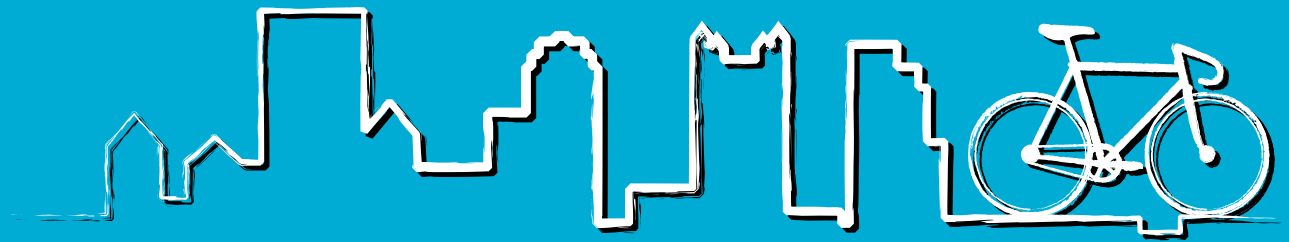


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URBAN VELO

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Issue #24 • March 2011



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URBAN VELO

Issue #24 March 2011



Brad Quartuccio
Editor
brad@urbanvelo.org



Jeff Guerrero
Publisher
jeff@urbanvelo.org

On the cover: Skin is waterproof. Cool rains eased the stifling afternoon heat. See and read more on page 34. Photo by Andy White, www.fyxomatosism.com

Co-conspirators: Rie Sawada, Alex Hansen, Martha Williams, Jeffrey Decker, Stasia Burrington, Roger Lootine, David Munson, Jessica Budde, Andrew X. Pham, Nancy Pham, John Cameron and Andy Singer

Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

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

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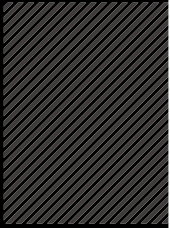
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Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



I write a lot of tech pieces for Urban Velo, but here is possibly the best advice there is no matter what your skill level with wrench in hand. Make friends with your local shop mechanics.

Even if you do most of your own maintenance there are inevitably times you are in above your head and need the sympathetic ear or deft touch of a professional you trust. Shear off a bolt, strip out a crankset's extraction threads, spend a weekend trying to get your bottom bracket to stop creaking only to make it worse, get a seatpost stuck in your custom frame—these problems inevitably arise just before your *big ride* and are just when you need to know who to call. And they need to recognize who is showing up 20 minutes before closing as someone other than a nameless face looking for a last minute fix.

Spending a few extra dollars on small parts from the shop can add up to big dividends later with your back against the wall and a broken bike that isn't going to get you to wherever your Point B may be. Ask around the local scene, the everyday riding and racing vets know who in town should be trusted with your bike, and who shouldn't even be allowed to air up your tires. Find a good mechanic or two in your town and next time you're at the bar get them a beer, next time you're out on a casual ride looking for lunch show up with an extra sandwich just to shoot the breeze. The five dollars spent will be quickly forgotten on your end but will be just as quickly remembered by the wrench with the answers when you're in a bind. Support your local bike shop, it's just that simple.



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



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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero



Springtime is just around the corner, and for many of us in the bicycle world, it's perhaps the most joyous time of the year. Especially those of us who live in parts of the world that experience four distinct seasons.

I'm amazed when I ponder the notion that my 18th winter in Pittsburgh is coming to a close. I've often thought about leaving town in search of a warmer climate, but for reasons that defy logic, I stay put, year after year. Despite the snow banks plowed up against the curb, the puddles of slush that camouflage hidden potholes and the ice-covered bike trails... When it's all said and done, the perils of winter make the coming of spring that much sweeter.

And in some ways, winter is something of a blessing. Unless you've got the resolve of a monk or an obsessive-compulsive disorder, it's tough to stay inspired all

year. Bike rides tend to feel like more of a chore than an opportunity when the thermometer dips below freezing, and as a result it's really not that hard to convince yourself to spend a little extra time indoors with friends and loved ones. Or to finally tackle that project that's been sitting on the back burner.

Then before you know it, the old legs start getting restless. And a 40° "heatwave" means it's time to take to the streets in long sleeves, shorts and a vest—windchill factor be damned!

Just like that, the inspiration is back... To take the long route home. To take a late night lap around the city. To organize a race, a ride or just a get-together on the other side of town.

Yes, spring will be here before you know it. Take heart, and enjoy.



Urban Velo issue #24, March 2011. Dead tree print run: 5000 copies. Issue #23 online readership: 55,000+

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Dillan Brinlee

LOCATION: Savannah, GA

OCCUPATION: Student, Bike Mechanic

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

I live and go to college in Savannah, GA. Savannah is where I got into biking and I love riding here. The city is spread out but traffic can get crazy downtown so it's a nice combination. For the most part it's laid back but rush hour can get pretty intense and I love the adrenaline rush I get when I'm riding on the double yellow, passing cars on both sides. I love mashing through traffic, biking to class, and riding around the city late at night doing freestyle.

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

Savannah is really the only city I've ridden in since I didn't get into biking until I came to college. I'd really like

to ride in a bigger city like New York City or San Francisco and my roommates and I are hoping to bike fixed across the country from Savannah to San Francisco in a couple of years after we graduate.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because it's the fastest way to get from one point to another. Even when I have a class that's a few miles away I can usually get there before someone in a car. Sometimes I try to take it easy and bike slow to class but I always find myself speeding up and out of breath by the time I get to where I'm going. There's just nothing like it.

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NAME: Lorena Cupcake
LOCATION: Chicago, IL
OCCUPATION: Bank Teller

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

Man, I've been to Portland. I enjoyed drinking my pour-over flannel drip single-origin fair trade coffee, eating my ethically sourced naan sandwich delivered by bakfiets, and getting tattooed by a surly vegan. But I really didn't see the claim that it's some sort of Two Wheeled Wonderland never to be approached in glory by any other city backed up.

Chi-Town will always be number one in my heart. There's always an event going down; cyclocross, group bar rides, Messenger Prom, Sadie Hawkins Style Ride, and more alley-cats than I could name.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love checking out guys from behind when they pass me on Milwaukee Ave. Riding home from bars when they kick us out at five in the morning. Having people talk to me in a way they never would if I was in a car; staggering bros trying to high-five me in Wrigleyville, little kids learning how to ride on the sidewalk waving at me, look-ma-no-hands hipsters openly envying my spoke lights. A total stranger once yelled "Hi, Little Miss Rainbows! Thanks for biking!" at me, which made up for every time anyone's ever screamed "Get a car!"

Poetry anyone?

Chaingrease and cocktails, the city I live in, bourbon and tacos and buck Pabst Blue Ribbon, tall skinny hipster boy riding his bike, these are a few of the things that I like...

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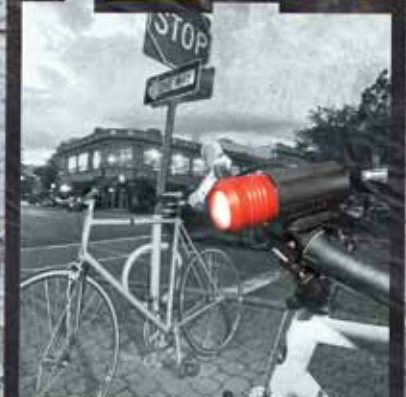
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NAME: Han Koning

LOCATION: Groningen, The Netherlands

OCCUPATION: Dutch

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

I live in Groningen, where nearly half of the city commutes by bike. We have special bike lanes, and cars hitting bikes is a violation of the law—even when the bike was at fault. Whether I'm picking up or dropping off stuff for work, or just looping through town for fun, it definitely beats driving the best car out there.

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

Definitely Amsterdam, just because it's Amsterdam!

Why do you love riding in the city?

It must be the freedom. The supreme form of urban transportation. Fast, agile, lightweight and sexyfull!



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NAME: Slavik Dyak
LOCATION: Lviv, Ukraine
OCCUPATION: Quality Assurance Engineer

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

I live in the west Ukrainian city called Lviv (population 800,000). The city center is old and European-like, while other parts are USSR-like. The city doesn't have any bike infrastructure and mostly people don't like cyclists. But still I love riding the city. It doesn't matter if you ride on the road with cars or on the sidewalk with pedestrians, nobody likes you so you just ride how you want.

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

I think it was Krakow, Poland. But it's only one of cities where I've been with my bike.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because I'm quick, I'm mobile and I don't need to park a car and walk a few blocks to my destination point. It's cheap. But mainly of course you have a lot of fun that you can't get in public transport or in a car. Like when you were a child!

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

In Ukraine we have a nice saying, unfortunately it can't be translated to rhyme, "Four wheels carry the body, and two wheels carry the soul."

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NAME: Kelly Benecke
LOCATION: Chicago, IL
OCCUPATION: Mom

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

I live in Chicago, IL. Riding in this city has been a very interesting experience, specifically because I had not ridden in years when I started and because I ride with my child. My husband and I sold our car when we first moved here in 2007, but I did not start biking until summer of 2009, when my daughter turned a year old.

The bike lanes can be badly labeled and contain the brunt of the potholes, and drivers do not seem to respect cyclists very much. Even so, I still have a love for biking and will continue to bike with my child as our main mode of transportation. My daughter loves to sit in her trailer and can often be found singing and reading books while we ride.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love the freedom. I love not having to wait or having to drag a stroller onto the bus or up/down the stairs to a train platform with a screaming toddler. I spent nearly two years relying on public transportation, and it was horrid. Now, I have no wait times, no break downs that can't be easily fixed, and I don't have to spend time searching for a parking spot.

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

"The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart." —Iris Murdoch

NAME: Jorge Catalán Campbell
LOCATION: Santiago, Chile
OCCUPATION: Industrial Design Student

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

I live in Santiago, Chile. Santiago is fast and has a lot of cars but has a little of urban cycling culture. I prefer to ride on the street fooling around between the cars.

