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Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #32 • July 2012



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# URBAN VELO

Issue #32 July 2012



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**On the cover:** Bloomington, Indiana's annual bike race, The Little 500. Read about the 62 year old event on page 30. Photo by Bruce Carver, [www.brucecarverphoto.com](http://www.brucecarverphoto.com)

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Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

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

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Tina Medley of Mobile, AL crossing over to play the ball at Ladies Army IV in Lexington, KY. See page 66 for more. Photo by Brad Quartuccio


# EDITOR'S STATEMENT

By Brad Quartuccio



In an age of technological advancements coming along so quickly that it is impossible to truly keep up, the bicycle offers an escape via a machine built to match and maximize the human form. Computers and phones from just two decades ago are nearly unrecognizable as such, yet bicycles over one hundred years old are not only obviously a bicycle, they aren't far off from what we ride today. Major Taylor's stance on his track bike at the turn of the last century isn't terribly different than that of today's track racers. Bicycle geometry hasn't changed *that* much since the first safety bicycles with equal sized wheels were first introduced. We still ride the same basic wheel size, and today's racing bicycles are only a few pounds lighter than those of our grandparent's generation, even if materials technology has allowed for them to be remarkably stronger. Besides the friction thumbshifters I prefer to use over today's whiz-bang shifters, I'm not one to utilize much vintage tech even if I remain enamored with it. There is just

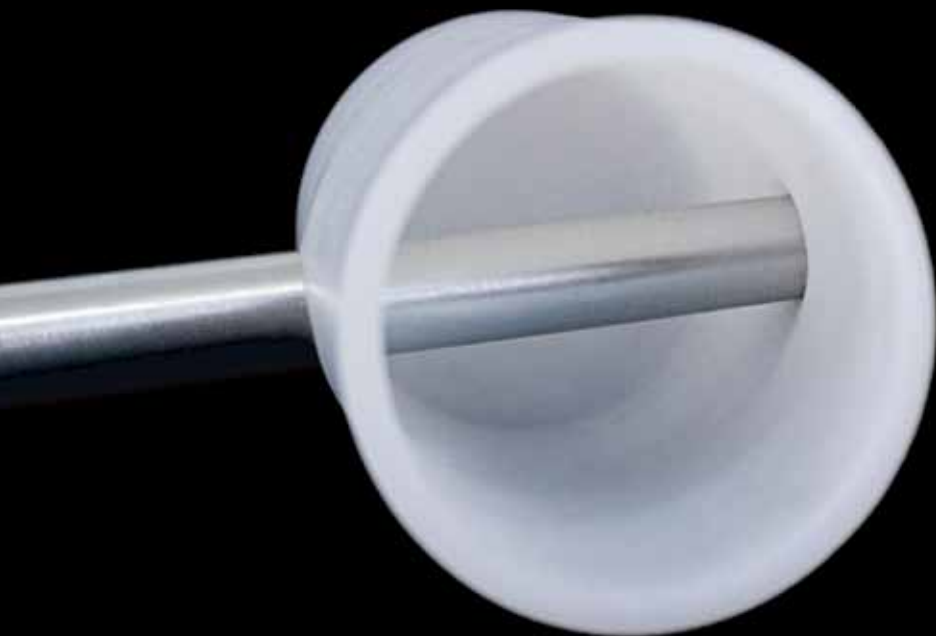
something about the relative stability of bicycle design that makes the previous generations' components all that much more interesting to me.

It was a late night conversation with a friend that brought about these thoughts most recently, as we discussed the alienating pace of technology on one hand and the resurgence in bicycle use amongst the most connected generation ever. The actual human connection to motion, the feeling of total immersion in the physical experience that bicycle riding can be is what hooks people in this age of digital everything. Even at the ultra high end of carbon fiber, electronic shifting and GPS connectivity bugs get caught in your teeth and you feel the hills roll beneath you. Running into a friend on the street is always going to be superior to interacting on screen, and perhaps the bicycle acts as a representation of the difference between a virtual world and one built truly on a human scale, to maximize the human experience. 

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

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# PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

By Jeff Guerrero



I guess I'm getting old. I realized this the other day when I saw an antique car parked in front of an old man's garage. I'm no expert on cars, but I'm pretty sure it entered the world a few years before its owner. And he probably chose that vintage because it's the car he remembers from his boyhood. A time when things seemed simpler. Even if he never rode in a 1938 Packard as a kid, driving one on Sundays brings on a sense of nostalgia. And I can totally empathize.

When I moved into my current apartment about seven years ago the main attraction was the basement. It was secure, offered space for bike parking and maintenance, and it was cool and dry enough for long-term storage. This was evidenced by the two antique bicycles that the landlord's parents had left down there.

The Columbia was a joke, a promotional bike emblazoned with Pepsi logos, the frame alone must have weighed 14 pounds. But the other bike beck-

oned from beneath a coat of dust. The dark brown 1974 Raleigh Sports women's model looked to be in impressive shape. So I pumped up the tires and took it out for a ride around the block. Low and behold, it worked like a charm. I won't say it rode like a dream, but the three-speed Sturmey Archer hub shifted just fine and the well-worn Brooks saddle felt remarkably good (though it did eventually tear from dry rot).

Unlike the old man with the Packard, I haven't lavished hours of restoration efforts on the Raleigh. I've lubed the chain, kept air in the tires and added a basket, new saddle, hub shiners and a cool set of self-powered LED lights. But I use it in much the same way, for spins around the neighborhood, or trips to the corner store. I never rode one as a kid (I was born in 1975) but when I go clanking down the road, sitting bolt upright with a grin on my face, I'm sure I'm getting the same sensation that countless old men experience on their own respective Sunday drives.



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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Patrick Garnett

**Location:** Lexington, KY

**Occupation:** Union Ironworker/Journeyman Welder

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

I live in the downtown area of Lexington, Kentucky. I wouldn't call it a city though, it has more of a town feel. Lexington is a chill city to ride in. The layout of the city is like a wheel. With a small highway as the rim and a few main arteries acting like spokes. The main roads are crap for bike rides, but after living in Lexington since '97, I've learned many alternate routes through really calm

and quiet neighborhoods. The terrain is also virtually flat, with just a few short hills thrown in. Lexington is also super bike friendly and during the nicer months there is something going on almost all the time that is bike oriented.

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

I've always enjoyed going to Pittsburgh with my bike, not just because the folks that make up Pittsburgh Bike Polo are the best fucking people ever, but because of the extensive inner city trail system the city has. Every time I'm in Pittsburgh I always ask for people to do a group ride late at night! There are so many great spots to stop at during the ride too. My favorites include a beer by the river, the handmade hat shop on Penn, and the "O" on Forbes.

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

I love riding in the city because most of the cycling fatalities that happen around here happen outside of the city in the country roads. Lexington is surrounded by beautiful horse farms and tons of people do long rides through the surrounding area, but I can't handle country roads. I also just like the flow of it, whether I'm on my 3 speed or on my fixed gear.

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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Steve Lee

**LOCATION:** Brooklyn, NY

**OCCUPATION:** Editor and Speechwriter

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

I live in Brooklyn and riding in the city is a microcosm of New York City itself. You have spandex-clad finance types, fixed gear hipsters, granny geared pedicabs, pragmatic 9-to-5ers, basket-toting fashionistas, kamikaze delivery guys and Charlie Brown-headed kids all competing for the same bike lanes, roadways and bike racks. I've been door'd by non-signaling taxi cabs, knocked to the ground by oblivious delivery vans and yelled at by jaywalking pedestrians. It's a battle every day.

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

Nothing compares to New York City as a place with such a conflicted soul about riding. We hate bike lanes! We love bike lanes!

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

I sit at a desk in front of a computer all day. Every morning, I taste the first breath of sunrise as I cross the Brooklyn Bridge during my commute to Manhattan. Every weekend before my wife and son wake up, I can either ride to watch surfers dance across the waves at the beach in Queens or scale the George Washington Bridge to dizzying heights above the Hudson River. Riding in the city is the ultimate stress-management tool.

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

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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Brian Amer

**LOCATION:** Bangkok, Thailand

**OCCUPATION:** Buyer

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

I live in Bangkok, Thailand. I love riding here. Many people think I'm crazy to ride a bicycle in Bangkok due to the traffic. However, since there are so many vehicles and other things on the road, the drivers are used to looking for everything. I mean, when you know you are going to encounter motorcycles, buses, tuk-tuks, carts of smoking meat, dogs, etc., on the road a bicycle isn't going to phase you. In my time bicycling here, I have yet to be honked at in anger, which happens all the time in the USA. One night I did a 30 km ride with a group of locals through the city. In that whole ride, only one driver was rude to us.

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

I'll say Bangkok or Chiang Mai, Thailand. Where else could you ride past temples, restaurants, shops, and street vendors selling pretty much anything? And no snow to worry about!

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

Bangkok traffic is notoriously bad. But while riding, that's not really a problem. You can go pretty much anywhere around the city on a bicycle. Plus, it's the best way to feel like a part of Bangkok. Many foreigners who live here ride around all the time in the back of air-conditioned cars. But that's just a way to look at the city, as opposed to being a part of it.

# nutcase

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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Tommy T

**LOCATION:** Oakland, CA

**OCCUPATION:** Retired

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

Greetings from Oakland, California. It's a resilient place. Despite the 1991 Oakland firestorm and various urban problems, our hyper-participative neighborhood groups and deep attention to the issues continue to resist second-city status to San Francisco. Oakland is happening, especially with the arts but also food. Why ride here? In a short outing I can sample great grub that tantalizes my palate: BBQ, Korean, pad thai, pho, tamales, tapas. It's so easy. The arts scene every first Friday is also worthy and very bike-friendly.

**What is your favorite city to ride in?**

Every city. Seriously. I'm like your readers, I've traveled around a bit. I'm trying to think of a place where I couldn't rent or borrow a bike. Little American towns, big Western cities, villages in developing countries. They all have bikes available. Every place reveals its nature to the cyclist.



## WE WANT YOU TO CONTRIBUTE

*Do you love riding in the city?*

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**NAME:**

**LOCATION:**

**OCCUPATION:**

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

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

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

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

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



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# i ♥ riding in the city



**NAME:** Jason

**LOCATION:** Tainan, Taiwan

**OCCUPATION:** English Teacher

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

I live in Tainan, a city of nearly two million on the southwest coast of Taiwan. The traffic here is gnarly. It's not so much that it's congested, because it's not. It typically moves and flows at a pace that I would describe as frantic. The thing that buggers me the most is that Taiwanese culture is based predominantly on Taoism, which produces a general vibe of acceptance and tolerance.

