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guide Page 64

URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #4 • November 2007



GOLDSPRINTS

Bike racing meets night life



URBAN PHOTO GALLERY... Inspiration on page 36 • Download this issue for free online URBANVELO.ORG

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Issue #4 November 2007

URBAN VELO

Urban Velo PO Box 9040 Pittsburgh, PA 15224



"The Pitter Patter of Tiny's Feet." Photo by Chris Thomas - www.flickr.com/photos/professorchrisgo



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Editor's Statement

By Brad Quartuccio



The Rise and Fall of a Bike Shop that Never Was is the story that few who truly know it wish to tell. Failure is tough in the land of opportunity. Contributor Scott Spitz provided key inspiration for these very pages with his 'zine, *Leapfrog*. Hopefully not defunct, lets just say it is on a vacation without a definite return date. Its pages looked into a side of the cycling world others missed, and in a way opened my eyes to what was right in front of me.

Taking a glimpse into *Ghana* by bicycle can give us all a sense of humility about things. An entirely different cycling world exists, with day to day battles that make many of our commutes seem fit for a king. On the flip side, we have some practical advice on making the best of a not-optimal bike fit and a guide to survive the cold weather ahead. Hopefully within these pages you find something that makes you think, or that transports you to far away place. We want to be what you crave. 

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



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Publisher's Statement

By Jeff Guerrero




Illustration by Erok Boerer - www.bike-pgh.org

I've got a confession to make. I run red lights. I don't do it every time, but if the coast is clear I just keep on rollin'. The same goes for stop signs, and my bad habits don't stop there... I pass cars on the right. I ride the wrong way on one-way streets. And I make a point of breaking the speed limit any chance I get. Still, I wouldn't say I'm reckless. I'm just a guy on a bike, trying to get by in a city designed for cars.

Everyone knows most drivers don't follow the letter of the law—some of the most straight-laced people I know roll through stop signs. By and large the speed limit is treated as though it was a suggested minimum. Traffic lights seem open to interpretation, too—green means turn without looking, yellow means hurry up, and the first few seconds of red are a grace period.

So why shouldn't we, as cyclists, feel entitled to bend the rules? Without a motor we're left at a severe disadvantage fighting for our share of the road. Stop signs and traffic lights kill our momentum, and traffic congestion threatens to keep us at bay. New highways spring up every day, but bike lanes are still an afterthought at best. Why not go beyond taking a lane and make our own?

Unfortunately, without a ton of armor, we're vulnerable out on the streets. I've lost track of how many cycling deaths I've read about in the past month, and it's a sobering reminder that we all need to keep self-preservation in mind. While it's a sad fact of the matter that with an increase in cycling comes an increase in casualties, there are things we can all do to avoid becoming a grim statistic. I'll admit I'm not the best person to be preaching about safety, so do as I say, not as I do. Because while there might be bike lanes in heaven, you can't ride bikes here on Earth when you're dead. 

Urban Velo issue #4, November 2007. Dead tree print run: 1200 copies. Issue #3 online readership: 20,000+

Global Chilling

Our friends in the Netherlands really know how to live. Plenty of mass transit. Miles of bike lanes. Millions of people pedaling merrily along their way. A cynic might blame casual Dutch living on that country's fondness for herbal diversions, but we think it's their bicycles. The Schwinn World Street brings Benelux style and all-weather dependability to America's mean streets. What's cooler than that?



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I Love Riding in the City



★ WHY DO YOU LOVE RIDING IN THE CITY?

★ WHERE DO YOU LIVE AND WHAT'S IT LIKE RIDING IN YOUR CITY?

★ WHAT'S BEEN YOUR FAVORITE CITY TO RIDE IN, AND WHY?

★ OR JUST SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT ABOUT RIDING IN THE CITY... POETRY ANYONE?