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

Viña del Mar, 200 km from Santiago. Fresh air, a lot of wind and beautiful sights.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I feel part of it, I'm not sealed up in a car. And while everybody is getting chubby, I'm getting tight. And the most important reason... Because I want to make this world and this city cleaner for all of us and the generations to come.



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NAME: Dave Hickey
LOCATION: Fort Worth, TX
OCCUPATION: Manager

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?
I live in Fort Worth, TX. We have a very active cycling community. In addition to the usual spandex clad shop rides, we have a group that is dedicated to night riding and pub crawls.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?
Beside Fort Worth, Los Angeles is my favorite. I travel a lot for business and I always take my bike when I visit LA. The reason I like LA is you can ride along the beach, ride mountains, and ride in urban areas all in the same day.
Other favorites are Tampa, FL, San Juan, PR, Austin, TX and Boulder, CO.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city... Poetry anyone?
Riding in a city is the best way to explore. Walking lim-its where you can go and driving is a hassle. I like nothing more than grabbing my camera and riding downtown. I've been riding fixed gear for 15 years, and fixed gears and the city are a perfect combination.

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LOCATION:

OCCUPATION:

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

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

Why do you love riding in the city?

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

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Andrew Schwartz

LOCATION: Ambler, PA

OCCUPATION: Student

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

I am from Ambler, PA, a small borough outside of Philadelphia. Even though Ambler is small, there are neat back roads to explore and of course, plenty of hills. There are not many cyclists, but there is some respect for cyclists on the busy downtown streets. Overall, Ambler is a lively small town and a lot of fun to ride in.

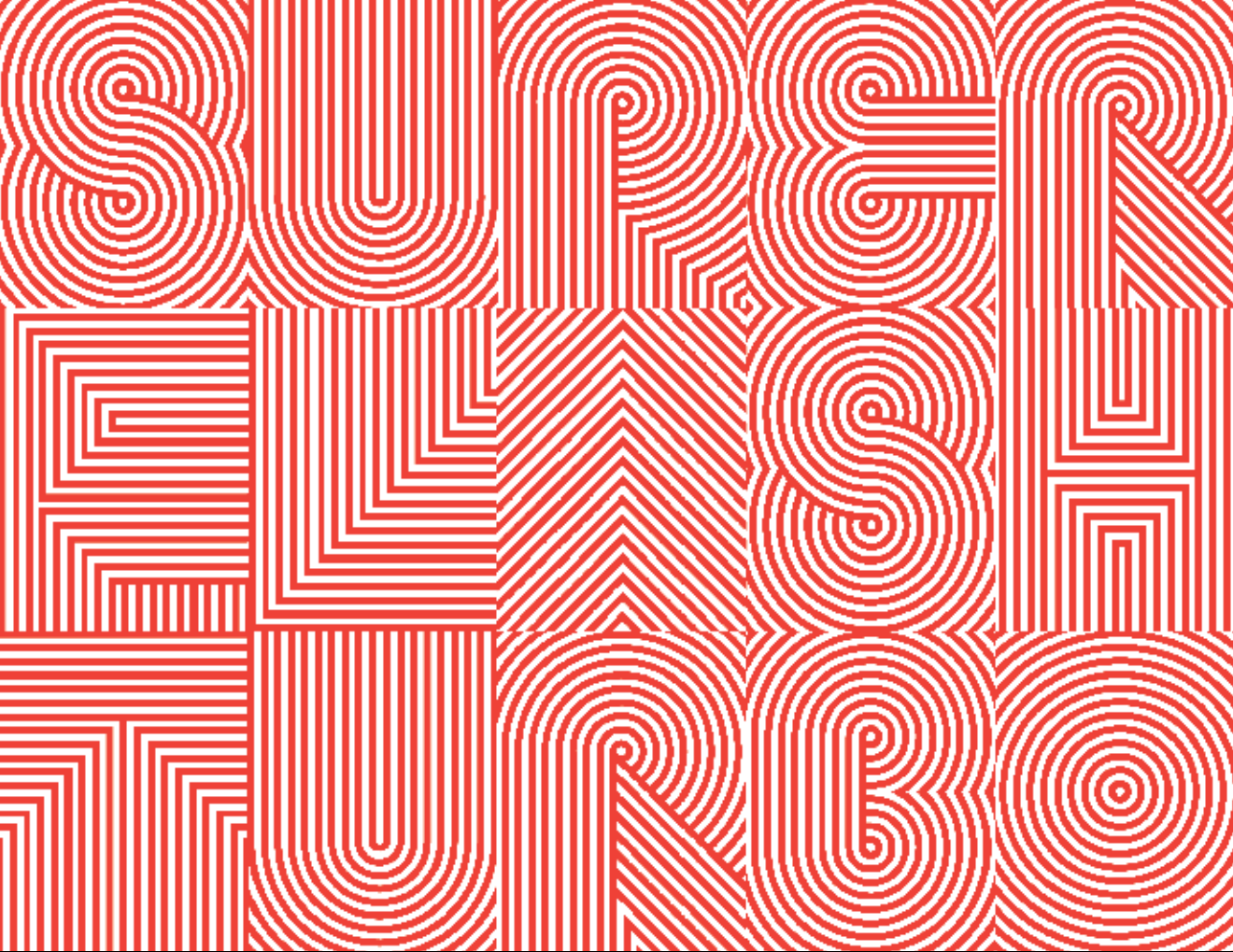
What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

By far, my favorite city to ride in is Philadelphia. Besides the widespread cycling culture, Philadelphia is a

whole new world. From sprinting down West River Drive to exploring the back roads, there is always something new to explore and discover. Also, there are many local shops willing to help out with any bike problems. Cycling is popular in Philly, which is what makes it great.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because the city (town in my case) is so full of life. No day is the same as any other and you never know what to expect. I just feel like an urban brawler ripping up the streets, which is a good feeling to me. Flying by the traffic jams of cars which aren't moving makes me feel like I am the fastest thing on the road. Riding in the city is a wonderful feeling.



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Achmad Anang
LOCATION: Surabaya, Indonesia
OCCUPATION: Teacher

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

I live in Surabaya, the City of Heroes and the capital city of East Java, Indonesia. Riding in this city is like being in a battle among the lunatic bus drivers, pedicabs, and private car drivers. There are no bike lanes and people prefer going anywhere using their motorbike or car.

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

Surabaya is my favorite city to ride, besides Malang. It's the second largest metropolis after Jakarta and it is

the center of business and administration in this province. It has the same problems as the other big cities in this country—a huge population in a limited area, without appropriate modes of public transportation.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love finding a group of bikers and also watching people in a rush going work. Among three million others, riding in the city during the workday becomes a challenge. It's quite hot and crowded living here.



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NAME: Armando Quiros
LOCATION: Natick, MA
OCCUPATION: Frame Builder

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

Hartford, CT as a bicycle messenger. The city is small and everything was a sprint, which is my style of riding.

I do like riding in Boston a lot!

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city for the thrill of it all. I was getting paid to do it before so after a few years it was work—a job. I retired from messenger work a few years ago, now the adrenaline rush of riding in the city is my pay. The anticipation of it all. Your heart rate going as you get into your zone where you just know what things are going to happen, but you are ready. After getting through it, avoiding it, you tell yourself “Ha I knew it!” and ride away awaiting the next street challenge.

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Words & Photos by Andy White

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We all love to ride. I would hope I'm preaching to the converted in this area. What makes a ride special always changes for me. Sometimes it's riding to the shop on a ladies bike with the shopping hooked over the bars, a commute with a tail wind both ways, bumping into a friend or making a new one on the road, a short 10 km pedal with my wife, or chasing down a break on the track.

This particular special ride, an urban escape of

mental and physical proportions covered six days and 1300 km (roughly 800 miles, 1 km is equal to .62 miles). If you are familiar with Victoria, Australia it began in Melbourne, headed north west for Bendigo, across the plains to Wangaratta, to the foot of the Alpine region in Mt. Beauty, and then a succession of three big days in the hills. It was windy, it was hot, it was wet, it was cold. It was the best ride I've ever done.



Day 2 - Bendigo to Wangaratta

I woke at 6 AM. With 210 km on the board from the previous day, the legs were a little sluggish just getting out of bed. I scoffed my breakfast of banana, apple, and donuts, pulled on my self-laundered kit and rolled out the door. The sun was breaking but the cloud cover was keeping a lid on the light. Yesterday's unfriendly headwind had not gone and to the direction I was headed it was very gloomy and dark with sparks of lightning the only illumination. "Bloody great."

I'd chosen a backcountry route for this day to Wangaratta, but at the turn off I looked down the skinny road and it was into the eye of the storm. I decided a slight deviation would be wise and headed for Elmore. As I

enjoyed my second breakfast in Elmore's bakery the heavens opened. I didn't think much of it as I finished my second grilled cheese sandwich. Then the street became a river. I ordered another grilled cheese. The rain was not easing and sitting in Elmore Bakery was getting me no closer to Wang. I rolled out in the unfavorable weather.

After a flat tire, and 120 km of flat and uninteresting roads, I'd reach my lunch point in Shepparton. The morning cold winds, and heavy rain were now a belting hot sun and clear sky. On boring sections such as these I usually listen to the local radio. An hour long segment on bird watchers was on and to my amazement Phil Liggett, the voice of cycling, is an avid bird man.

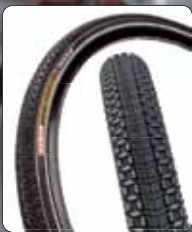
Life in Motion

Messenger Spotlight: Marco

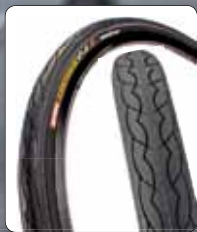
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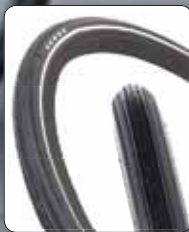
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With long seemingly endless roads taking me to the horizon, and similar visual cues my mind wanders and escapes on its own journey. I see the long green grass and think back to rides previous. My first “epic” was as a 5 year old riding beyond the fence line of my house to the end of the street, never out of eyesight of my Dad. There was no path. Just a bumpy unpaved sidewalk with unruly lush grass. On returning from my triumphant ride I immediately asked my Dad when I could go again, and could I go a little further next time.