That sounds great, until you factor in the traffic. There are no rules. People do whatever they want, whenever they want. It's like hardcore disorder with a dash of septic chaos, every time you step out the door with your bike.

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

Honolulu. I lived there for four years and the Hawaiian culture in general just seeps with the spirit of aloha. No joke. People are so courteous there that if four drivers come to a four-way intersection all at the same time, everybody will be signaling for everyone else to go, and no one will actually go.

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

The only thing I enjoy about riding in my city here in Taiwan is getting out for a night ride sometime after midnight. At night, the traffic here is almost non-existent, so you can cruise all over the city and explore 400 year old temples, or you can ride along the river down to the beach and go for a midnight swim (don't drink the water), or you may run into the local bmx/fixed gear crew throwing 360's off the steps at the local park. Nighttime is the only time to ride in peace here.



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# DOING IT FOR THE KIDS

By Krista Carlson

Photos by Jon Lake

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

**W**hile many Safe Routes to School programs focus on incentives and safety for children biking and walking to school, here in Bakersfield, California there is a focus on simply getting kids to be active, outdoors and healthy. And thanks to one guy's itch to play bike polo, and no reservations to seize an opportunity, kids on the Southeast side of Bakersfield now have a new way to spend their afternoons one day a week.

Kids bike polo was brought to the park in 2011 by Brian DeLaCerde, a former Safe Routes to School coordinator, who has been one of Bike Bakersfield's only transplant staff members. "I realized that I had a lot of creative freedom," he explains. "I just tried to bring in things that I was a part of in Austin and Boston."



Every Thursday, school-age children make their way to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, anxious for the weekly bike polo games. They run up to the rec center checking for Patrick and Jon and the trailer full of helmets and mallets. Patrick Orozco, 20, and Jonathon Moo, 21, are Bike Bakersfield's current Safe Routes to School coordinators, and they are responsible for putting on bike rodeos and demos at city schools, for providing support for the park's kids-only bike workshop, and for teaching kids how to play bike polo.

The center is already a hub for children in the neighborhood, many of whom come from single-parent homes. "They are left to entertain themselves at the center," Orozco says. "There are families that use it as a daycare, so when you give them attention and you hang out and play with them, they have fun. They

love the attention, and I don't mind giving it to them if it's going to keep them out of trouble.

"These kids are not in the highest [income] class so they don't have access to vehicles; they rely on bikes, and alternative methods of transportation—and their bike-handling skills are insane. These kids can literally haul ass into a pole and then miss it and haul ass again."

Bakersfield sits equidistant from Sacramento and Los Angeles and is the metropolitan hub of the San Joaquin Valley, a major agricultural zone. The area has more clear days each year than most North American cities, with early springs and mild autumns, but it also trumps most of the nation in violent crime, robbery, poverty, obesity, unemployment, and pollution. It's a city where more than 60 percent of children live in poverty, where gang membership has continued to

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## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School is a United States federally funded program that was established in 2005 to improve safety and accessibility around schools. Major objectives include curbing traffic and air pollution within communities and promoting active, healthy lifestyles among children.

Each state administers its own program and additional funding and resources are provided by local and state agencies, including transportation, police, public safety, and recreation budgets, with support from schools and community organizations. Local programs are maintained by the joint efforts of teachers, parents, community leaders and local organizations.

Safe Routes to School projects encompass both infrastructure improvements such as curb ramps, crosswalks, signage, bike lanes, traffic light installations and traffic-calming mechanisms; and non-infrastructure programs, including traffic safety education, bike safety rodeos, increased traffic enforcement in school zones, and various programs designed to incentivize and facilitate walking and biking to school.

increase since the early 2000's, and where methamphetamine and heroin is endemic. It's gritty.

The park sits in the thick of it, two blocks away from where the projects begin, Orozco explains, "That place is a spot for kids to go to so they stay out of trouble. Bakersfield is the kind of place where if you're not into sports you're out doing drugs and partying and drinking because there's nothing else to do here—so if you're not out doing something to prevent that, or being in a place where that's not going to happen, then you're going to end up in that scene."

Inside the rec center, a locker room has been converted into a dedicated bike workshop where ugly bikes hang from the ceiling and border the tiled walls of the communal shower. The space looks like everything could have been moved in just yesterday, furnished with the essentials and nothing more.

"I have to ask the kids not to play with the shower, because it still works," explains Joe "The Bike Guy" O'Grady. O'Grady is the sole mechanic for the park's build a bike program, which receives much support from Bike Bakersfield and from Snider's Cyclery, one of the only bike shops in the area.

The build-a-bike workspace opened in 2007 and is open year-round. Kids age 9-16 can earn a bike through a two-week program, or eight days of working in the shop. Smaller 16" and 20" bikes are given away to children younger than 9. On the day we visit, a rambunctious 6-year-old scores a tiny pink Royce Union with training wheels.

O'Grady writes down the serial number on the bike and the little girl's name on a blank sheet of paper he pulls out from his apron. Later he will count each one, tallying up the number of bikes he's given away that month:



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24. “This is my last piece of paper and my last bike,” he announces. That doesn’t include any of the bikes earned through the build-a-bike program.

For years the workshop has been a kind of sanctuary, but now bike polo on Thursdays is another draw for the kids. The game provides a constructive challenge for kids to focus their energy and attention. While the youth of southeast Bakersfield may be by disadvantaged by most standards, they have taken to polo with uncanny ease. Many have been riding bikes around since they were in diapers, and most are virtually fearless and instinctively competitive.

“Those are the kids that are always on their bikes and like riding bikes because that’s all they have. They’re busy working on their bikes and working on their handling,” Orozco says.

While children from low-income communities have taken to polo like fish to water, others have not been as responsive. “We go to schools in the nicer areas and kids hop on bikes and they do not know how to ride one at all. All they’re used to is the sidewalk, and being in their neighborhood, 30 yards around their house. You would think that the more upper class kids

would be more accustomed to riding bikes and have more fun with it, and they are the ones that actually hate it,” says Orozco.

Even the stigma associated with bikes seems to foster a heightened interest in the game. “It makes it even more successful to bring bikes to a higher place with these kids,” he says of taking their idea of a transportation tool and turning it into a sport that involves skill and strategy.

Kids find out about bike polo through their school, their parents, or by passing through the park on their way home from school. “The schools are very cooperative with Bike Bakersfield because the kids love us. If you do it in the afterschool program and you have your own polo stuff—a few mallets and some cones—then the kids can bring their own bikes. Almost always guaranteed those kids will be willing to participate.”

While getting the schools, park administration, and kids on board were all easily accomplished, the program is not without its share of challenges.

“When we first came out here we got no respect from anybody,” Orozco recalls. “The intimidation factor is the number one thing. Those kids grow up think-

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ing that whoever's the baddest and the toughest and whoever can act the hardest is the one who's going to succeed in life. You have to earn their respect—but the only way you're going to earn it is if you don't let 'em punk you."

Sometimes the kids get into fights with each other, and on a few occasions, have tried to fight Patrick. Admittedly a laid-back guy, the kids challenge him to enforce more civil conduct. The job can be fun, he says he loves it, but some days it tests his patience. Fortunately, some of the older kids have taken on leadership roles among the group, too. One high school senior, Carlos, is known as the "head honcho."

"You just make it known that you're going to be here, so you might as well deal with it," Orozco says. "Eventually they just started warming up to us and had fun. Some days it's off, some days it's on, but just because we have an off day doesn't mean we should quit."

Whether six or 26 kids show up, bike polo always brings with it the spirit of fun and camaraderie, and injects a light-hearted attitude into the tense atmosphere of Bakersfield's poorest neighborhood.

"It's an incredible experience and I need to go back and see how they're doing," says DeLaCerde, who is now working for Immersed in the Wild, a wilderness program for at-risk children in nearby Springvale. "I felt like we are—whoever is out there working with them—we make a huge impression on these kids. We would always leave there kind of giddy, riding our bikes away thinking, 'In ten years, what do you think Treyvon's gonna be like? What about Tyrone?' We have fun thinking that because we're doing what we're doing we have the opportunity to steer them in a different direction. The best part of it was just being a part of these kids lives."



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# *Back Home Again In Indiana*

## THE STORY OF THE LITTLE 500

**By Zachary Woodward**

Photos by Bruce Carver, [www.brucecarverphoto.com](http://www.brucecarverphoto.com)

Every spring in Bloomington, Indiana something special happens. Students and townies, dorms and fraternities, faculty and alumni, Greeks and independents all come together for a bicycle race. But not just any race. You won't find expensive bikes, pro riders, or flashy sponsorships. There's no cash prize, and for many riders, no second chance. A year's worth of sweat and tears comes down to 200 laps around a dirt track on a single speed bike designed half a century ago... this is the Little 500, and we've been doing it for 62 years now.

You might have seen the 1987 movie "Breaking Away," a work of fiction based on a very real event. But it's just that—fiction. Non-students cannot compete, there's no cafeteria brawls

between Greeks and townies, and you're certainly not allowed to duct-tape your feet to your pedals during the race... but it makes for a good movie, right? Long before Hollywood tried to capture the magic of "Lil' Five" students were pouring their heart and soul into the event, and they'll continue doing so long after people have forgotten about that movie. But really, most people just don't know the history. Until you've seen the blood, the sweat, the off-season training rides, the tears of anguish and the ecstasy of victory you can't really know. I thought I did, yet this year I was able to see the event through the eyes of someone who was there at the beginning, my unassuming, incredibly nice 81-year old grandmother, Wanda Coats Woodward.



Eric Young leads The Cutters to a fifth straight win in 2011.



I've attended four Little 500's before this year. Each year I like to ride up to Bill Armstrong stadium to cheer for my dorm's team, though as a community of artists and musicians we ended up at the back of the pack. Still I got to watch powerhouse teams like Delta Tau and the Cutters make history in front of my eyes. Since my grandmother needs a lift to the stadium this year I'm forced to drive. She's already waiting for me as I pull up at the hotel, wearing a colorful ensemble fit for a spring day, though the temperamental Midwestern weather isn't obliging. She's carrying an interesting cane that I discover folds out into a chair. Since she doesn't move too quickly nowadays, each stop to rest on her cane-chair provides us with a moment to share our common affection for the one-of-a-kind race.