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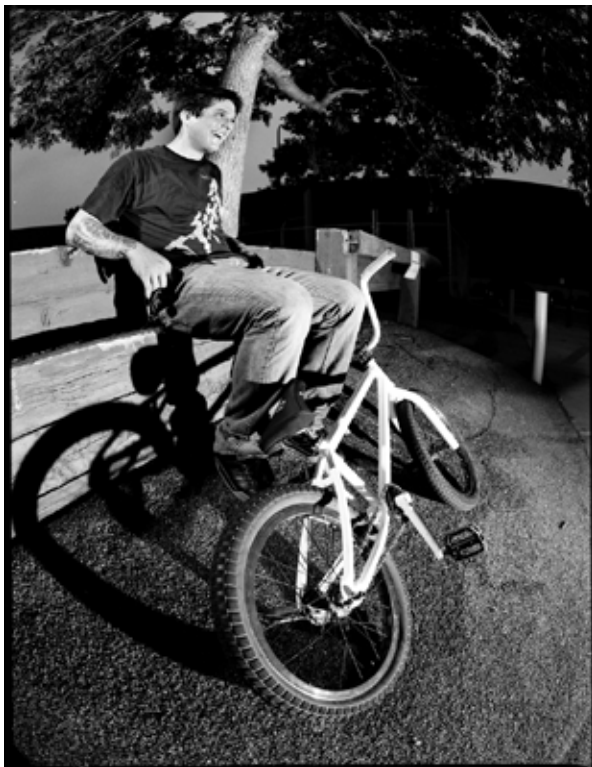


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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Todd Johnson
LOCATION: Minneapolis, MN
OCCUPATION: BMX sales and customer service for Quality Bicycle Products.

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

I live in Minneapolis and have for the past 20 years now. Riding in Minneapolis is fun, plain and simple. Good spots, not too many other riders to bust up your spots. The skatepark situation here sucks balls but we can't have everything I guess.

Spring & fall, perfect weather to ride in. Not too hot and still not too cold—a nice hoodie and a pair of well-worn jeans for protection.

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

My favorite city so far to ride in is San Antonio, Texas.... mainly because the cops there are cool as shit... I know you

never hear anyone say that, but it's true. They have good street spots around every corner, awesome ditches everywhere. And the Alamo... Got to love that town.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Being 32 years old and still riding a BMX is something I never thought I would be doing. We have a lot of "obstacles" to ride, we have a good group of BMX'ers with the exception of a few but that could be anywhere. With our sister city of Saint Paul not too far away it's like having two cities in one to ride—endless and undiscovered spots. Since Minneapolis is a bike friendly town it is easy to get around with out a car. Busses with bike racks, the light rail allows your bike. So even having the disadvantage of a 20" wheel I can still venture far from home and not have to worry about riding that little bike all the way, to and fro....

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

Riding for me isn't about being the "best" more so being the best I can be. It relaxes me, takes my stress away, and it's good exercise. for the most part it has created a lot of good friendships and unbelievable opportunities for me and for that I am most grateful for.



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I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Jeff Guerrero

NAME: Carlyne Mistake

LOCATION: Pittsburgh, PA

OCCUPATION: Freelance writer, bike mechanic, legal secretary, student.

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

I live in Pittsburgh and I love it. I love riding around downtown at night, looking at the city reflected off the rivers, riding up and down all the hills, weaving in and out of traffic and suddenly there's a great park and it feels like you're not in a city at all but in some far off forest. There's all types of riding here—I learned to mountain bike in Pittsburgh even though I've lived in a number of places with accessible trails. The drivers don't really know what to do with you and sometimes drive on the bike lanes, but it's not about the cars it's about the roads... There's probably only one straight road in the whole city, and every ride unfolds in front of you.

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

Besides Pittsburgh, I really liked riding in Utrecht, in the Netherlands. I was there in the winter and was for the most

part alone and didn't have much to do besides ride around and find warm corners to sit and write. I had come from Ireland and once got yelled at for not following proper Dutch protocol. They shouted, "What are you, British?" because I was riding on the wrong side of the road. Oops!

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love weaving in and out of traffic. I love beating cars. I love when it's cold and I ride over steaming sewer grates (even though it's gross). I'm a bit claustrophobic and don't like feeling stuck anywhere, so I love having my bike with me so I can leave whenever I want, wherever I am. I love alleyways and secret passages, and being able to park my whip anywhere. And I love talking specs with businessmen who think I don't know about bikes. But mainly I just love the constantly changing scenery.



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I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Willie Bailey, www.thebicyclecenter.com

NAME: Matthew Silvey
LOCATION: Clarksville, TN
OCCUPATION: Student/former retail whore.

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

I live in Clarksville, TN. The city has a lot to offer. We've got urban riding, rural club rides, big hills, long flats, mountain biking. What we don't have is a real bike friendly town.

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

I rode with some friends in Nashville. You would think being a country music town it wouldn't be bike friendly, but Nashville is pretty progressive. They have bike lanes and greenways and an all around good attitude.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I like riding in the city because I feel true freedom. I can cruise or race downtown and it affects no one but me. My bike produces no noise or pollution. Attitude, however, is given freely. You get too close and you get lots of profanities. It's exciting, and it makes me feel like I did when I was 10.