The afternoon stretch grew hotter and hotter as I grew more tired and dehydrated. To my right the Victorian Alps loomed in the distance. The modest hills would be tomorrow’s challenge.

I rolled into the supermarket in Wangaratta as the sun began to fall low in the sky. On checkout I asked if there was a pub in town. Judging by the expression on the attendants face I rephrased the question, “Is there a pub in town with accommodation?” Sure enough there was, and the sign out front indicated it was motorbike friendly. I began the unwind process for the day. Pull off my damp and sweat stained kit. Shower and wash kit. Dry clothing over the heater in the room, drink two bidons of water, scoff a bag full of sweets, repair the three punctured tubes from the days previous, charge my phone and GPS, walk downstairs to the pub and order nearly everything on the menu. All performed at a lethargic pace. Eat, sleep, repeat.

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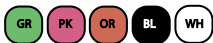


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Day 3 - Wangaratta to Beauty

To my excitement I found a cafe in the main street that was open before 7 AM. I could start my day with an espresso and baked goods. Today was already going to be better than yesterday even with 600 km in the legs. The weather was cool and I'd been told the old railway line, now converted to a bike path, would be a good route to take. It meandered slowly upwards passing vineyards, orchards and stock all the way to Beechworth. There, I took in my second breakfast of the day with a toasted chicken focaccia and espresso. The road out of Beechworth plummeted down to the valley. The road was twisty with each bend in sight, comfortably sitting on 70 kph without even turning the pedals. My mind escaped to the first time I took my first mountain bike down the steepest hill in the area. Behind my house were paddocks and a gorge. Kangaroos and hay bails were the yardage. It was a dirt road covered in loose rock, a gradient of around 20%. 4WD access only and a braking bump half way down. A quartet of young men stood at the top, each daring the other to go first. I was scared and excited in the same breath. All I can remember is shaking wildly, my eyeballs and helmet rattling around, grabbing the brakes but not slowing. For a brief moment I was airborne as I lifted the anchor into the air. "Woohoo!"

As the speed washed off and the road climbed to Yackandandah my mind was back on the road in front of

me. The Victorian Alps are not grand by world standards. I've hiked the Andes in South America to heights of 4500 m, ridden and skied in both the French Alps and the Canadian Rockies. Australia, though we call them mountains, has hills. Scale aside, they are no less beautiful and very different to ranges found around the world. Particularly the snow gums, and ghostly towering trees, which remain from bushfires past. The smell of eucalyptus trickling through the air, broken by the stench of road kill, is typical.

Some local advice took me on even smaller backcountry lanes that twisted and pitched severely. The occasional logging truck would offer a polite honk as I'd move over into the dirt and gesture them past. The afternoon turned very hot and the road followed the river into the valley. A small bridge spanned the river and it was an invite I couldn't resist. Off with the Sidi's and into the water up to my bibs. A handful of young kids performed acrobatic feats from a rope swing that dangled from a shady gum, judging each other based on twists, height and water displacement. This is the life.

I pulled the Sidi's back on and leisurely rode the last 40 km into town on the Mullagong road into the town of Tawonga, where I would finish for the day. Mt. Bogong, Victoria's highest mountain (1986 m) loomed over the valley. The afternoon storm was on its way. Time to unwind for the day. Eat, sleep, repeat.

Bianchi

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Day 4 - Beauty to Bairnsdale

If ever there was an epic weekend ride, this would be it. I crammed it into one massive day in the saddle and it was doubly spectacular.

The afternoon and evening storms from the day before had gone, but the hangover of rain remained. Everything was glistening with the moisture that was falling. Clouds hung low in the valley and somewhere above them was my first point of call at the summit of Falls Creek. It's a moderate climb immediately out of town for 30 km. Up and up the road goes with barely a moment to look at the bitumen as the amazing views change around each bend. By the summit I was soaked to the bone. Hands pruned, I squeezed the accumulation of water from the soggy mass that was my gloves and jersey. The toilets at the rangers station had a hand dryer and I used it to warm up. I sourced a local newspaper and shoved it down my jersey for the equally long but steeper and rougher descent to the Omeo highway. The "back road" down Falls Creek is rough, poorly marked and hellishly steep in parts. Visibility

was down to 100 m as I rode back through the cloud line. The combination of burnt trees and thick mist was eerie. The temptation to go as fast as I could was culled by the thought of crashing and being stranded, possibly for hours, out in the middle of nowhere in the cold and wet. Been there, done that.

At the highway intersection I headed south for Omeo. The river never far from sight, the soil roadside was a vibrant red and the vegetation this side of the range was noticeably different. Far in the distance at the valley floor I saw a tractor turn onto the road. This would be my "ride" into Omeo. As the road became a rollercoaster, the tractor always seemed to pull just far enough away each time I nearly reeled it in. What I'd planned to be my easy ride behind the slow moving machine to "save" energy was the opposite. This seemed strangely familiar. As a kid I rode my BMX on the sidewalk each day to the local butcher and bakery at the end of my street to get sliced ham and bread rolls for my school lunch. One particular day a man on a



Rider: DJ Mull Photo: David Beard

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“big” bike went passed me on the other side of the road. It was ON! I pedaled as fast as I could, switching looks between the path ahead of me, and to see if I was gaining on the big bike which was cruising, but to me, at half the size on a BMX it seemed like light speed. Between glances and furiously swinging the bike side to side I hit a square post of a driveway fence, split my knee open, and bent my bars. I hobbled to the butcher a bloody mess. I finally caught the back of the tractor as the “Welcome to Omeo” sign passed and the tractor turned into the first street. The driver gave a laugh and a wave.

From Omeo the Great Alpine Road closely follows the Tambo River. The rolling green hills were vibrant thanks to the season’s high rainfall. All the smaller creeks were now full, and the larger creeks now rivers. This is not the

norm. For the past 10 years most of Victoria has been in a degree of drought and I’d ride past signs indicating creek names thinking “where is the creek?” At a large bend in the Tambo River I ticked over 200 km for the day. A small wooden access bridge was below the main road. I stopped for a swim in the still waters. Bemused sheep looked on.

The road falls from Omeo to the coastal town of Bairnsdale, but it does so on an undulating carpet of asphalt. By the time I’d reached my destination I was absolutely sapped of all strength. What a day.

In a stupor I wound down for the day. The Bairnsdale motel had not only a washing machine and dryer, but a bath and television. Two more days ahead of me. Bigger and harder than today. I fell on the bed and drifted off to sleep during Goodfellas. Eat, sleep, repeat. 



AJ Austin

Photo: Jake Marx

milwaukeebicycle.com



10/10/10

DANGEROUS

BUSINESS

Plain talk advice from an ordinary cyclist about what to do if you're involved in an accident with an automobile. This is not legal advice.

By Jeffrey Decker

It's safe to say that cycling isn't always so safe. Whether you're an urban rider cutting through traffic, a daily commuter going to and from class or work, a triathlete training for your next event, or just out for a gentle ride on a beautiful day, every trip we take involves at least some element of danger.

About a month ago I was riding to a friend's house across town. Along my journey I was riding down a somewhat poorly lit road, with both front and rear lights. To my left up ahead there was a car that stopped at a crossing stop sign, I myself did not have one. As I entered the intersection the car pulled out to cross the road. With no time to stop I was struck by that front corner of the gentleman's SUV and was thrown clear to the pavement. My bike was not quite as lucky, and as his car came to a halt, found its place under his front tire.

If you don't yet know the feeling one gets when seeing their first build project being crushed under a couple of tons of steel, I hope you never do. As I lay on the pavement about five feet from the front bumper of his vehicle, a sort of shock set in. Accented by the sudden swarm of spectators and the somewhat chaotic setting it was hard to know what to do next. The first thing to worry about is yourself, then your bike, and finally what to do.

The point is it's important to keep your wits about you if at all possible. For those of us who've had the experience, we know it's not as easy as it sounds. When the body takes such trauma it tends to rattle the senses. There

are a few things to try to keep in mind when an accident happens.

First, make sure that the police are called to the scene. This is essential to ensuring that you don't get screwed out of your bike and, potentially, your bodily health. There are many different scenarios that may occur, and the important thing to remember is to gather all of the information you can. Police, when reporting to the scene of an accident, will do their best to help out. The problem sometimes is that officers don't always know how to treat bike cases, or even that we are equal road users.

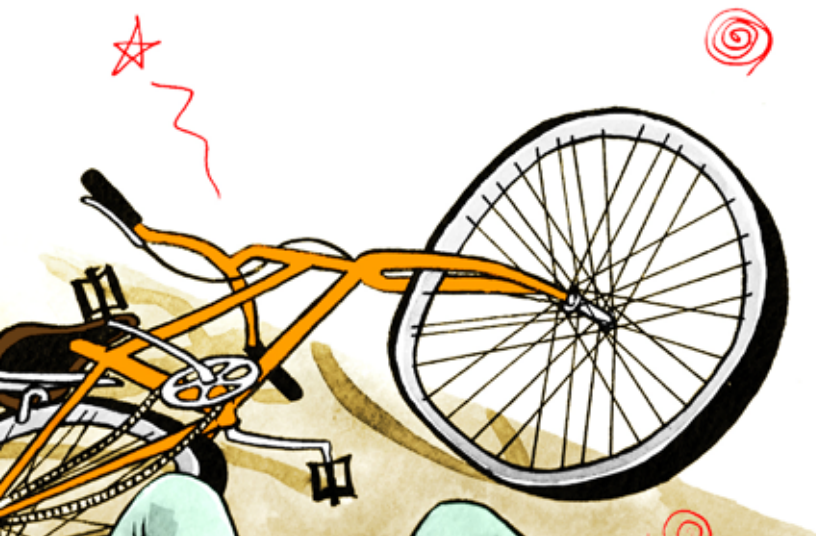
Your number one priority in the case of an accident should always be your health. Even if you don't notice any serious injuries at the time of the accident, you never know what may crop up later. Whenever a call is placed to 911 to report an accident, the operator is always supposed to ask if medical assistance is needed. Essentially they're asking if an ambulance needs to report to the scene. While this may not always be a necessity, it is usually a good idea. One thing to keep in mind is that if you're not at fault, it isn't on your tab, even if you need to take a ride to the hospital.