The Little 500 has humble beginnings, but it took the vision of one man, my grandmother tells me, to set the race on the right path. One spring day in 1950 Howard "Howdy" Wilcox, the new director of the Indiana University foundation, heard commotion from the nearby Hickory Hall. He discovered students from the east and west wings engaged in a bicycle race around

the dormitory, each side attempting to be the first to reach 500 miles. It was their own version of the famed Indianapolis 500 motor race that takes place not 60 miles north of the Bloomington campus. While those students never completed their mammoth endurance race, that day of fun sparked an idea in Howdy Wilcox that he couldn't shake. What if the University held its own such bicycle race? It would allow the many disparate groups on campus to come together in the spirit of competition. Of course, as executive director of the Indiana University foundation Howdy's job was to raise money for the school and build a loyal base of alumni donors, and an annual race was the perfect way to bring the alumni back into the fold. He not only sold the Foundation on the idea, but everyone on campus as well. My grandmother recalls Howdy personally visiting each dorm and Greek house on campus, pitching the idea to students and asking if they'd form a team. The format was to be just like the "big" 500 up in Speedway—33 teams, 200 laps, a flying start with 11 rows of 3, and of course a pace car to get the field going. Everyone loved the idea, and the Little 500 was born.





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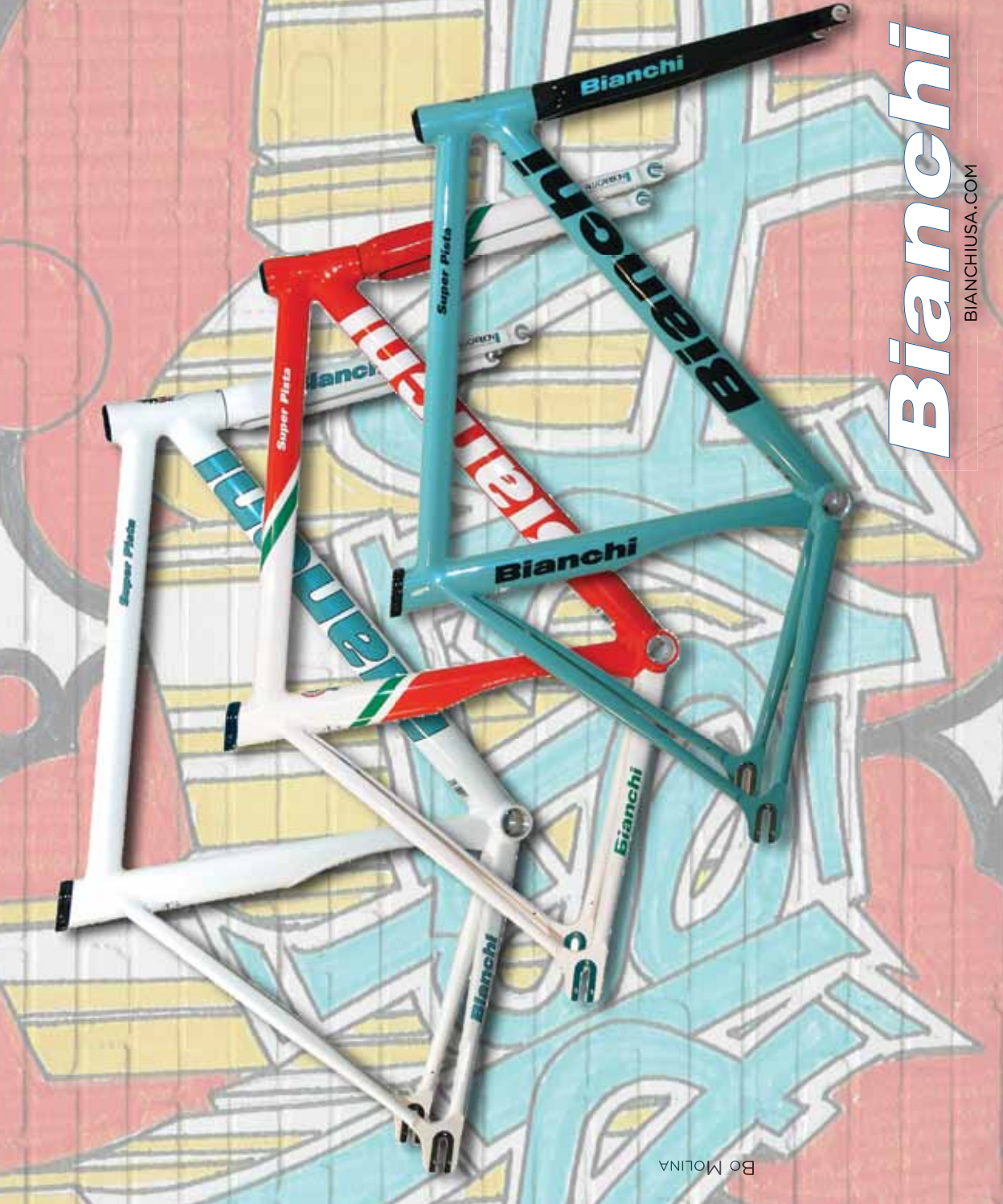
Thinking skull light was using for illumination of the bike.

Afterward, we found as long as the place which can tie up, it can be the application scope.

Remember to use your imagination and think about how the light can be use in your life.



We arrive at Bill Armstrong stadium quite early. As one of, if not the, oldest living member of a former steering committee my grandmother has been noted as a VIP. While the riders are out for their morning warm-ups we make our way to the alumni barbeque set up in the parking lot. I graduated in '09 and her in '52, but as we sit down to our meal of pulled pork and chips I notice there's plenty of people both older and younger, and everywhere in between. The common topic of conversation seems to be "back in my day," though each inevitably slides towards the odds for teams this year. To my surprise the president of the university cordially greets my grandmother, though as soon as she's free she makes her way to the long tables of binders that hold memorabilia from each year. 2011... 1999... through the 80's... the 70's... the 60's... all the way back to 1951. She slowly opens her cane-chair, sits, and opens the first binder. There she is in black and white, with a host of other students surrounding Howdy Wilcox and an Indiana banner. The next page has tickets from the first race. My grandmother reminds me that back then nothing was printed, it was typed. Apparently she was the head of the student foundation's typing pool—I've known this woman my whole life yet I'm learning something new every minute. Every planning document for the race appears to have been saved. You can see typed to-do lists and hand written notes next to photos of the students who wrote them. Another shot captures the first Little 500 bike—a heavy looking Roadmaster with curved tubes all around, drop bars, and of course a coaster brake. The current bikes are made by Schwinn with an aluminum frame and feature classic track geometry, but other than that the bikes are essentially the same as they were in 1951. Sure, true track racing uses fixed gear bikes, but when you're riding 200 laps and switching on and off with three other guys you learn to appreciate the coaster brake. I note the one-piece crank and glance over at the 2012 model displayed at the front of the tent that uses the same technology. The materials may have been updated and the components tweaked, but the design remains the same. Standardized bikes are part of what makes this race unique. It's not about who can spend the most money on carbon parts and high-end components, it's about speed, skill, and teamwork. Now I'm getting excited. The start is near. We leave the history books



# Bianchi

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BO MOLINA



behind and make our way towards the fabled cinder track.

Entering the stadium for the Little 500 never gets old. It's a long line to get in and an even longer line to the bathroom. Most have done their drinking ahead of time, while others rely on clever methods of sneaking their booze in. Lining the straightaways of the track are the pits and crews of each participating team. Colorful banners and fraternal flags fly in the wind behind riders as they stay warm on stationary bikes. Team mechanics run back and forth between the infield making last minute adjustments. Coaches extol their final words of advice. Though the stadium usually houses the men's soccer team, the atmosphere is more like that of the nearby Assembly Hall, the hallowed home of the Hoosier basketball team. It's festive and raucous to attend, and intimidating for those in the spotlight. As we take our seats in the stands the weather begins to clear—it's as if nature is arriving to watch too. A host of rituals follow. The teams are introduced in the order they qualified as they walk around the track. A parachuter towing a giant American flag descends from the sky—remember, we are in the Midwest—as a country music star sings the national anthem. My favorite part comes

though when the whole crowd sings "Back Home Again In Indiana." It's just one of those moments you never forget. But sentimentality quickly fades as the call comes to, "Mount your Schwinn bicycles."

The riders line up next in rows of three. Each rider is identified by a number, while each team has a specific color chosen for that year. One month before the race a meeting is held where each team chooses, in order of qualification, their jersey color. Solid colors are the most visible and always go first—white, green, yellow, black—while teams at the back are stuck with oddities like pink, rasta, or my favorite which appears to be three different shades of green. You can tell the more serious riders by their aero helmets, racing sunglasses, with a few guys even wearing shorts from their team's custom kits. I scan the field and find the usual suspects up front—Beta, Cutters, Fiji, Phi Deltis, and the resurgent Black Key Bulls. Training has been king for the 365 days leading up to the race, but now it's about teamwork, timing, and a little bit of luck.

As the pace car exits the track the riders begin to pick up speed. At the start-finish line the green flag is poised, ready to drop. As the riders circle the final turn the entire stadium is cheering like wild and on



# THE REVERB HELMET

Chris McNally fell in love with bicycles and art at an early age, and the love affair has never stopped. As an illustrator, the need to get out for a ride has always been a part of Chris' creative process, even if the ride is just across town to his studio. Visit [giro.com](http://giro.com) to see the **Reverb™**, and to ride along with Chris on the streets of San Francisco.

 **GIRO**

its feet. Immediately the heavyweight teams drop the hammer and try to lose the pack. Navigating around 33 other riders is extremely difficult though—crashes are common, injuries are serious, and a few inches to the left or right could spell the end of the race, or worse, a career. Every team is jockeying for position in the corners and making their run on the straightaway. My mind immediately drifts to last year's Kentucky Derby—the colors, the excitement, the history, the speed—when all of a sudden it happens. On lap four almost half the field goes down in turn number one. Riders go over their handlebars and kiss the dirt. Multiple bikes go airborne and soar over their riders; these metal steeds still know how to buck a cowboy. The lucky few that escape the mayhem ride to the outside and seize the opportunity. Frustrated riders struggle to untangle bikes. One rider simply rolls off the track in anguish. Coaches and mechanics have already left their pits and sprinted halfway across the infield. The yellow flag is out and waving. Who caused the wreck doesn't matter, the shuffled field is the new reality and every team adjusts accordingly. And there are still 196 laps to go.