Or just say whatever you want...

It is said, "Revolution begins with one individual." That gives me hope that one day we will be riding down the road and be passed by a car and say, "Man, I haven't seen a car in years."

NAME: Mike P
LOCATION: Honolulu, Hawaii
OCCUPATION: Social Detox Counselor

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

Honolulu, Hawaii on the island of Oahu. During the day we have our array of spandex triathletes and fitness freaks pedaling around. There are way too many cars for an island of 609 square miles and over a million people. The city is totally not behind bicycles. They build bike routes that go into chainlink fences. On the other hand it's in the 80's year round.

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

Honolulu, Hawaii. It's 80 degrees year round. From my apartment I can ride XC, DH/FR, ride my fixie (there is an old cement velodrome in Aala Park) and the beach is a short pedal away...

Why do you love riding in the city?

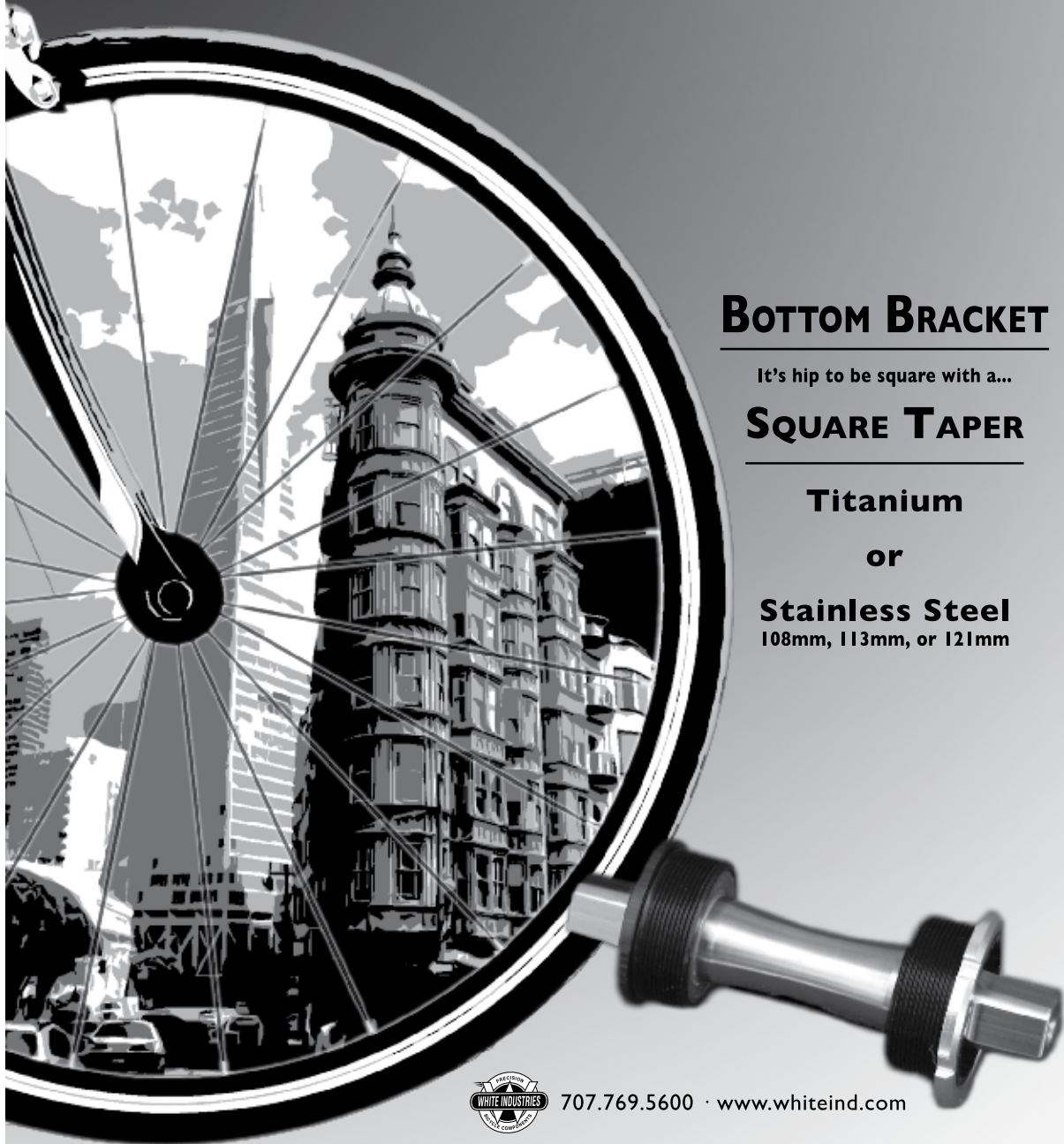
I like to play in traffic. I hate stop lights. The cars sit in traffic and I can go right by. One day I realized that it takes me the same amount of time to get to work in car as it does on a bike. The city of Honolulu is like a race track.