Luckily for me the driver who hit me stopped, but not all drivers will stick around to wait for the police. Even in a situation like that, try to at least acquire a description of the car, and if possible their license plate information. This information alone could be your savior. If a driver does decide to stick around, insurance and license information is key.

Involved in a **CRASH?**

Here's a quick list of things to consider if you find yourself involved in a bike/car accident.

- 1. If you are hurt, stay still. Don't try to walk or ride it off. You may have more serious injuries than you think. The brain is good at masking pain at first.**
- 2. Call 9-1-1 or have someone else do it for you.**
- 3. Get the driver's name, license plate number and insurance information. If there are any witnesses at the scene, get their information too. If you are unable to write down this information yourself try to have someone else on the scene do it for you. Try not to rely on the police.**
- 4. Take pictures of the scene if possible.**
- 5. Get a police report. Police are required to file a report when there are injuries, no matter how minor.**
- 6. Go the hospital or doctor as soon as possible to both diagnose and document your injuries.**
- 7. Write down your version of the incident as soon as you are able to help preserve details that may be forgotten or confused as time passes.**
- 8. Contact a lawyer. There are lawyers across the country that have experience with bicycle cases—find one.**
- 9. Do not post online or otherwise about the incident until it is resolved to avoid compromising your case if it were to go to court.**



Many drivers who hit cyclists will try to take care of the damages out of pocket to avoid having to pay the premiums involved with claiming the accident on their insurance. While this is sometimes a viable solution to the problem, not all drivers will keep their word. Many drivers don't realize how expensive bikes can be—many associate the cost of a bicycle with big box store offerings under \$200. Another thing to keep in mind is there is a possibility of unforeseen injuries that may be attributed to the accident, and many of the costs associated with medical bills aren't something people can afford out of pocket. Drivers have car insurance for a reason, and although they may be reluctant to use it, in most cases it's the best resolution for both parties.

Not only is it important to gather as much information about the other party involved as possible, but also from any witnesses on the scene. This is one thing I personally did not do, and while luckily it didn't hurt in my case, getting witness information can only help yours. One thing about police is that they will not always get the facts straight. While police are there to help you, and are often very good about helping in any way they can, it's sometimes hard for them to determine who was at fault in any accident, especially if there are conflicting stories. Another unfortunate fact is that some police officers don't like cyclists. Most are helpful, but like our four wheeled friends on skateboards, bicyclists don't always have a good reputation with the police.

Witnesses are also always helpful when dealing with insurance companies in determining what account of the accident is to be believed. Another thing to consider is witnesses may have seen something you did not. This is especially true when the driver decides not to stick around.



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Witnesses are your birds-eye-view so to speak and will help to add clarity to the situation.


The thing you have to keep in mind is the more information you can gather at the scene of the accident the better. If possible, take pictures of the damage done, injuries, street signs, etc. No information you gather will hurt you, but not having enough certainly can.

The mess doesn't just end at the site of the accident, however. Something you'll soon discover when placed in such a situation is that dealing with the insurance company or the actual person involved isn't always as easy as you'd hope. People will sometimes flake out on you, say they are going to pay then never answer the phone, or when the time comes, outright refuse. The same goes for insurance companies. Some will fight you on every point. There are plenty of cases where insurance companies don't want to pay out nearly what they should, or anything at all.

After the fact there are many places you can go to seek advice. It's always suggested that you contact a lawyer in any sort of accident with significant property or bodily damages—ask around your local scene for lawyers in your area who have handled bicycling cases in the past. There are a number of resources on the web to help as well, for me it was www.mybikelaw.com. Luckily for me I live in

South Carolina and just around the corner from one of the lawyers on the site. Often lawyers are willing to sit down and lend advice in which direction to go pro bono, or for a small fee. While maligned in other circumstances as the victim of an accident your lawyer is on your side, and their expertise could be worth their weight in gold.

In my particular case, even with the driver's information I still thought it best to seek legal guidance, and ultimately representation. Most of the time in personal injury cases the lawyer won't charge a fee if you don't receive a settlement, and most often their fees won't come out of your property damages. The way it worked out for me, I got reimbursed very quickly for my totaled bike and torn up messenger bag. My particular attorney took a third of my medical settlement, the remaining two thirds of which was more than enough to cover my expenses.

When an accident occurs it's important that our rights are protected and upheld to their full extent. It's important to gather as much information about the accident as possible and to seek the appropriate legal advice. While there are many situations where cyclists are hit at the fault of someone else, it is also our responsibility as cyclists to abide by the laws that govern us on the roadways—to not only look out for ourselves but those around us. 



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During her two weeks of backpacking through India in August of 2010, Rie Sawada traveled as far north as Manali, and to Rishikesh, Chandigarh, New Delhi and Jaipur.

The temperature ranged from the high 70's to 104°F. Surrounded by cattle, bicycles and images of Shiva, she ate curry three times a day until she got diarrhea.

She can't wait to return.



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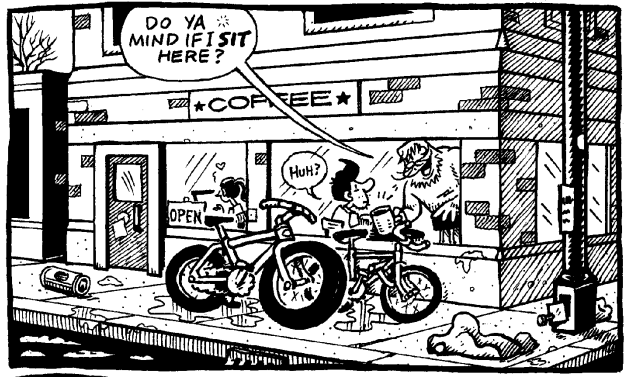


Gallery: India, 2010

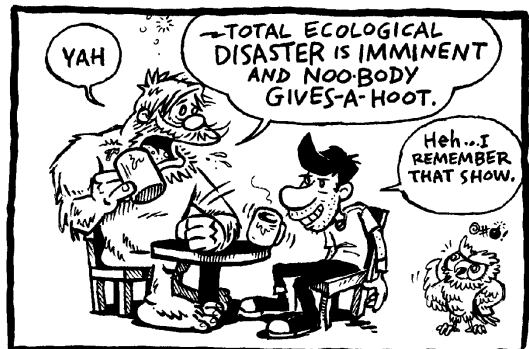
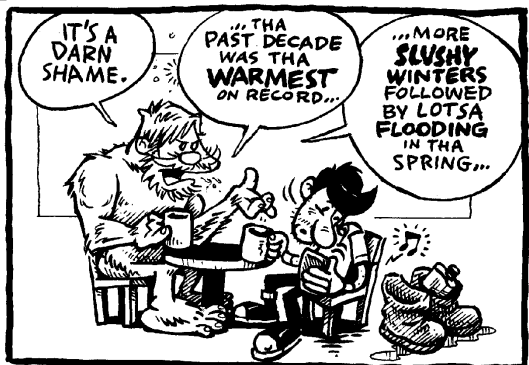
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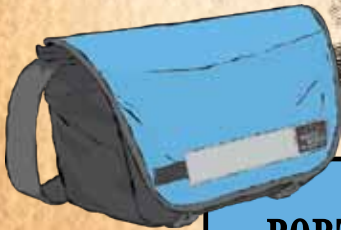
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Pake Track Frame

The Pake Track Frame is a no frills steel frame meant for people building up a bike on a budget, or at least not looking to break the bank while still looking for “true” track geometry. At \$225 for the frame and another \$80 for the straight blade fork, the Pake frame is one of the least expensive track frames out there. I bought my first Pake over four years ago, and in that time have put lots of miles on it in all sorts of situations as it has more or less been my go-to bike for the entire time I’ve owned it. Street track bike, single speed, with a

basket, with panniers on a couple of overnight camping trips, as a polo bike for two seasons and as it stands now as pictured with a flatbed rack and upright bars—the Pake track frame has served me well in a number of iterations it was meant for and a few it wasn’t.

The frame is steep and tight, with my 59cm frame having parallel 75° head and seat tube angles, a short 988 mm wheelbase and a track legal bottom bracket height with only 58mm of bb drop. It is kept clean with a rear brake mount but no cable guides. There is ample clearance for big, comfortable and ride anywhere 28c tires, and I’ve crammed 32c cross tires in there for riding through the snow. While the pictured bike is the older 1” headtube model, on the latest version the fork has been changed to a 1 1/8” straight blade model. Welcome changes, but unfortunately they seem to have come at the expense of the water bottle mount and those of us that get thirsty when the rides start stretching out. I have two other track bikes without bottle mounts and I couldn’t tell you how many times I’ve wished they had one.

When it comes to the actual ride of the bike I have zero complaints, the steep geometry is the main selling point of the bike and is where you come to love or hate the frame. I love it, I just find steep and tight geometry so much fun to ride I’ve been hooked since I first gave it a go. While some will find it tiresome on long road rides or even overly twitchy overall, if it’s what you’re looking for the Pake has it. The bike rides surprisingly nice, and the frame has proven durable in my experience with nary a dent or serious ding through tons of spills and lock-ups.

Check out www.pakebikes.com



Fixcraft Top Tube Polo Pad

Fixcraft is a small company dedicated to bike polo equipment. Among their offerings is this clever top tube pad. It's got enough material to hold up to four polo mallets, but it doesn't look like anything out of the ordinary when it's not loaded.