Times like these are when you must rely on your team. No one rider can win the race themselves (as rules require each team member rides), but over the years there have been many that damn near could have. Dynasties have been born on the legs of a few good men and this year is no different. The individual time trials have shown who the thoroughbreds are, and many are already household names around campus. This year Delta Tau rider RJ Stuart is the man to beat, while Phi Delta ace Steve Sharp doesn't want to settle for second again. The Cutters are strong as always and lead by returning star Kevin Depasse, but after an epic streak of five straight victories everyone is wondering—can they do it again? Especially without the man who led them to their last three titles. If there is one rider I'll never forget watching, it's Eric Young. By his own admission he was a mediocre runner in high school, but after buying a road bike his senior year of high school and training with his friends on the hills of southern Indiana he was hooked. And he was good. Really good.

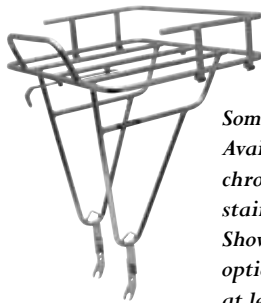
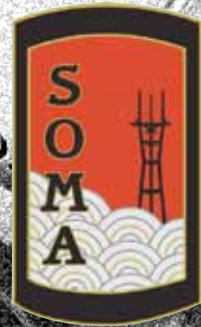
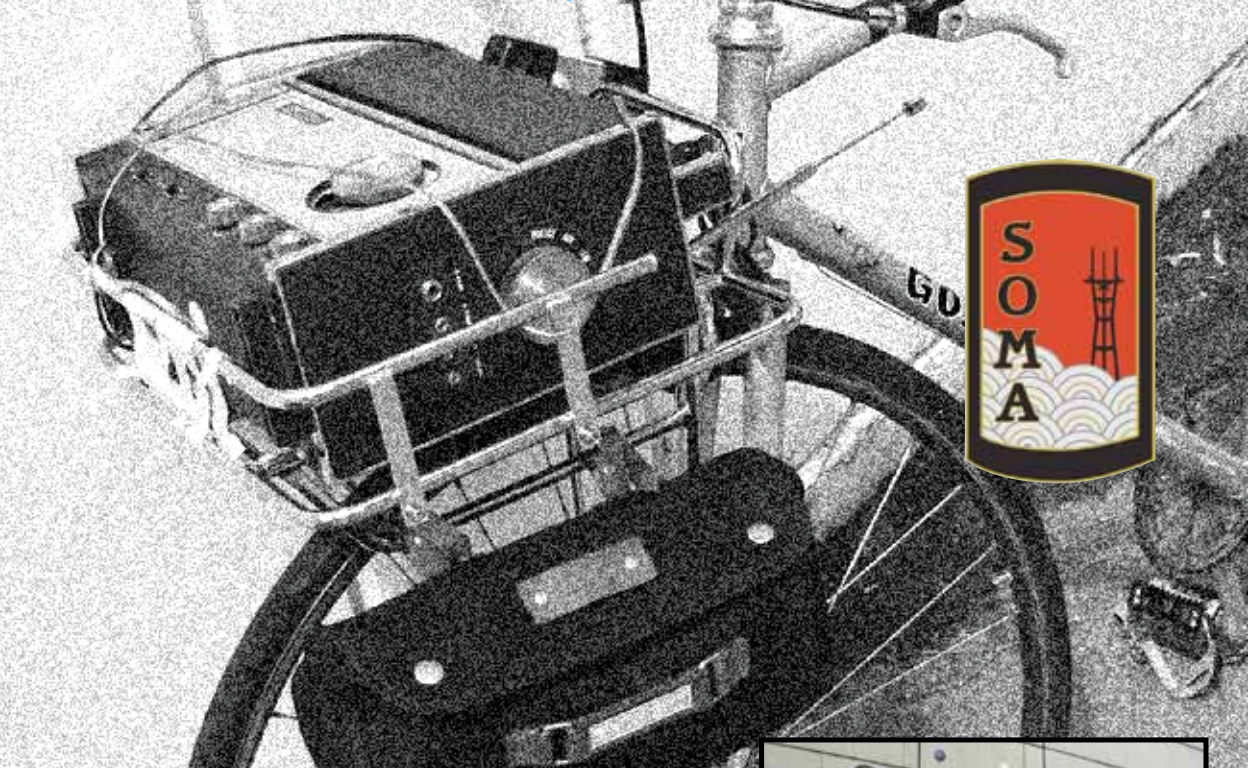
The Cutters were already a dominant team that contended each year, but Young's stellar performance in 2009 helped them obtain the elusive three-peat. In

fact he was so good that his eligibility was called into question by the organizing Student Foundation. "Professional caliber" riders participating in an amateur event has been an issue since the earliest years of the Little 500. At the end of the 1950's a young gun named David Blasé was making waves in the local cycling scene and decided to team up with '59 champions Phi Psi to form the best team possible. But transferring from the dorms to a fraternity for purely cycling reasons was becoming too common, and many saw it as an affront to the spirit (and balance) of the event. So the IUSF created a new rule requiring transfers to sit out for a year, and though he knew he was the only rider targeted by this move he swallowed his pride and sat out the 1960 race. He instead spent time back in his hometown of Speedway, Indiana training for the next year's race and participating in high-level road races. When Blasé returned the next year even better than ever this time the organizers declared he had too much experience to race! Luckily the powers that be realized the error of their ways, and in 1962 the rule was revoked and Blasé was allowed to ride. The story goes that during his summers off he met some Italian doctors and picked up on their culture and style. When he returned to IU he was sporting long hair and European flair, a persona as magnetic as it was uncommon in the 1960's. His friend and fellow rider Steve Tesich would eventually use David Blasé as the inspiration for the character of "Dave Stoller" in the aforementioned Oscar winning film "Breaking Away." If you've seen the movie you can guess how the story goes: Blasé dominated the race in 1962 and Phi Psi took home their fourth straight title.

When you consider this history then it's not so unbelievable that four decades later the "Dave Blasé" rule reared its ugly head in response to the overwhelming talent displayed by Eric Young. There had been a long-standing rule barring professional athletes from participating, but what about riders who, through Little 500, became so good they were essentially at the pro level? Young was explicit about his intentions to race at higher levels but recognized the personal significance of riding his last year in the Little 500. Unlike the scores of basketball players who used to skip college for the pros, or the current "one and done" athletes, Young chose to forego his opportunity to become a pro cyclist for one more shot at campus immortality.

# "PORTEUR"

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In 2011 I watched as he dominated the entire field to carry the Cutters to their fifth straight crown. It was as if I was watching Blasé-incarnate ride into the present to remind us of our history. When Eric Young lifted his hands to the sky and crossed the finish line that was the moment when a hero became a legend.

Halfway through the race I decide to go for a stroll around the stadium. Every step I take highlights a different facet of the Little 500. Surrounded by alumni my grandmother keeps a keen eye out from the VIP section. I continue down the homestretch pushing my way through the hordes of students who have lined up behind their team's pits. Many have brought homemade stools and cutup milk crates to stand on in an effort to peer over the crowd. One girl is huddled up under the bleachers either drunk, asleep, or both. Two fraternities are having a back and forth cheer competition in the stands. In the infield giant scaffolding holds cameramen swinging their video cameras to and fro as to catch the stream of colors rounding the track. I watch as a mechanic and coach debate the best height to adjust a seat. A row of police and sheriffs seem to be more interested in the race than the ornery students surrounding them. On one of the curves I run into my friend Megan who competed in the women's race yesterday. I haven't seen her in months because of her demanding training schedule, but now she's in good spirits. After a lackluster qualification time she rode a majority of her team's laps to take them from the back of the pack to a 7th place finish, a Cinderella story for a team of rookies. She's still wearing her Collin's uniform from yesterday and she strolls around the track enjoying her day in the sun.

As I continue around the track I peer up to the scoreboard where each team has a lap-counter keeping a tally of each lap finished. It's a terribly boring job that nevertheless requires constant attention; I wonder how many of them drew the short straw in getting stuck with that job. In the stands I see more friends and take a moment to catch the race for a different vantage point. At this point in the race the riders are finally spreading out, though the top eight teams are still within milliseconds of each other. The Cutters have recovered from the early setback and keep moving forward. Phi Deltas are setting the pace and the Black Key Bulls keep making moves towards the front. Beta is in the mix and looking to make this

year the one. The sun decides it's finally time to come out and stay out, the racing is getting good as the last laps approach.

As I make my way back to my seat I notice that the Delta Tau cheering section has posted up behind the Cutters pit. These guys know who their competition is. 15 laps to go and they're watching intently as the pack rides past us and into the 3rd turn—the Cutters try to make a move towards the front and go down hard, taking the Black Keys Bulls with them. The Deltas go crazy, this is the opportunity they've been waiting for. Commotion on the Cutters bench, pits clear yet again, and it looks as if the two strongest independent teams have let the moment slip out of their hands. Delta Tau, Beta, and Phi Deltas set the pace for the final laps. Delta Tau makes a flying exchange and captain RJ Stuart saddles up for the final push. He doesn't look back. As the checker flag flies he too lifts his hands to the sky in celebration. The Cutters must regroup and look to the future. Phi Delta settle for second yet again. Stuart cements his place in history. Another amazing race, another amazing year.

"Something special" might be a bit of an understatement. Until now you may have not even heard about this race, but for 62 years it's been bicycles and brotherhood that brings the Bloomington community together. It's an event that the 20,000 students watching, the thousands of previous riders, and the half-a-million Indiana alumni will never forget. My grandmother certainly hasn't. She's joyful yet tired as we begin to leave the stadium. Though she's been to countless races this one, she informs me, will be her last. Old age is inevitable; though the race she helped start will live on. She has seen what's it's become, from those kids racing their bikes around Hickory Hall to the grand modern spectacle; from Howdy Wilcox to Eric Young the Little 500 has brought a community together in a way nothing else could. As we leave the track I glance back to see the Delta Tau team riding their victory lap. It's not just the four riders circling the track—it's their entire community. Friends, family, coaches, fraternity brothers, girlfriends, mechanics, all played a part in making victory a reality. It's a beautiful scene to behold. One that I know has happened sixty-one times before, and will continue to happen every April in Bloomington, so long as bicycles have wheels and students have feet.







