around me, I pedal hard. Faster than traffic now, I skirt a yellow light at Hester and bank the hard left towards the bridge.

Chinatown threatens to envelop me as I turn across Canal. Bodies everywhere, all with plastic bags and down-

turned eyes. Meandering through the crush on my steel steed, marveling at my own anonymity. Not one person looks at me, New York City style. Up the bank of the bridge ramp I go, the wind tasting different as it comes off the water. The light settles in the corners of the sky, decadent hues of color tucked into the elongating shadows of the evening.

I'm walled in by the suicide prevention chain link of the Manhattan Bridge. The projects on my left loom impressively. A mass of window AC units and brown brick, now reddish in the falling sun. The wind is loud, blasting my face as I sit back. Hands off once again, I look at Long Island City and the docks of Greenpoint. The lights of the Williamsburg Bridge seem to float in the hazy twilight.

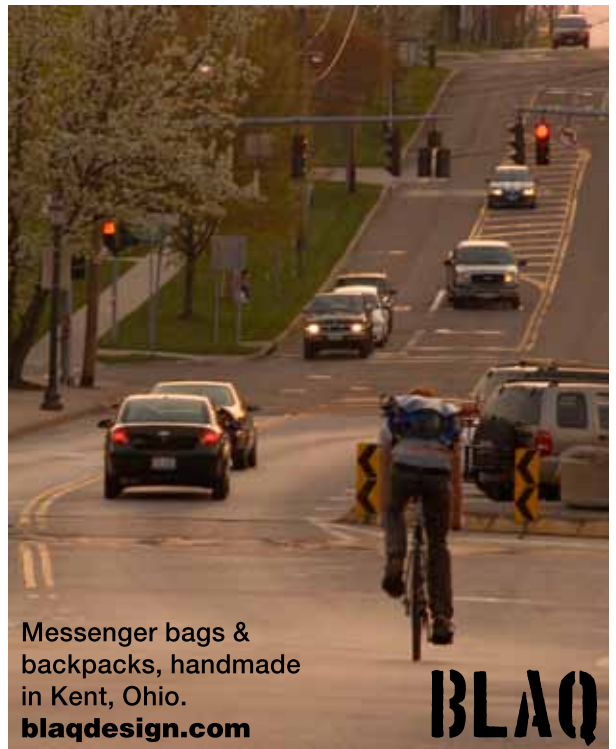
A roar is building behind me: I go faster but so does it. It's bearing down on me now, I feel the hair rise on the back of my neck. Faster still yet, I feel the bridge shaking under its closing approach. Tremors are rippling out and under my tires, up through my wrist bones, handshakes of industry. I'm hitting the bumps of the bridge joints so hard they threaten to toss me into the fence. It's gaining faster, screeching, pulsing, roaring under the same downhill momentum. The Q train on, around, and over me as it tears past. My pores absorb the hot blast with a shiver. Ears shell shocked by the sound of grinding metal, I taste it in the back of my throat.

I catch faces framed in the yellow light of the train windows. Despite the speed and wind I see each face in stark focus. A thousand faces hurtling over a bridge in New York Fucking City, we ride downhill into the night together.





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Brake Lever Compatibility

By Brad Quartuccio



Not all cable-actuated brakes are created equal. Beyond differences in make and quality, there are fundamentals of design at hand that determine what brake levers will and won't work effectively. There are two varieties of levers available, designated by the amount of cable that they pull. Standard or short pull levers are paired with road calipers, U-brakes and cantilever brakes. Long pull levers are compatible with Shimano's V-brakes and other long armed direct-pull brakes along with the majority of mechanical disc brakes. Drop-bar road levers are almost always standard pull save for a few specialty versions for direct-pull brakes. Levers for flat bars are available in either version, with most mountain levers of the past 15 years or so being long pull, and some being swappable between short and long pull.

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Road caliper, standard pull.



Cantilever brake, standard pull.



V-brake, long pull.

Mechanical Advantage

Brakes are all about the mechanical advantage of the entire system, brake and lever as one. For a rim brake, the mechanical advantage refers to the amount of force that the pad places on the rim as compared to the amount of force applied to the brake lever. This can also be thought of as the amount of movement at the brake lever as compared to that of the pads. For example, a very powerful brake will have pads that move a relatively small distance as compared to how far the brake lever moves, and will exert much more force on the rim than the hand squeezing the brake lever.

At the brake end of the system, road calipers and cantilevers have relatively low mechanical advantage (the brake pads move roughly the same amount the cable has been pulled) while V-brakes have a high mechanical advantage (the brake pads move much less than the amount of cable pulled). A low mechanical advantage brake caliper requires a brake lever with a high mechanical advantage to work properly, like a standard or short pull version that pulls a small amount of cable as compared to the movement of the lever. High mechanical advantage V-brakes require the extra cable pull and lower mechanical advantage of long-pull levers.