It's such a simple concept that quite a few people are probably saying, "Why didn't I think of that?" And as with most simple but ingenious devices, it works like a charm.

The pad measures 16.5" long and comes with approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick foam padding. And you can get it in any color you want, as long as that color is black. The Polo Pad retails for \$25. Check out www.fixcraft.net

Bicycling Science

Bicycling Science is one of those books that really should be on the shelf of any real bike nerd, full of more equations and notations than more than a few could ever hope to completely wrap their minds around. That's not to say this isn't a readable book, more that most people will find themselves skipping through the parts heavy on math and sticking around more for the history and the thorough explanations of what makes bikes work as some of the most efficient machines ever. From the dawn of wheeled machines on through the particular efficiencies involved in a drivetrain, the book is one part of a thorough understanding of the modern bicycle. Highly recommended, make sure you pick up the pictured 3rd edition, as I am to understand there are some significant changes from the commonly seen at swaps 2nd edition.



Crank Brothers Candy 2 Pedals

Many moons ago, Crank Brothers introduced their Candy pedals at Interbike's outdoor demo. When the day was over, I bought a demo pair for a song, and some eight or nine years later they still work just fine. And while I've never personally had any issues with Crank Brothers pedals (and I own five pair) I'm to understand that their customer service is second to none.

The most noticeable difference in the updated design is that the Candy 2, 3 and II models feature a two-piece machined aluminum body (the entry-level Candy I still have a composite body). The various models also feature different materials and bearing configurations, which is reflected in the price, of course.

Formerly the Achilles heel of Crank Brothers pedals, the old cleats have been redesigned. The premium brass cleats use a more durable alloy and feature a two-bolt washer (similar to Shimano cleats) for up to 2.2 mm of side to side adjustment.

The Candy 2 pedals retail for \$90 and carry a five year warranty. Check out www.crankbrothers.com



Chicago Wig Street Straps

Chicago Wig has been quietly making pedal strap foot retention devices for some time now, and it's really only a matter of time before more people realize that Isaac is offering 3" wide straps. Plain and simple, the 3" wide strap means more contact area and a more secure connection to your pedals. It's almost like sliding your shoe into another shoe.

The Street Straps forgo metal buckles and the like, and instead use a hook and loop fastening system. Not only are they easier to install than most other foot retention systems, the design is so stiff that the material really holds its shape, even if you accidentally step on the strap.

From a durability standpoint, I can attest to the fact that other Chicago Wig products are built to last. The sewing is professional and the materials are at industry standard or above. Thus far I haven't seen so much as a single ripped stitch on the Street Straps. It is true that the hook and loop system eventually wears out, but because you're likely going to set the tension once and forget about it until you get new shoes, it's probably not going to be an issue.

The 3" wide Street Straps (tested) retail for \$55 plus shipping, the 2" wide version is \$45.

Check out www.chicagowig.com



Duro Sevilla 700×35c Tires

For the past six months I've been running a set of 700×35c Duro Sevilla tires on my Redline 925. Used primarily for playing polo and getting to and from the court, these tires have been taking a beating like none other. Right off the bat, getting to our main polo court involves riding on all manner of rough roads, and the surrounding area under the bridge where we play is littered with broken glass, thorns and God knows what else. To date, I've not had a single puncture flat with these tires. That could be luck, or it could be Duro's Flak Jacket puncture resistant casing.

I really can't count how many times people have remarked on the Tru Shine reflective patterned sidewalls. Not only do they garner attention, they shine like daylight in a car's headlights. I had presumed that the reflective coating would eventually wear off or at least begin to crack or flake, but it pretty much looks like new after six months.

Considering the abuse, and the fact that I've continued to ride them as shown above without puncturing, I would say they get high marks for tread durability. I'll chalk that up to Duro's use of a 70A durometer rubber as opposed to the softer 60A used on their mountain and road racing tires. Incidentally, the front tire is in perfect shape, with no more than cursory signs of wear. And of course I won't be pushing my luck—I'll be replacing that worn rear tire ASAP. The Sevilla retails for \$25 per tire.

Check out www.durotire.com



Brev M Wheelset

Having released their track wheel last fall, Brev M sent in a set for review and they quickly found a home on my polo bike, seeing use 2-3 times per week on the local court. The gold ano turns a lot of heads for sure, but the real question for a heavy duty wheelset like this is how it handles the repeated abuse.

Brev M makes two versions of their track wheel, a 32h set with a 32 mm deep rim and the pictured 36h set with a 40 mm deep rim. There are only a couple of aluminum rims out there with a deeper profile. The extra 10 mm on top of the gold-standard Velocity Deep-V is quite noticeable as a point of comparison. Interestingly enough, the rims are machined before anodization, leaving a braking

surface for those who choose to run rim brakes on these wheels. The wheels are tied together 3x with 14g spokes and brass nipples, with large flange alloy hubs that spin on adjustable cup and cone bearings, just like Shimano. As should be expected, the wheels have real track nuts with a free spinning yet captured serrated washer.

As one could imagine, those deep-section rims and all those spokes don't make the lightest wheels in the world, with these coming in at approximately 1300g each. With wheels this portly, approximately is good enough, especially considering that there are road wheelsets that weigh less than a single one of these Brev M hoops, let alone the pair. Weight is clearly not the driving force behind these wheels, looks and urban durability are the top design criteria here. So far so good on the durability, even after some hard crashes and dozens upon dozens of aggressive polo games the rims show some scars but still spin true as can be. The anodization on the machined surface has held up far better than I expected, though they are certainly prone to squeal more than bare aluminum rim surfaces. Cartridge bearings are all the rage these days, but there is ample reason to stick with a loose ball bearing system like these. The larger bearings spin better and can handle more load than their tiny cartridge counterparts, and while they do become contaminated with dirt and water faster they're easy to clean and repack with grease. That said, the Brev M hubs do not have the buttery feel of some boutique hubs out there, but you can't feel that other than in your hands anyway.

With the looks of the wheels you either love them or hate them. They're over the top flashy, and can make or break a given build as far as appearance goes. And the weight is noticeable—the price of bling. I wouldn't put these on a track bike you plan on racking up the road miles on, but for polo or other abusive riding they're not out of the question given their potential long term durability. Worth mentioning is the fact that at least on my test set of wheels the hubs and rims do not match, the rims are gold as can be but the hubs are a bit on the orange side, perhaps too much spray-tan. Brev M is working on it as even in the same batch different alloys can yield different colors, but I've noticed in the past that of all the anodized colors out there gold seems to be the hardest to match piece by piece. Just a word of warning, as I've seen some particularly hideous bikes with five different gold ano colors on them. On an otherwise all black build, they work quite well. These 36h Brev M track wheels retail for \$260 per set and are also available in Pink/White/Pink and White/Black/White. Check out www.brevm.com

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The **Pryme Good Day** gloves are lightweight cycling gloves with a humorous twist. Features include a gusseted, terrycloth thumb, and synthetic leather reinforced palms with happy face grippers on the finger tips. The back of the glove is stretch knit mesh with screen printed graphics. They retail for \$24. www.bikethreads.com

Fyxation just released a traditionally shaped BMX-style platform pedal priced at an economical \$20 per pair. The Gates plastic bodied pedals accept most foot strap retention systems out there, and are available in the same colors as most Fyxation stuff—black, white, green, orange and pink. As expected on a pedal at this price point, they are spec'd with a chromoly spindle and easily rebuildable loose ball bearings. www.fyxation.com



The new **Milwaukee Bicycles** steel road frame is made in the USA by Waterford Precision Cycles. Built with True Temper Verus tubing, it's designed for use as a geared road or cyclocross bike (up to a 700×32c tire). Frames start at just over \$600. www.milwaukeebicycle.com

The all aluminum **Blackburn Air Tower HP** head is presta specific with no levers to break off, a bleed valve and a small nub for your finger for easy one handed operation. Just push it on, pull it off—be gentle and don't rip the valve stem off. Available for about \$15, it'll fit most floor pump hoses on the market if my collection of busted ones in the basement is any sign. www.blackburndesign.com

As you know, **DZR** makes SPD-compatible cycling shoes that don't look like cycling specific shoes. In fact, they've got a unique flair that makes them look like ultra high-end designer kicks. And in a way, they are. The Jetlag (women's—\$85) and Concubine (men's—\$100) are the latest additions to the DZR lineup. They're touted as, "The first and only SPD compatible slip on. The ultimate companion for the lazy cyclist." www.dzrshoes.com



By nature, trolls are surly. But when a **Surly** becomes a Troll, look out! The Troll is a 26" wheel 4130 steel mountain bike frameset with rack and fender mounts. Build it as a commuter, a utility bike or a mountain bike—fixed, geared or singlespeed, you decide. The frame and fork retail for \$495. www.surlybikes.com

The **Mission Workshop** Orion waterproof jacket couldn't have come at a better time. Not only was it snowing, it's still the time of year when freezing cold rain is possible. Made from Schoeller fabric, it's got a host of features like taped seams, zippered pockets and a detachable hood. www.missionworkshop.com



Torker has introduced the Interurban, an inexpensive 16-speed, steel-framed road bike. According to Torker's marketing manager, "They're in stock and starting to move out of here—several dealers have bought size runs—both campus and commuting shops. The lure of a road bike under \$600 is the catch." www.torkerusa.com

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RALEIGH AMERICA MODEL YEAR 2011: STEEL ROAD

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On Not Riding

By David Munson

Photo by Jessica Budde

At 6:20 AM on a Saturday at a public hospital in Changwon, South Korea, the nurses came around to check my vitals, as well as the vitals of everyone else in the room. There were five other patients, all of them middle-aged Korean men. I was the only one under 40 as well as the only foreigner. They evaluated my heart rate and blood pressure, I pantomimed that I was sore but otherwise feeling fine, and they gave me a dose of some kind of pain reliever via a hypodermic injection to the left buttock. At 8:00 AM breakfast arrived. Three meals a day of rice, kimchi, and some manner of soup. I was bored out of my mind.