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## Horse Cycles

Thomas Callahan first started building frames in 2006, and concentrates on lugged and TIG welded road, track and commuter bikes. Self-taught and a dedicated cyclist himself, Thomas' passion for the build shows through in his custom wet-paint and impeccable finish work.

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# 3 Brooklyn Bike Builders

photography by Brad Quartuccio





## Coast Cycles

Johnny Coast is the fabricator and namesake of Coast Cycles, with a certain affinity for classic lugged construction and style. He first learned metalworking basics from his father, and then went on to hone his bicycle construction skills at UBI before learning fillet brazing from the legendary Koichi Yamaguchi of 3 Rensho pedigree.

50 Troutman St Rear, Brooklyn NY 11206

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

# 3 Brooklyn Bike Builders

photography by Brad Quartuccio



## SquareBuilt

Lance Mercado is the man behind SquareBuilt, specializing in steel street track bikes since 2007 and recently making waves in the polo scene with custom frames, forks and bars, along with a prototype coupling system of his own design. With an apartment directly above his workshop it is safe to say that Lance lives and breathes bicycle construction.

868 Myrtle Ave #1, Brooklyn NY 11206

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







## State Bicycle Co Massacre

State Bicycle Co is a web based, mail order fixed gear bicycle company offering bikes in the competitive \$430-\$650 “serious entry level” category. Their bikes are most likely going to people putting real money down on a bike for the first time after deciding that bikes are for them and they want something reflecting the current urban cycling trends. We’ve had the pictured State Massacre FGFS in for a couple of months, with plenty of time to write up some thoughts on this \$580 complete bike.

At under \$600 as shown, including USA shipping, the State Massacre bike is not only one of the few complete fixed trick bikes out there, it also has one of the lowest barriers to entry. In my opinion it’s quite the looker too—I’m into the stark and simple color scheme. In a realm where the norm is framesets alone that cost as much as this bike, let alone the proliferation of high-end, heavy-duty rims, hubs and cranks out

there is it important to remember the price tag and judge the bike accordingly.

The heart of any bike is the frame, in this case a one-size-fits-some welded chromoly steel tubeset with a matching chromoly fork. The State FGFS is available in one size only at this point, with a 57.5 cm long toptube and 50.5 cm seattube, providing a pretty long cockpit and a measured 32” standover requirement in the center of the toptube. While State claims this fits riders from 4’11” to 6’6” tall I would narrow that range considerably—the frame is arguably a tad small for my 6’2” self, and definitely too large for someone near the 5’ mark. The rest of the geometry comes together with a 73° head angle, 74° seat angle, longish 43.5 cm chainstays and 3 mm of bottom bracket drop. I do wish the frame and fork had matching brake mounts—as it stands the frame has welded on brake mounts and the fork is drilled for a long reach caliper brake. While



most fixed freestyle riders aren't using rim brakes anyway, the option makes the bike that much more beginner friendly or versatile as a burly city or polo bike, and matching brake mounts be that much more attractive to riders wanting to run brakes. In my perfect world the bike would have removable canti studs front and rear, or at the very least use the same long reach caliper on the frame and fork.

The parts build is made up of mostly house brand parts—cruiser BMX bars and a short stem fill out the cockpit, 32h triple wall V-section rims and “standard” street fixed hubs make up the wheels, with a plain square taper crank finishing out the drivetrain. The Animal pedals and Hold Fast straps stand out in a world of garbage plastic pedals included with complete builds. The bike ships with a tall 36 x 13 gear ratio (74.8 gear inches) and Kenda 35c tires, though it has clearance for all the way up to 50c front and rear. As shipped, with pedals, the bike weighs a respectable 25 lbs.

While I put a lot of time in on fixed gears, trick riding really isn't my forte, so I handed off the bike to a local friend Devin T for some riding input, and a report. “After some getting used to really loving the State Massacre, as a commuter/city or even polo bike, I feel it has a lot to offer. As for tricks, even on an entry level, the bottom bracket and cranks and also the gear ratio is something I would change up. The chainstays are rather long, hard to wheelie, but once achieved it is stable and doesn't loop out. Furthermore, entry level tricks are wheelies, barhops, hops in general but this



bike seems much more suited for flatland style tricks, sliders, Keos, fish and chips etc. Brake studs on the rear triangle but not on the front fork? Brake studs in general on a fixed freestyle bike? Overall, whether you are commuting or tricking this bike can get the job done.”

The parts concerns brought up by Devin are much the same as what I saw out of the box—inconsistent brake mounts f/r, and square taper cranks with a pretty high gear ratio. The gear ratio is higher than what I ride on my track bike for fast-guy alleycats, let alone tricks or polo use, and a stronger bottom bracket and crank combo is something most any trick rider would appreciate though it would likely add very real dollars to the bike's bottom line. The square taper crank is fine for the rest of us that aren't regularly shearing off bottom bracket spindles however.

Practicing tricks on your commuter track bike and want something dedicated to further learn on? Want to give this whole fixed freestyle thing a try without spending really big money, or thrashing your everyday bike? Just like the trick bike style and want an overbuilt bike for getting around town? The Massacre might be what you're looking for. More serious trick riders may scoff at the cranks, people outside of the most average height range will likely find it doesn't fit, people looking for dual rim brakes have some compromises to make. No bike is perfect for every rider out there, but this one might be what you are after. See more color options from State along with their more traditional street track bikes and parts at [www.statebicycle.com](http://www.statebicycle.com)





## Torker Interurban 24

In the recent past Torker has emerged as a solid brand for a number of new cyclists, from students moving into town for the first time to adults purchasing their first real city bicycle. I've repeatedly pointed friends and family towards their line of commuter bikes and have watched as some have rediscovered cycling for both pleasure and transportation. The Torker Interurban 24 is meant for cyclist parents looking for a "real" bike for their child—I wish bikes like this were around when I was 10 years old.

With a 6061 aluminum frame and straight blade chromoly fork, riser bars, a 2x7 Gripshift drivetrain, dual pivot brakes and multi-surface tires the Interurban 24 could be mistaken for a new-school adult city commuter if it wasn't for the 24" wheels and kid-sized cranks, grips and seat. The Interurban 24 has a standover of 24", and is recommended for children with an inseam length of 25-32". For city trail riding this may

be the bike that allows Junior to keep up with the parents. The Interurban 24 is a serious step up from the department store offerings that most kids are riding, as is the \$430 price, though assuming your kid doesn't totally thrash the bike it should retain its resale value better than a comparable adult bike.

Elias Krahel (see Urban Velo #31, I Love Riding in the City) reports, "The bike is light and has nice gears. I can ride up hills fast! Shifting is easy and the bike's brakes work well." The flat bars are more comfortable than drops, and the bike itself matches the style of what the older bike kids are riding. The gear range is reasonably wide, though admittedly could have even lower bailout gears for still growing kids to make it up steep hills. Even adventurous kids are covered with fender and rack mounts. Also available with 20" wheels for younger kids.

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## Abus U-40 Mini

The guys at Abus are seriously passionate about locks. When they found out that I have been using one of their cable locks for over 12 years, they got very serious and explained that even though I was using it when locking my bike in low-risk areas, I needed to start using their latest technology.

Enter the Abus U-40 Mini, a high-security, mini u-lock. The U-40's temper-hardened steel is coated with a soft shell that not only prevents it from scratch-

ing your bike, it makes the lock look thicker and more theft-proof. But when it comes down to it, it's the steel and the lock technology that truly keep your bike safe.

Many locks on the market are case hardened, is a process in which the steel to be hardened is dipped into a hardening solution for a pre-determined time—the longer it sits in the hardening bath the harder it gets. This steel is very cut resistant, but it's also somewhat brittle, which isn't good for a lock. So Abus uses temper hardening, a multi-step process where the steel is dipped at different intervals into a hardening bath, and let rest in between. The multi-step process is more expensive and time consuming but renders a steel that is very hard (cut resistant) yet more malleable to allow the lock to flex without breaking. Abus says, "This is perfect for a lock where you need it to resist torsion attacks without breaking. Our U-54 can resist over 2000 nm, or the force of 4 Porsche engines of twist force and still return to neutral and function."

Abus went on to explain that the lock cylinder of the U-40 mini is highly pick-resistant due to the high number of key variations—250,000 to be specific. "We have a machine that processes the key cuts which automatically kicks out any key combination that has more than two of the same numbers in a row. For example, a 2,2,2,6 is an easy lock to pick as it does not have big variances in the cut, while 1,6,2,4,3 is a much more resistant key cut. This, again, is an extra step that ABUS takes, but we find it imperative."

Finally, the double locking shackle secures both sides to the lock body. What this means is that should a thief want to cut the lock off, they would have to cut the shackle twice in order to separate it.

I knew that many Abus locks are made in Germany, so I was surprised to learn that the U-40 is made in Asia. However I'm assured that their Asian factory has had an Abus sign on the door for 35 years, and that they shipped all of the machines and tooling there (along with German engineers to set them up). So Abus feels that they're able to maintain an exceptional level of quality control over all our products, regardless of the country of origin. The Abus U-40 retails for \$65, comes in red or yellow and includes four keys.

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

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## Knog Blinder

Knog was one of the first on the scene with soft-bodied blinkie lights, and have been pushing USB rechargeable lights since the technology first came out. Their latest product is the \$45 Knog Blinder, a USB rechargeable LED light featuring an anodized aluminum body, single button switch and quick release mount. The pictured Blinder 4 has four LEDs housed in an aluminum and polycarbonate body, with a silicone strap compatible with 22-35 mm bars or seatposts. Hidden under the strap is a fold out USB plug for recharging.

In use the Blinder is quite bright—Knog claims 80 Lumens of front white output and 44 Lumens from the rear red LED set. The rear is too bright to comfortably ride behind at night, a good thing as far as I'm concerned for being seen riding solo in traffic. I wouldn't say you can see on a dark trail with the front or anything, but I may be guilty of doing some urban exploring with the Blinder as my guide though it is certainly a "be seen" type of light. The light itself is fully waterproof—I let mine blink through a complete charge submerged in a glass of water—and gets

a claimed 3 hours of runtime on steady, with up to 40 hours blinking. Even for daily use, most people will find recharging it once or twice per week plenty.