Mix and Match?

The wrong lever and brake combination isn't always obvious, and can be counterintuitive at first. Pairing a long pull lever with a cantilever brake gives a very firm feeling brake in the workstand, but on the road it will be hard to pull the brakes hard enough to stop the wheel due to the low mechanical advantage of the entire system. On the opposite side of the spectrum, V-brakes and standard pull levers will give a very spongy brake lever feel but will in reality have too much mechanical advantage to work properly. Even though the mismatched system has a lot of mechanical advantage and power to spare, the brake pads will need to be so close to the rim that even when fully retracted they may still make contact. Otherwise you may find that you run out of lever pull before the pads fully contact the rim—in either case the brakes will not work as they should.

There is more to the eventual feel and stopping power of brakes than matching the proper lever and caliper, but this is a vital first step. Different levers and calipers have different braking attributes based on design and manufacture, and sometimes require some experimentation to find the combination that feels just right.



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Quick Release History

By Brad Quartuccio



The quick release skewer has become all but standard equipment on many bicycles today, making wheel changes and seat height adjustments a tool-free occasion. The construction and operation is simple enough that it is hard to believe the eventual influence its development in the late 1920's would have on bicycles as we know them today. The quick release mechanism patented in 1930 was the first invention of Tullio Campagnolo, at the time a twenty-something bike racer frustrated with a recent loss at the hand of an axle nut he simply couldn't turn in order to fix a flat. Just a few years after that fateful flat tire Tullio went on to produce the first bicycle shifting mechanism that allowed racers to switch gears without dismounting and flipping the wheel over. Twenty years later Tullio introduced the first modern derailleur, a two-pulley parallelogram design fundamentally the same as current models. Quick releases themselves haven't changed much since their introduction—it's still a rod threaded on one end with a lever operated cam mechanism on the other. The rest, as they say, is history, with Campagnolo firsts influencing the construction of and rules governing bicycles ever since.





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Maximize Solvent Use

By Brad Quartuccio




For a truly dirty chain no amount of wiping will make it clean again, it's going to need a bath. The solvents and degreasers used can be noxious, expensive or both—it's best to maximize your use of them before disposal no matter what. It should go without saying, but you should always defer to the safety precautions of the solvent of your choosing, none of it is good for you, though some is less bad than others.

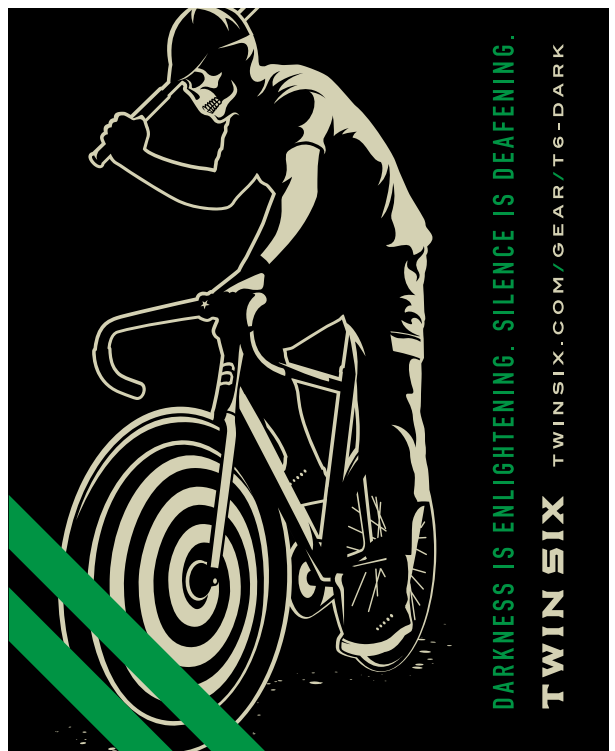
1. Any two containers will do, but I like to use these old 8mm film reel canisters I found in my basement when I moved in. Place the dirty chain and some solvent in one container, put the lid on and shake it up.

2. After you've shaken up the chain, remove it from the solvent bath and wipe it as clean as you can before setting it aside in your second container. Let the remaining solvent settle until all of the grime collects at the bottom.

3. Carefully pour off the now clear solvent into the second container. Repeat the process until your chain is sufficiently clean, saving any remaining solvent in an appropriate container for future use.

Depending on the solvent, you may find that oils collect at the top rather than the bottom of the container. This doesn't affect chain cleaning much, but can change your decisions on how to best collect and reuse the solvent. 

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