Seemingly in one instantaneous move I was struck and left awkwardly rolling around on the pavement trying to recover my breath, followed in turn by the labored move to a standing position.

The first time I got hit by a taxi was in Chicago in 2004. Then, everything seemed to move in slow motion as I rolled up and over the car and was thrown into the intersection. A stretch of bullet time before finding myself lying on the pavement adjacent to my bike with people yelling and calling 911 on their cell phones.

This time the impact was more like a three thousand pound exclamation point—a physical interjection that came screaming out of the intersection to my left as the taxi ran the red after missing his left turn signal. I had looked, verified it was clear to go, and accelerated hard because it felt good to do so. I got about one hundred feet and then *boom*. Seemingly in one instantaneous move I was struck and left awkwardly rolling around on the pavement trying to recover my breath, followed in turn by the labored move to a standing position. The taxi driver and a few other individuals stood there and looked at me, expressionless. They did nothing, said nothing. I looked at the shattered windshield (impressed), inspected my crushed helmet (relieved), and picked some flecks of safety glass out of my left forearm and right knee. My bike was thirty feet away and looked the way a dead starling looks on the sidewalk after flying full speed into the side of an office building.

The problem with having an accident on a Friday night and being taken to a public hospital in Korea is that there are no doctors there during the weekend. In practical terms, what that means is that you can't leave until Monday, at least not if you want to be able to get your insurance claim. For about 72 hours I was in hospital limbo. Lots of reading, lots of Nintendo DS, lots of staring at the ceiling, and lots of wishing I were with my girlfriend instead of waiting for Monday to arrive at record slow speed. It gave me plenty of time to think about riding, to think about what came next, and to consider the reality of not being able to ride for an undetermined period of time.

The last time I saw my bike it was in the road while I was being loaded into the ambulance. I suppose the police still have it in Korea, but I was never able to get it back. I got a settlement for the accident, but that went to the new camera I needed for working and a new bike was put on hold. It remains on hold.

For about eight years now, riding has been such an immense part of my life that my friends have practically come to view a bicycle as a part of my anatomy. It's an activity that's as much a part of any given day for me as eating meals, feeling groggy when I wake up in the morning, or sneezing twice after breakfast. The first time my bike got totaled six years ago, I had my mountain bike as backup. I threw some slicks on it and went gonzo around Chicago, jumping off things and trying to wheelie (still can't do it) until I built up a new fixed gear. This time, however, I had no backup. Until cash flow is sufficient to float a new build, I am without a bike.

I am a cyclist without a cycle, whose feet miss the pedals, whose scars miss the speed that led to impact and abrasion, whose brain stem misses the helmet that saved it. I am a cyclist that doesn't ride. Every day I have the urge to get on two wheels and just go somewhere. Every day I have to remind myself that my bike no longer exists.

I miss having a bike, but I also miss that particular bike. It started as a keirin frame that a friend in Japan found and shipped to me. I initially built it up with the parts that I had on hand, and over the course of four years ended up changing just about everything except the frame itself. It was precisely as I wanted it. For the last year that I had it, it was basically perfect in the sense that the upgrade lust, the striving for tweaking had evaporated entirely. I didn't want to change it, I only wanted to ride it as hard as I could, to use it as a vehicle to go places and to push myself into unexplored territories of physical exertion. It was a tool of personal empowerment, a device for explorations in space and time.

I presently explore space and time on foot. I've worn out two sets of sneakers already.

When the presence of riding suddenly becomes an absence, it throws one off. It was bewildering at first. I began taking the bus across town, and it felt like I was cheating. Not cheating in the sense of trying to gain special advantage in a dishonest manner, but cheating as in I felt I was cheating on the pursuit of cycling. It was a matter of infidelity. It felt like I was betraying it by way of an illicit affair with public transit. That feeling has since passed and patience has set in. I will return to riding, I know, but for now I just need to wait. That's the tricky part.

When all you want to do is ride, waiting sucks.



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Excerpts From The Novel

Catfish & Mandala

A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through The Landscape And Memory Of Vietnam

By Andrew X. Pham

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Exile-Pilgrim

I had been pedaling and pushing through the forlorn land, roaming the foreign coast on disused roads and dirt tracks. When I was hungry or thirsty, I stopped at ranches and farms and begged the owners for water from their wells and tried to buy tortillas, eggs, goat cheese, and fruit. Every place gave me nourishment; men and women plucked grapefruits and tangerines from their family gardens, bagged food from their pantries, and accepted not one peso in return. Why, I asked them. *Señor*, they explained in the patient tone reserved for those convalescing, you are riding a bicycle, so you are poor. You are in the desert going nowhere, so you are crazy. Taking money from a poor and crazy man brings bad luck. All the extras, they confided, were because I wasn't a *gringo*. A crew of Mexican ranchers said they liked me because I was a *bueno*

hermano—good brother—a *Vietnamito*, and my little Vietnam had *golpea* big America back in '75. *But I'm American, Vietnamese American*, I shouted at them. They grinned—*Sí, sí, Señor*—and grilled me a slab of beef.

Japan Dream

I am soaked in self-pity. Then it rains and I begin to shiver. Cornered, I do what I always do in absolute desperation: I bite my lip and plunge into the street. Pedaling like a racer, I try to keep up with the traffic, maneuvering between autos traveling on the *wrong* side of the road. I edge into a narrow lane and barely avoid entering the freeway on-ramp. A bus swerves away from me, brakes screeching. I turn my head and its headlights stab my eyes. Blinded, I hit a bump in the road, sideways. My tires skitter

across the rain-slicked asphalt. I carom off a retaining wall. Somehow I don't go down. The bus would have flattened me.

Shaking, I coast into a parking lot and spot an old man on a bicycle. No time to gather my wits. I chase after him, shouting questions in my bad Japanese: *How do I get out of this airport? Where can I find inexpensive lodging? Where's the public rest room?*

He looks at me the way people look at dogs foaming at the mouth. He pedals harder to get away. I tail him like a shadow. There is no way the old man is going to get away from me. Biking up the Pacific Coast has given me muscles, so I feel powerful. I chase him as easily as a cat toys with a mouse. The sight of me swooping down on him must be terrifying because he pumps standing, as though his life depends on it. I should feel a twinge of guilt, but I don't. It is late: he must be going home. And home couldn't be the airport. I am feeling nasty and have no desire to sleep on the airport bench.

"Gomen nasai!"—Pardon me—I shout, but he ignores me.

After a few blocks, his strength fizzles and he paces himself, realizing that he can't get away from the lunatic screaming incomprehensible Japanese. I tell myself I can ignore him as well. Just shadow him. Sooner or later, he's

bound to lead me out of the airport. The rain runs down my face, misting my glasses as I gloat at my brilliance, my prey unwittingly guiding me out of the airport and meandering me through guarded checkpoints and a maze of construction-project detours.

In the second it takes me to swipe water from my glasses, he shifts into hyperdrive and runs a red light. I skid to a stop, the cross traffic separating us. I feel bad, good, guilty, tired-sick. That old guy is one slippery noodle. It is a daring escape, very gutsy and well timed. I explode with laughter, roaring my appreciation to the wet sky. A sharp sensation of being alive suffuses me, tickling, tingling. I'm not miserable anymore. The rain comes down hard, soaking me, and through my foggy glasses I see him glancing back as he swings the corner. I wave farewell. A magnificent night. Everything forgivable.

Strange-Hearth

"The roads are dangerous," she says. "The country is not safe."

"I was stabbed right around the corner by two muggers. They wanted my motorcycle." Hung shows me the scar beneath his shirt.

"One thousand seven hundred kilometers on a bicycle to Hanoi! A bicycle! When your parents find out that you're going

"A trip so necessary and so noble that it makes others seem like mere jaunts or stunts."

—The New York Times Book Review

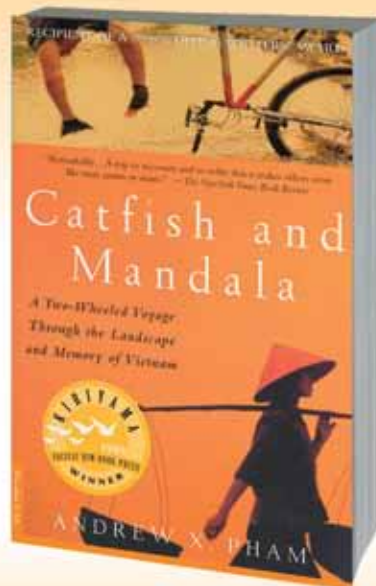
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to ride a bicycle to Hanoi, they'll be sick with worries. Think about your parents. They didn't bring you into this world so you can waste your life. Be considerate. Don't do it. There's nothing out there but jungle and bandits. You'll die," Grandaunt concludes with absolute certainty.

By the time they bid me good night, I am thoroughly worried. Maybe they are right. After all, they've lived in Vietnam all their lives.

After the hour-long breakfast, we take my bike out to a major "auto shop," a ten-by-fifteen-foot storefront where a dozen mechanics tinker with bicycles and motorbikes. The vehicles are fixed right on the curb by grease-blackened men and boys who work with shoddy hand tools. The cement is runny with oil.

The bike needs a major tune-up after my one thousand miles in Japan, and I'm not up to it. The airport baggage handlers have damaged the rims beyond my ability to true them. The broken brake isn't working properly either, no matter how much I fiddle with it. Then there is the puncture in my "puncture-proof" tire. I carry three types of repair patches and try all of them, but Saigon's humidity foils every one.

The bike guru is a shirtless little Vietnamese, a five-foot-one, silver-haired grandfather. Since he is the shop's revered expert with the most seniority, the other mechanics defer to him the honor of working on my foreign bicycle. He spends a full five minutes marveling at my grip-shifters to the cleat pedals. When he gets to work, he is amazingly fast. Somehow with a couple of wrenches, pliers, and a hot-patch press, he perfectly trues the wheel, fixes the brake, and gets the bike to purr like a kitten in twenty minutes.