The switch requires a two second press to turn on, preventing finding it blinking in the bottom of your bag. You can click through a few different blink modes, and turn off the light by holding the button for another two seconds. The Blinder even remembers the blink mode you left on, a minor but mentionable nicety. The button also has a small LED indicator—red when the battery is low or charging, green when fully charged. When it comes to charging, just flip out the USB plug and insert into an open computer or charging port. I found that in some circumstances I needed a USB extension cord to easily plug the light in either due to the shape next to a laptop, or because it blocked the USB port next to it.

Color me impressed, the Blinder is my latest go-to blinkie. It's initially pricey at \$45, but add a year or two worth of batteries to a \$30 light and you're at the same final place. See the whole line of Blinder lights at [www.knog.com.au](http://www.knog.com.au)

# ///KARVS



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## Kenda Kwick Tendril Tires

For the past couple of months I've been running Kenda Kwick Tendril tires on my polo bike, giving them a pretty abusive run through in the process. I was on the hunt for a larger volume tire with minimal tread and good flat protection that was also available for a 26" wheel and wasn't going to break the bank—the \$35 Kwick Tendril met the bill. It is not the cheapest tire you can purchase, but one shouldn't expect a folding bead and effective flat protection for much less. I tend to go through rear tires on my polo bike pretty regularly and these from Kenda were no different as I managed to skid through them in 3 or 4 weeks time on a rough surface heavy on the rear brake. I wouldn't say the tires were any more prone to wear than usual, just not particularly long lived under the abusive circumstances. More representatively, the front tire has remained unchanged for some time and shows no particular signs of premature wear. Even when riding through the 'hood and on glass strewn courts I've managed to stay flat-free for months, always a welcome part of a tire review. Overall I'm pleased with them, and would recommend these tires as everyday city tires in a second. They're not performance tires and neither are they meant to be, I wouldn't go putting these on your road bike hoping for the next speed record or a supple ride. Available in 26 x 1.5 and 1.75 for mountain bike commuter conversions and 700 x 25-38 from most any shop around.

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

## DZR Minna Shoes

DZR has become a major player in the world of urban cycling shoes, and their latest offerings appear to be securing their reputation as one of the top cycling shoe companies.

The Minna is a good-looking, well-padded, casual-looking, SPD-compatible shoe that borrows design elements from skate, BMX and even soccer shoes. Whereas the first pair of DZR shoes that I tested had very flexible soles and minimal padding in the uppers, the Minna feature highly padded uppers and a considerably stiffer sole. The result is a shoe that feels a lot more secure around the heel, and one that feels like it's transferring lots of power to your pedals.

Off the bike, the Minna aren't quite as easy to walk in as their Ovis or Strasse models, but they're shoes that you can wear all day long (provided you don't do an unusual amount of walking at your 9-5). The Minna features a metallic logo plate and a reflective badge on the heel. Vegans will have to look elsewhere, as they're made from smooth and suede leather, in addition to canvas.

Available in European sizes 37-47, the Minna shoes retail for \$95.

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







photograph by Peter DiAntoni

*Milwaukee*  
*Bicycle Co*



## Chrome Stock Cobra

The Chrome Stock Cobra hoodie is made from soft, warm, durable moleskin cotton. Moleskin? Yes. Neither made from moles nor used to prevent blisters, moleskin cotton is a heavy fabric that features a distinct soft and fuzzy side. Because of its dense weave, the fabric is warm and highly wind resistant.

The cut of the Cobra generally favors tall lanky folks, as it's cut long enough to cover your wrists and plumber's crack when you're in the drops. It features a cargo pocket across the lower back, two pockets to keep your hands warm, and a key pocket on the right sleeve—all with zippered closures.

Naysayers may scoff at the \$100 price tag, but anyone who's tried one on will agree that this is one hell of a nice hoodie. If I were to pick nits my first thought would be that the hood seems a tiny bit large. The key pocket on the wrist is not really necessary, and I would rather have thumb holes instead. But in all I'm very happy with the Stock Cobra, and I wear it often.

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

## Ernesto Lube

Ernesto Lube is one of those dedicated small-guys that the bike industry is chock full of. Their only product is the pictured 4 oz bottle of soy-based, biodegradable chain lube. Drip it on, wipe off the excess, and don't worry about the toxicity of your lube. They jokingly claim on the website that you can fry eggs in it, but I kept my use to my bicycle chain. I've been using this lube on my 'cross bike for six months now and don't have much to report, which is overall a good thing. It was thin enough to penetrate the links but not so thick to seem sticky and a magnet for dirt. It may wear faster than synthetic oil based lubes, but the "green" nature of the lube makes the minor difference forgivable to me. I'll be the first to admit that as long a lube doesn't seem to wear out too quickly or attract too much grit I don't pay much attention to it, and while completely subjective terms, I've not thought much about this lube and plan to keep using it as needed. Each bottle is available for \$7.50, with refills available for \$3.75 each.

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## Hiplok Wearable Bike Lock

The Hiplok perhaps epitomizes the co-opting of courier style for mass-consumption, but unlike disc wheels on the street or deep anodized drops for grabbing coffee the Hiplok actually makes sense. I was initially impressed with the idea, even if I dismissed it as not for me. That is, until I actually had one at my disposal—I've been using this lock for around town trips for a couple of months now, and the Hiplok now resides on a hook near my front door for quick use. Chains are handy sometimes, and the Hiplok makes it easy as it gets to use.

The Hiplock combines a specially made lock housing and a nylon sleeve with a reflective Hiplok logo and an integrated, heavy duty hook and loop belt to quickly adjust the length and secure it in place. The lock has an ABS outer shell that is curved to sit comfortably across your body, and has a simple belt fixing

loop near the keyhole. Wearing the Hiplok is comfortable and secure, and adjusting it from the 26" minimum to 44" maximum belt length is as easy as can be. While a u-lock in the back pocket is even faster (if you have the right size lock and pockets) the Hiplok isn't springing free over a pothole or curb. The lock includes four keys, so you have no excuse for losing all of them.

In terms of the lock itself, the chain is made from 8 mm case hardened links with a square profile to deflect most bolt cutters, or at least make it that much harder to cut through as compared to round links. The lock itself has a 9 mm steel shackle and a small profile making prying attacks fairly difficult. The lock mechanism uses the now ubiquitous flat key that allows a million different combinations, and is more pick resistant than conventional or round keys even if in my experience (though not with the Hiplock in particular) more prone to jamming due to user error. The lock weighs 4 lbs, roughly twice what a quality mini u-lock weighs, but not nearly as much as what some of the Superman-repelling chains from the competition weigh in at, though admittedly with larger diameter links and lock shackle. My armchair estimation of theft deterrence gives the Hiplok high marks unless I'm missing a fatal flaw with the lock mechanism—if a thief is breaching a lock like this they are likely using power tools or such large bolt cutters that no lock will stop them. From my perspective I'm willing to lock up any of my bikes more or less anywhere I'd go with the Hiplok.

After a few months of use the reflective logo is beginning to crack and peel off of the nylon sheath, which I expected given the flex and wear the sleeve receives. I honestly like how the lock feels on the bike and how it functions locked up—it's comfortable and not locked to me while riding, and I'm confident in the security it offers when I leave my bike behind. I do wish the one end of the chain was affixed to the lock shackle in some manner, or even integrated into the lock itself, as it needs to remain in the correct orientation for the Hiplok to wear comfortably, but sometimes in more complicated locking scenarios I've unwittingly removed and replaced the lock in the wrong direction or to the wrong end of the chain. Otherwise, into it. The Hiplok is available for about \$100 in a few different color combinations. See more details and order direct at [www.hiplok.com](http://www.hiplok.com)



# !!!

Thank you NACCCs & Richmond.



## Club Ride Days2Short


It's summer and the hot weather is upon us. As much as I favor cycling knickers (shants, if you will), once the temperature reaches 90°F I want some shorts. And while cut-off Dickies certainly would do the job, once you've been exposed to the world of high-end mountain bike apparel, it's kind of hard to settle for less. So when Club Ride approached us about reviewing their products, I was rather happy to oblige.

The Days2Short shorts are made from quick-dry nylon that's brushed to look more like casual wear than technical wear. The fabric stretches just enough to avoid snagging your saddle, but provides total freedom of movement. They have traditional pockets and belt loops, as well as zippered cargo pockets and an adjustable waistband. The shorts come with a removable Coolmax liner so you can choose to use theirs,

roll your own, or go commando if you so desire.

Club Ride is based in Ketchum, a world-famous mountain resort town in Idaho. And in any given resort town you have a genre of outdoor enthusiasts who get labeled "dirt bags." Now don't jump to the conclusion that dirt bag is exclusively a derogatory term, however. A dirt bag is known to run gear from a decade ago, they duct tape their footwear and sew patches onto their outerwear. But as much as dirt bags are frugal, they tend to be knowledgeable, and they appreciate quality. So if you're a clothing brand in Ketchum, you have to keep the dirt bags in mind for the sake of your reputation. And I'm pretty confident that 12 years dirt bags will be stitching up vintage Club Ride shorts and saying, "These are pretty sweet."