He seems so enamored with the bike that I suggest he give it a test ride. At first he declines, claiming it is too big for him. I insist, and he capitulates with a childlike grin and leaps on it. How he manages to find the pedals with his rubber flip-flops I don't know, but he speeds off around the city block like a racer, whooping and dodging traffic—wild as a teenager. He returns huffing, wet with sweat, rosy with pleasure. He wants to waive the fees, but I won't let him and settle the bill: \$1 U.S.

III-Wind

A cyclist draws up alongside us. I see his silver hair and bow in greeting, then looking down, I nearly fall out of my seat. He has only one leg. His right leg ends just above the knee, the dark nub sticks out of his shorts like a big salami. A crutch hangs on the bike frame. His left leg churns the crank in a jerking rhythm, hard on the downstroke, gliding with the momentum on the upstroke, a two-stroke engine running marvelously on one.

"Uncle, that's amazing!" I blubber. "I've never seen a one-

legged man ride a bike before."

He slows down and latches up to the cart next to me. "Oyl!" he exclaims, very pleased for some reason. "You speak Viet!"

"Yes, Uncle. I'm a Viet-kieu," I confess, and brace for his face to fall, but it doesn't. "How far can you go on a bike?"

"Once I biked all the way to Ky Anh and back, twenty kilometers each way. But usually I only ride to the market, that's twelve kilometers round-trip."

His handlebar basket sags with packets of instant ramen, a bottle of what looks to be kerosene or rice wine, a can of condensed milk, and a tin of tea.

"This Viet-kieu is going to Ky Anh," the ox driver tells the old man.

"Ky Anh?" repeats the old man in a tone I don't find encouraging. "There's nothing out there except a government-run motel. It's actually a barracks, but they'll overcharge you ten times for a bed."

"I'm overcharged all the time," I point out nonchalantly. "How far is it?"

"An hour and a half. It'll be dark soon," the old man says, gauging the sky. He looks me over, apparently having come to a decision. "Come with me, Nephew, I'll put you up for the night. I live by myself. There's plenty of room and you're welcome to hang your hammock."

Over two months in Vietnam, it's the first time someone's invited me home without his hands out. I accept the old man's generosity bowing deeply.

"It is nothing." He waves off my thanks. "Good, good. You'll like my beautiful villa."

Fever-Ride

I sigh and, in a whisper, relay my symptoms to the pharmacist. She asks about the shape and size of my stool. I look over my shoulder. The cyclo driver is lurking six feet behind, ears trained on our conversation.

"It's dysentery, I tell you," he says, directing his advice to the pharmacist.

She gives me a fistful of multicolored pills—a four-day course of medication, twice a day, seven different pills each time. I have no idea what they are. She tells me to stay away from rice and meat. The cyclo driver shouts from the sidewalk, "Tell him to drink young coconut milk." The entire course of medication, including the cyclo man's advice, is three dollars.

I take the medication. Because I am angry, angry at the weakness of my body, angry at everything, I get on my bike and leave town. To hell with dysentery and fever. I am a survivor.



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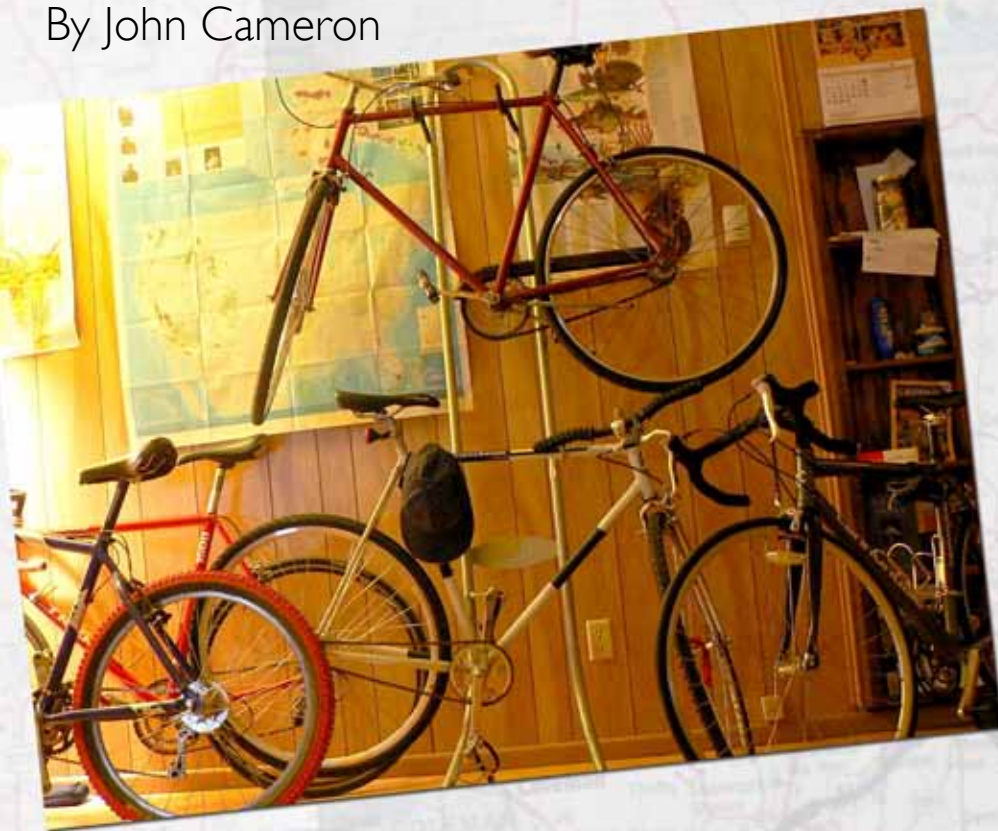


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The Wander Map

By John Cameron



I had forgotten how simple and easy it was to escape on a bicycle. This little machine is a perfect design with no more noise than the quiet clicking of the chain and the hum of the tires. For years I had biked long distances. It was what I looked forward to most in the afternoons. I kept a map up on the wall where I lived in a small town in central Texas and with a marker drew in the lines as I biked them. Before long I had biked all the roads that were close and in order to draw in new lines it became an all day event, and then an all weekend endeavor. I pedaled through the rolling hills and dairy land, sometimes miles away from anything.

"You rode here on *that!*!" hollered a lady in surprise as we talked in a roadside store. A farmer or two would tip their hat back to scratch their heads in amusement and surely call in someone else from the other room to see me, and my bike. At houses, churches and stores they would happily fill my water bottles and see me off on my way.

I would catch myself staring at that map sometimes. I would watch it like some people would watch a TV. On it I read memories of sunset views and heinous Texas wind, savage drivers in massive trucks, and dodging beer cans and road kill. My legs ached when I remembered some of the hills I had to pedal to make it back to where I had started. All of that was there right in front of me, and from where I stood looking at the map I saw how those lines grew and how all those stories began and ultimately ended. What if I just kept going, I wondered, how many lines could I fill in?

When I didn't want to ride alone I invited someone along. If they didn't have a bike, I'd build them one. Occasional we would road trip the 30 miles to the scrap yard and haul back a pickup full of bicycles. They were \$10 apiece and three could be tinkered into at least one reliable and roadworthy bike. Bikes were what I knew most about and everything I thought about until one day I just stopped being "into" bikes. Just like that, in a split second, biking for me almost ended entirely.

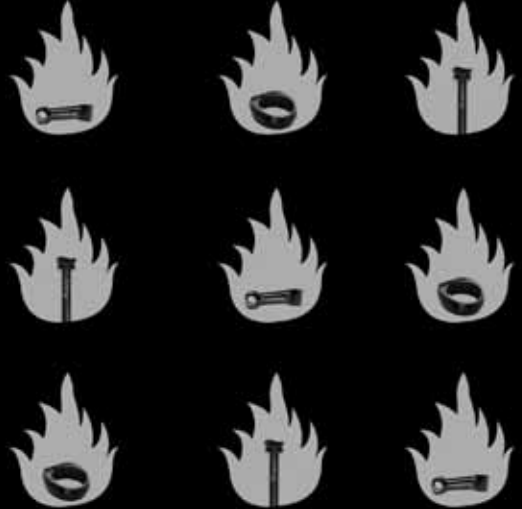
I woke up in an MRI machine with instruments swirling over my head. I heard familiar voices saying familiar things but could not see them. A mistake so simple had sent my head crashing onto the street one sunny afternoon. I lost control only steps away from the house I lived in and the wander map on the wall. A friend who I had built a bike for happened by the moment I needed him most and took me to the hospital. I never regained enough memory from that day to know exactly what happened.

After the bike incident I healed and moved on. I traveled to new jobs, new places and beyond. In all these new places I began exploring but never felt that I had fully experienced or seen it all until I had had the chance to explore by bicycle. I ended up renting bikes, borrowing others, and when necessary buying another one all together. I felt most comfortable in a new place and could understand it best after I studied a map, picked some lines and then hopped on a bike and began filling them in. "You have your priorities all wrong!" I was lectured one day while visiting a friend. "You don't even have a place to live but you just bought a bike?" "What better way to find a place to live than with my bike," I retorted.

When I moved to Philadelphia I arrived with a backpack and a bicycle. It was my first time in the city, my first trip to the East Coast and my new home. At the airport I opened the cardboard box that I had packed my bike in and assembled it on the curb while cabs pulled by to pick people up. I put my backpack on and rode off into the city.



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Stuck Seatpost

By Brad Quartuccio



Stuck or seized seatposts are one of those things that are more or less bound to happen to everyone at some point. Whether a friend's bike, a used bike or your everyday commuter, play with bikes enough and you're going to encounter a stuck seatpost. Given the right conditions a stuck seat post can happen in what seems an instant, but is more likely at least a couple of weeks if not years in the making.

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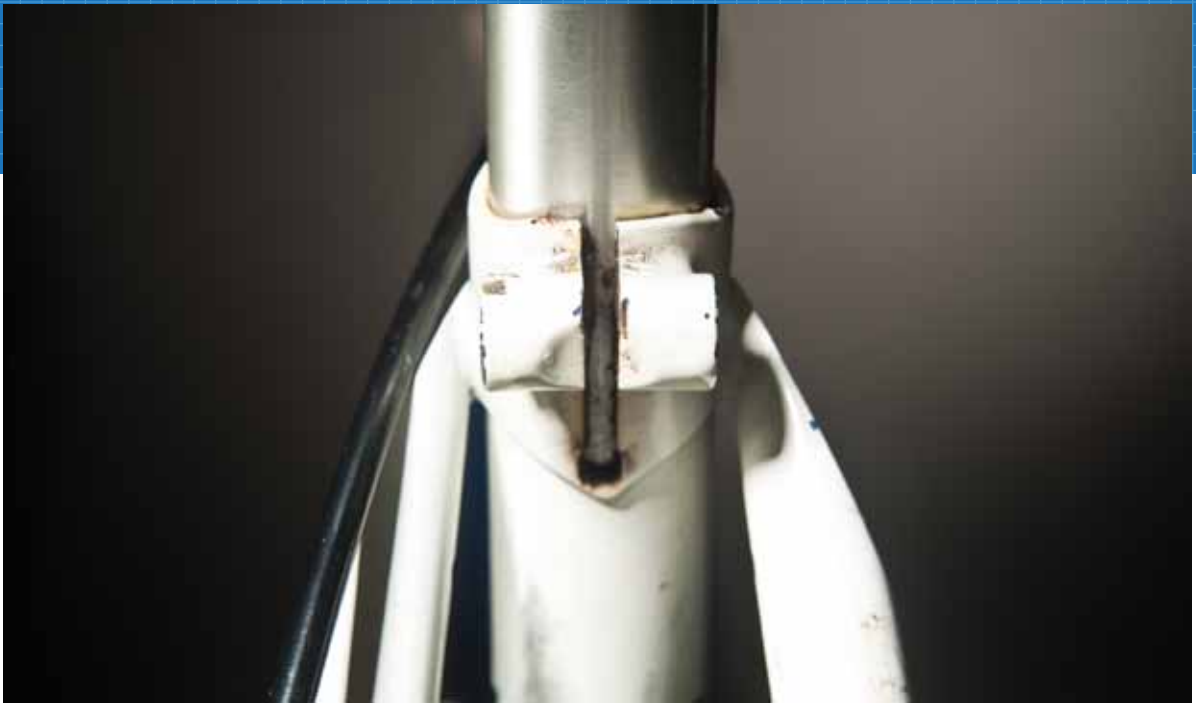
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Completely remove the binder bolt before further diagnosis and treatment of a stuck seatpost.

The first goal is to diagnose why the post is stuck, and the first thing to do is to completely remove the seat binder bolt. If your bike has an external clamp that is separate from the frame, it is worth removing the bolt and sliding the clamp off of the frame and loosely onto the post. Check to see if removing the bolt loosens the post, and for any signs that the clamp was overtightened and crimped the post in place. If you have had the bike for a while and haven't crashed since your last seat adjustment it is safe to say that your seatpost is the correct size and unlikely to have a subtle bend causing it to stick. Used bikes are another story—it's amazing how many people force an oversized post into a frame only to wonder why it won't budge later. If you do suspect a mechanically stuck post it's best to consult a local shop or framebuilder for further advice.

Some sort of oxidative or galvanic seizure is more common, and the most likely culprit for a metal seatpost in a metal frame that was just fine last time and is now stuck in place. Without getting into the metallurgy of each—an oxidative seizure is caused by steel or aluminum corroding and the oxide layer being thicker than the original material, galvanic seizure is caused by an electrochemical reaction between dissimilar metals causing one to corrode to the

other. No matter the case, if a good twist of the seatpost from your strongest friend doesn't make it budge your best next step is to turn the frame upside down and use a liberal amount of penetrating lubricant applied to the inside of the seat tube to hopefully break it free. There are a number of commercial products meant for freeing stuck bolts and the like, but in their absence any thin lubricant should help. Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions, and then let it sit overnight before trying to twist the post free.

If the overnight bath doesn't work, you suspect the post might be mechanically stuck, either your frame or post are carbon or you otherwise feel in over your head it's a good time to start calling around to local shops for an ace mechanic's help. Methods beyond a penetrating lubricant become more creative, and more destructive, fairly quickly and it's best to do your homework and let someone with more experience actually do the dirty work. 

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Drivetrain Wear

By Brad Quartuccio

Drivetrain wear is inevitable. Much like tires the drivetrain bits that make everything go 'round are ultimately disposable pieces. Wearing out chainrings just happens, largely in relation to number miles logged and what kind of grit you find yourself riding through. There are a number of other factors that influence the ultimate life of the ring—original manufacturing quality, gear choices, maintenance etc—but the actual method of wear is pretty much the same, and goes hand in hand with a worn chain.

With a new drivetrain, the chain and rings match up perfectly, with each chain roller fitting tightly and completely between each tooth. As the chain and chainring wear, the rollers are forced incrementally further up the face of the tooth, eventually wearing them into a distinctive shark-fin shape. The extent of the wear is many times not evident until a new chain or ring is installed, and skips under load. The new piece doesn't match with the old, and may signal that the whole drivetrain requires replacement.

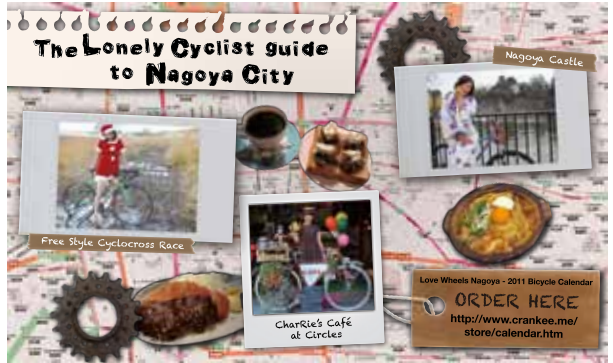
Besides keeping everything clean and lubed, the best way to protect yourself from pricey replacement chainrings and cassettes is to replace your chain regularly, before it is "stretched" from wear.



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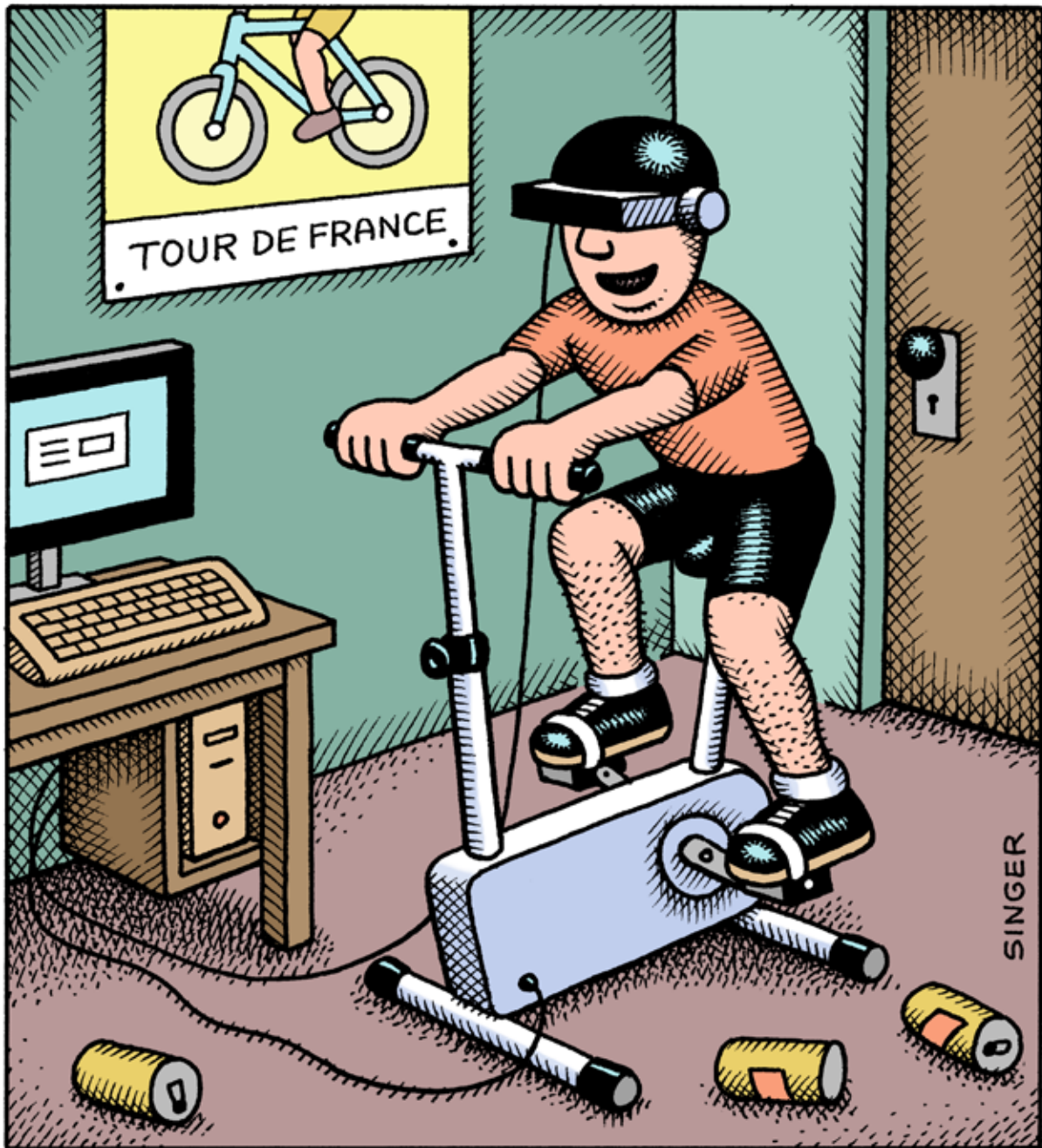
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