The Days2Short shorts retail for \$99. Check out [www.clubrideapparel.com](http://www.clubrideapparel.com)



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**DZR's** new Task Collection is now available. The shoes, which retail for \$95 – \$139, are designed for added stability, traction and power transfer all while maintaining the street style look DZR is known for. [www.dzrshoes.com](http://www.dzrshoes.com)



**Mission Workshop's** Arkiv Field Pack is part of their new modular backpack series. Bags start at \$209 and accessories begin at \$30. [www.missionworkshop.com](http://www.missionworkshop.com)

**All-City's** Deputy hubs now come in 48h drilling for polo use. Available in black only, retail is set at \$105 for the front hub and \$110 for the rear. [www.allcitycycles.com](http://www.allcitycycles.com)



Limited to a run of 50, The Roger comes with a complete **Roger** skateboard and **Fairdale** skate rack. The Roger sells for around \$800 through dealers and all graphics are custom. If you don't need the complete set, you can buy the skate rack alone through Fairdale for \$44. [www.fairdalebikes.com](http://www.fairdalebikes.com)



**Keen** is launching the Harvest III series this summer, adding to the Harvest series of upcycled bags with a line made from excess, damaged, or obsolete pre-consumer car airbags. [www.keenfootwear.com](http://www.keenfootwear.com)



**Road Runner Bags'** latest design, the Evil Mini, is a simple, lightweight drybag with a single large compartment and an outer compression strap. The bag is made from Rip Stop nylon inside and out. It comes in at a mere 1.2 lbs, and is available for \$65. [roadrunnerbags.wordpress.com](http://roadrunnerbags.wordpress.com)



**Rubena** is a well known European tire manufacturer introducing their commuter line to the US market. The company made its first bicycle tire in 1928, and today produces 6 million tires and 9 million tubes per year in the Czech Republic. [www.rubenatires.com](http://www.rubenatires.com)



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# THE TOUGHEST LADIES IN SPORT

BY LISA MOFFATT

On a warm sunny afternoon in July '09, Polly Nomial, Shannon Frey and I were knocking the ball around the old court at Grandview in Vancouver BC. Patricia Cournoyer stopped by on a break from work and watched us from the grassy knoll outside the tennis fence. Shannon was pretty new to polo and we were trying to encourage more women to play, but a ladies night never really took off. Neither did a beginner night.

There had been some discussion among the women of Cascadia about being passed over for tournament teams and concerned about how bike polo was moving away from fun, weekend tournaments to more serious competitions. We didn't want women to lose out on this new wave of polo and wanted to create a place for them to feel welcomed.

We batted around a few ideas and finally I said, "Fuck it. Let's have an all women's tournament." The ladies were all game and in two months we pulled it off having it as a one-day tournament on the Friday before the newly named East Van Crown. The tournament was heavily populated by Cascadia women, but we had players travel from as far as New York City and Ottawa to round out the nine team compliment. Originally I had envisioned it as an informal throw in tournament, but women had already formed teams and it would have been hard to convince them otherwise. We had minimal prizes, and even made mallets for one team. The girls from New York, Cecily Upton and Fiona Ryan, were so excited that they immediately agreed to host the second installment of the Ladies

Army tournament.

However, Ladies Army wouldn't exist without the amazing support of all the men in our communities. They help us run the brackets, referee, organize, serve food, provide courtside maintenance, etc. This enables us women to concentrate on our games and getting to know each other better and build camaraderie, the likes of which exists no where else in the poloverse. In fact, "Ladies Army" was originally suggested by my boyfriend at the time as a team name for what became my first Ladies Army team. We thought it was too good of a name not to have some longevity as it embodied what I dreamed would one day happen in every polo city in the world, in effect, an army of women players, the Ladies Army.

The Ladies Army is not popular with everyone. There are debates online about the gender divide some perceive it is creating; that it is pushing women out of the regular coed game of polo. I believe those people miss the point of the tournament. It's meant as a friendly get together and it is not associated with the competitive tournament calendar of North American Hardcourt (NAH), the regulating body of bike polo in this section of the world.

There are a small number of women who want this gender divide, though no one has personally expressed this directly to me. I lament the day this might happen, that a gender divide might rip the welcoming and inclusiveness of this coed sport apart. I fear this, because Ladies Army is working, it is doing what we dreamed it would do. It is getting women excited about bike polo



and encouraging more of them to come out and try it and take those risks one needs to take to get better at something. Naomi Manin'tVeld, who got her polo start in East Van, says, "It's actually empowering to have a women's only tournament, especially for women who play in male-dominated communities. I am the only woman who plays regularly in Boston and while I think my game is getting better and better and the men I play with are total sweethearts, it's nice to be reminded that ladies love polo too, and that the community is bigger out there."

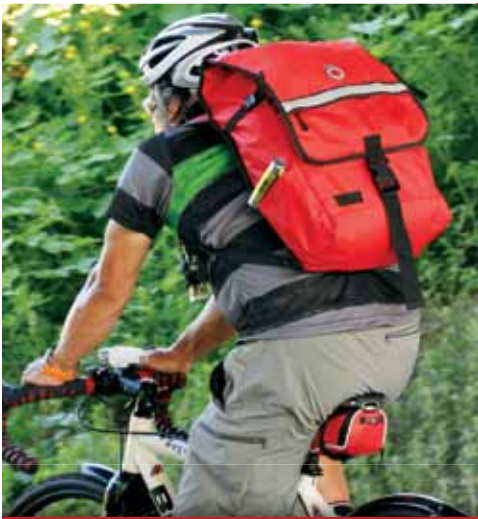
Machine, an ex-pat from Scotland, now living in San Francisco who has attended the past two Ladies Army tournaments says, "There is a good vibe, a great vibe, and the stamina! It's the only tournament like it on the planet! You can't improve on perfect. It's an amazing tournament."

Maureen Grady, one of the organizers of Ladies Army III in Austin described the difference of an all women tournament, "Ladies Army differs most from any other tournament in the amount of women present. Every other tournament in bike polo is ruled and dominantly populated by penises. That fact alone

changes the vibe, hands down. Ladies Army is just as tough and hard of a weekend as any other tournament experience I have ever been to, it just tends to be way more social and full of "lady love" and the infamous "polo girl crush" and a super fun positive vibe." Maki Hojo, who traveled with her teammates from Japan for the tournament, agreed that it was so amazing to play against good women players and it has inspired her to "practice more and have better games next time."

Naomi Manin'tVeld, so inspired by her experience in Lexington that she included a write up about it on her blog: "What struck me this year was how talented the players are. I didn't go to Austin last year and there seemed to be an incredible leap of ability from New York to now. The caliber of play is getting better and better... Coming into the weekend I felt happy to just go out there and play a pick-up style of game. My tune quickly changed during my first game with Jen and Lisa. It was attack, attack, attack..."

The winners of this year's Ladies Army were rewarded with a spot at the World Championships and some money to help get them there. Although it will be great to see an all women's team at the World



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Championships, because the Ladies Army is not on the competitive tournament calendar, there is some controversy around this kind of treatment of women in the sport. Kayla Story, from Chicago offers up her response to the dream of seeing gender equality in bike polo, “I don’t necessarily think that “equal numbers” of women to men in polo [is] ever going to happen or [that women will get] treated equally once you get to the upper tier of tournaments. That’s an earned spot, and I’m not saying that we as women should not, or could not earn it, but being given spots just for general inclusions sake doesn’t sound like it would appeal to any bad ass lady playing polo.” She’s not alone in her thinking. Often I have spoken with and watched women working hard, knowing they are capable of standing on those major podiums around the world using the feelings of exclusion and comments that they aren’t good enough to fuel their fire and determination.

Ladies Army is not perfect, and as always, there is room for improvement. Conversations about the Lexington tournament speak to the need for more consistent and serious refereeing. As the tournament expands internationally, accommodations for better notice of next games will need to be implemented. Offering both a visual and verbal announcement will help to leap language barriers. Increased sponsorship for Ladies Army is considered by some to provide more legitimacy to the all women’s weekend. But Ladies Army tournament has also been pushing the envelope in bike polo. The Austin Ladies Army was

the first tournament in North America to be broadcast live over the internet. The Lexington tournament had on-court referees using in-line skates for the first time at a major tournament.

And the ladies aren’t going anywhere! We are a force to be reckoned with on and off the court. We are actively involved in the development of bike polo, having helped establish a board of directors, creating and implementing a competitive structure, being elected regional representatives of NAH, designing polo facilities, and supporting the sport locally by organizing tournaments.

Without a doubt, with every Ladies Army come more amazing memories. Some of the highlights from Lexington that were shared with me for this article reminisced the 100 foot long slip and slide, court-side haircuts, Machine’s endless and enthusiastic commentary, the London girls, and Ariel winning the raffle bike. But I know I am in good company when I describe one of the most memorable moments of Ladies Army IV from Geneva’s Elena Mironova. She was so intense, watching every game, learning every player’s strengths and weaknesses. In the lead up to the final game she took a clean check from a German player into the fence, stayed on her bike and scored a goal. She hobbled to the sidelines on her bike, her breathing labored, calling for a time-out. During the check she had broken her collarbone, there was a 3.5 cm overlap in the bone and her polo weekend was over with her team claiming second place overall. The toughest ladies in sport. 

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# A CONVERSATION WITH GRANT PETERSEN

By Zack Barowitz

*Grant Petersen is a reformed racer and the owner of Rivendell Bicycle Works. We talked about riding in cities, wearing tweed, and the unsung qualities of old mass-production mountain bikes. His forthcoming book **Just Ride: A Radically Practical Guide to Riding Your Bike** is instructive on all aspects of cycling (even racing) and will garner appreciation and infuriation from experts and novices alike.*

## **What are the biggest impediments to urban cycling?**

Fear of injury or death, the effort required, weather, the need to dress up at work, the lack of bike parking, and maybe the need to visit clients in other parts of town or in other cities during the day. These are just what I can think of without thinking.

## **What about bicycle infrastructure in Amsterdam?**

Whether you're talking about Amsterdam or Tokyo or New Delhi or ANY place where bikes dominate. The riders aren't green, they aren't necessarily environmentalists philosophically. They may be criminals, or whale eaters, or whale hunters, or drug dealers, but it doesn't matter, they're on the bike because the bike makes more sense than the car. It may be the price of the car, or of gas, or that bikes are easier to park, or that car taxes are ridiculously high. The car isn't a realistic option for them, so they ride a bike.

What do we have in the U.S.? Portland, Oregon.

Because of great efforts by the local government and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance to make life easier for bike riders with parking, accommodations, and lanes; 6.5% of urban trips are made by bike, compared to less than one percent in the typical American city. They're the National Champs, but it still means [the vast majority] of trips are made by cars. Incentives only go so far. Disincentives to driving are far more effective, but I'm afraid it's kind of late for that, now. People squawk at \$4.40 per gallon gas, but it's still cheap by all world standards except Venezuela's.

## **Some advocates are opposed to bike lanes in favor of "vehicular cycling?"**

Cities should accommodate and prioritize bikes in all new projects. I like bike paths. I don't think riders should be required to ride them, but when they go where I'm going, I take them. For many people, it's the bike path or nothing. You can't just say, "Get comfy in traffic, like ME!" I think a rider's responsibility to stay alive is greater than their responsibility to put themselves in harm's way in the name of "responsible cycling" or "cyclists' rights." That is a dangerous thing for me to say, because it can be twisted around, quoted out of context, used as a pull quote and misrepresent the complexity of the issue. So, please don't do that. All I am saying is don't freak out drivers, don't scare or hit pedestrians, and do what it takes to stay alive.

## What was your job at Bridgestone?

I was hired as an in-house technical rep to talk to dealers and bike riders, since nobody else “in house” knew about bikes or could talk the language. I did tons of data entry. Later I became Marketing Manager, I wrote ads and catalogues. At about the same time I had a lot of influence over the designs of the bikes and the parts. But the official designers were smart engineering types, who would take my suggestions, most, not all, and turn them into bikes. My “design” roles have always been overstated.

## Where did you learn to design bicycles?

I took a mechanical drawing class in high school, and my dad was a mechanical engineer. I used to draw frames on his drawing table. I firmly believe a pencil-and-paper approach helps relationships and proportions sink in more effectively. But, let me say this without sounding overly humble: Designing frames is not that hard. I could teach anybody everything I know in five hours.

## Your writing sets you apart from other frame designers. Have you always liked to write?

I don't know about “always,” but when I was fourteen I wrote an article about a new way to tie trout flies, and submitted it to Field and Stream, Outdoor Life, and Sports Afield. They all rejected it. But at least I wrote it, and it was pretty good for me at the time. I learned more about writing from reading, including reading books about writing. I don't have sharp skills but I know how to avoid common mistakes.

## You have the reputation as an industry iconoclast, yet you are influential in the industry and people tend to agree with most of what you say.

I think it's natural to focus on the stuff you find outrageous. But I don't say things that I believe to be outrageous. I have opinions, just as anybody who has a background in any field does. I have experience. If opinions didn't follow, there'd have to be something missing in my brain. But, I don't preface every opinion with “in my opinion,” because that's a waste of time. Just because you like or agree with something I say doesn't mean you have to join my cult and agree with everything, and I've changed over the years.

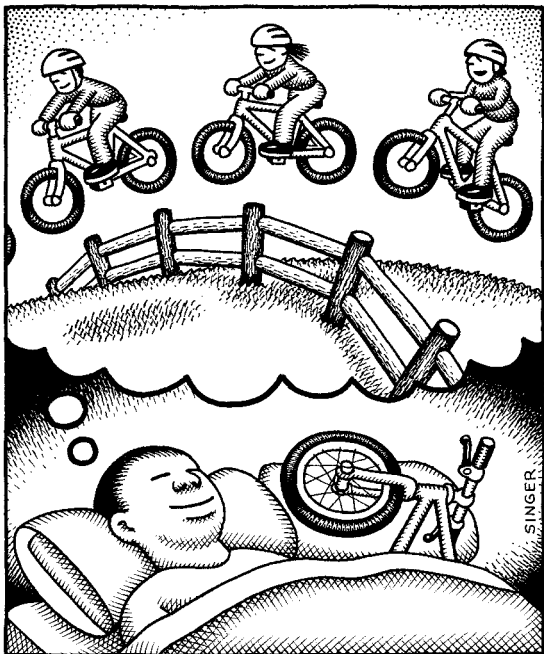
## Does strange clothing, like tweed, marginalize cycling?

I tend to think that bike extremism, in the hardware or clothing, is like a snake that grows from both ends. One end (usually the high tech/innovative end) starts something, and then the other end reacts to it, with the unstated or even unintended goal being a kind of balance in the whole snake. For instance, one-speeds were nowhere until 9-speeds got popular, and now that Joe Schmoie dresses like a European Pro, we have tweed rides as the balance. Balancing kind of requires an opposite extreme, the Tweeders are providing a service. The Tweedies make it easier for bike riders to fall into the sane middle range.

I don't see any point in costuming up for a bike ride. If you saw a ten-year old kid [in spandex], you'd think, “how sad.” When I see 65-year olds do it, I think the same. But to each his/her own. My everyday “uniform” is totally bike ready, and I don't mean only for a two-mile jaunt.

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## **What is your all time favorite city bike?**

I don't think the bike makes that big a difference. They all work. But, if you're asking my own preference, or what I think makes the most functional sense, the most practical sense, I'll stick out my neck and nominate an all-steel early to late '80s mountain bike fitted up with a higher and maybe a swept-back handlebar, fenders, rack, and basket. Platform pedals, kickstand, bell, rear view mirror, and some kind of light. It might not suit somebody's style, and I'm not saying it's a better style; I'm just saying for me, that's what I think makes a lot of sense.

The fact is, there are major bargains to be had in certain kinds of used bikes. Any of the pre-'85 Japanese lugged steel road bikes, a decent steel frame that was designed before things got wacky.

## **Pre-'85? I would've set the date a few years later. I sometimes see some decent '90s Taiwanese-made road bikes.**

OK, we can go a little later, but a five-country monetary re-valuation happened in 1985, and it devastated the Japanese bike industry. Remember the highly ornamented Shimano 600 arabesque and 105 arrow groups? It seemed over the top at the time. But it is high evidence that a strong dollar and a weak yen meant wonderful, unnecessarily artsy things, could happen. The worst Taiwan bikes were the '86s and '87s, the rookie years for high volume, imported-into-the-US Taiwanese bikes. It's not fair to paint them all with the same broad brush, but many of them had problems. By the later '80s and beyond, those problems were fixed. By then the lugs were gone. But for urban riding, a lack of preciousness is usually a good thing.

## **Do you ever think of building cheap TIG-welded mass-market bikes?**

I think of it a lot. I thought of when I was in Yosemite on vacation. That should drive home the point. But a good idea isn't always a good idea. Ideas have tentacles, they affect and are affected by other things outside the main idea, and those things aren't always obvious. If you could take some of our bike models, fold your arms and blink your eyes like Jeanie, and turn it into a TIG-welded bike with thick, seamed, straight-gauge CrMo steel tubing; you'd have a heck of a cheap, functional bike. But if we did that and they became immensely popular, we'd have tons of competition the next year, and that competition could smother us. We don't source from China, but that kind of

bike could be, and suddenly we're just an also-ran, an after thought.

## **What about building a bike that is a bit more theft resistant?**

I still have a plan for a cheaper bike for riding in bike theft areas. Everybody at Rivendell knows about our "cheap bike project." The idea is to have a super ugly bike with a few manufacturing shortcuts, it would come primed, but not painted. You'd assemble it and then paint it, and not worry about overspray on the rims and tires. Each bike would look already stolen, and could have a unique paint job that made a real thief reluctant to take it, because it would be so identifiable.

## **It was a relief to me when in your book you confess that you do not like working on your bikes.**

The worst part of working on bikes is hooking up the cables. I insist on smoothly cut or ground cable housing, because I don't like even the remote possibility of a burr damaging a cable. Even in theory. So I grind burrs smooth off the housing on a grinding wheel, and if the heat seals the end and I can't get a cable through it, then I have to re-cut and start over again. It can take me 30 minutes to hook up brakes. Hate it.

## **There's an entry in Just Ride titled "The Predictability Ruse," where you mention one type of unpredictable behavior—that is to swing out a bit before the car passes you; what other methods do you use?**

The key is to look unconcerned or unaware; not to freak out the driver and cause an accident. But there's nothing to be gained by riding with such an air of confidence and control that the driver passes within inches of you.

I also think that bike riders see cars as inanimate evil polluters and killers, because they don't see the face and the eyes of the good person inside. They see the grill and headlights as a menacing face out to do them and the planet harm. It's easy to forget that inside that polluting hunk of metal could be a kind pacifist who does a lot of good in the world. In the absence of absolute knowledge of who's behind the wheel, that's a good assumption to make. You can't get along and do good things if you don't survive. Cars win every collision.





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# Derailleur Alignment

By Brad Quartuccio



When it comes to rear derailleur performance, alignment is key. Cassette cogs are barely more than half the width of a chain apart from one another—preventing chain jumps across cogs under power and maintaining proper indexed shifting requires that the derailleur pulleys remain in perfect alignment with the cogs. No amount of barrel adjustment and limit screw fiddling will correct for a misaligned derailleur hanger—any shop worth their service tag knows that the first step in most any derailleur adjustment is checking the derailleur hanger alignment.

Derailleur hangers are commonly bent inward from laying the bike down on the driveside, or twisted from a horribly missed shift or debris caught in the drivetrain. Modern replaceable hangers common on aluminum and carbon frame can be “soft” and easily bent and in some cases hard to align properly given the flex between them and the frame. Some,

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such as titanium or thick aluminum hangers, are hard to realign without breaking them. While a visibly bent hanger obviously needs some help, it doesn't take much misalignment to cause shifting trouble. A classic symptom of a misaligned hanger is being able to dial in your shifting in 2-4 cogs at the high end of the cassette and skip on the low end. Adjust for the center of the cassette and neither the very high or very low gears work well—it's time for an alignment. For better or worse the only tools available to align a rear derailleur are shop-quality and shop-price, and while few home shops have them at their disposal most bicycle co-ops should have one on hand, and most medium to large cities have a co-op shop space.



1. Remove derailleur and thread alignment tool into hanger in its place. Starting at the 12 o'clock position, set indicator arm to touch the rim at the valve stem, and lock into place. Using the same point on the rim for measurement ensures that the trueness of the rim does not affect hanger alignment.

2. Rotate tool and wheel 180° to the 6 o'clock position, sliding indicator arm to meet the rim sidewall. If the gauge is barely touching the rim, the hanger is aligned in that direction. If the indicator arm is either interfering with or has a gap between it and the rim, the hanger is out of alignment. Repeat at the 3 and 9 o'clock positions.

3. If the hanger is out of alignment, use the tool itself to gently bend the hanger back into alignment in small doses, checking progress along the way. The hanger can be likened to bending a paperclip back and forth—the less movement to get it right, the more likely the alignment will hold and the less likely the hanger will break.

It may be tempting to simply grab hold of the derailleur and bend it back into place visually aligning the pulleys with the cassette, but this is not recommended. Not only is your eye terribly inaccurate as compared to the proper tool, you risk bending the derailleur cage itself, furthering the misalignment and requiring a more expensive fix.





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