Or just say whatever you want...

"I go to work because I know I get to ride my bike home..."



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I Love Riding in the City

NAME: Nick Warren
LOCATION: Salzburg, Austria
OCCUPATION: Communications Manager/ Freelance Journalist



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

Salzburg, Austria. Cycling in Salzburg is an extremely pleasant experience and bike lanes are pretty much everywhere. Being Europe, most people use bicycles as a form of transport and motorists are very patient with cyclists. Even in winter when it's snowing, you see

old gents in pin stripe suits riding along carrying an umbrella or ladies on their way home with their shopping in a basket.

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

Auckland, New Zealand. I was a bicycle messenger there for over three years and although it's not the most beautiful metropolis, when you know city streets inside out like a courier does, it makes riding through it a special experience. It's also a very hilly place, and you can get up some mean speed on some of the descents, but obviously going the other direction isn't quite so fast.

Why do you love riding in the city?

The fact that you can get around on such a simple machine much faster and easier than anything else is so satisfying. You get to know a city intimately and it's much easier to observe everything and everyone around you. Plus the buzz of racing through heavy traffic is second to none. But remember: Ride To Survive!

Check out www.cycle-wire.com

NAME: Henry Rowan
LOCATION: Vancouver, BC
OCCUPATION: Daycare attendee

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

I live in Vancouver, East Side. It's a great place to ride despite its gathering yuppie, money crowd. There's still plenty of green space, ocean, mountains and a ton of bike routes that can take you on a ride into some hidden jewels of this city. Weekdays are often just a commute to daycare for me, but papa's ride to work provides him with a spectacular view of the city with the Lions, Cypress, Grouse & Seymour all in attendance. Weekends we venture further and also like to explore the gulf islands, sunshine coast and go on bike-camping trips.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Freedom! And because I get to spend time with my papa and we can ride to all the different parks, beaches, rivers and forests. Instead of driving in a car zooming by everything and getting frustrated, we can cruise through downtown, the suburbs and have lots of time for playing. We can take our time and get our face and eyes into all the nooks and crannies. My particular favourite is the ride out by the South Terminal along the Fraser River and watching the float planes come and go. Plus, I get to take lots of naps as my trailer is quite spacious.

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

Papa says he's enjoyed cycling in a few cities, but nothing beats the rush of riding in Montreal winters. Temperatures of -30, snow, ice on top of your regular hazards - including Quebec drivers! - makes for an exhilarating ride. Plus it makes the spring even sweeter when you can shed your boots, gloves, hat and many layers to feel the warm breeze and sunshine on your skin. Papa says that's why Montreal summer cycling is such a joyous affair!



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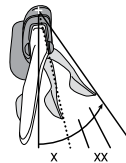
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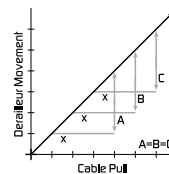
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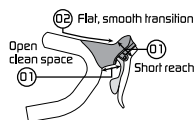
X: Cable pull is equal
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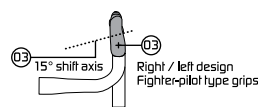
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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: Stevil Kinevil
LOCATION: Drunkingham
OCCUPATION: Retired messenger, wrench, art fag, Swobo buffoon.

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

Santa Cruz California, formerly of Oakland, formerly before that, Colorado. Where I currently reside has the highest bicycle/automobile accidents per capita in the state. When an individual rides here, you're enveloped in a cloak of invisibility. Its very warm, and sometimes you find money on the street.

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

Copenhagen. The people are stunningly nice, and the bicycle culture is unparalleled. Girls on bikes, boys on bikes, old ladies on bikes, topless secretaries in the park, bike lanes, bliss.

Why do you love riding in the city?

The behemoth and completely unnecessary diesel pickups blowing their toxic spew in my face, being the target of empty 40oz. bottles, flat tires, drunk drivers, near misses, seeing every single aspect of my environment with naked eyes and a 360 degree view, showing up to the bank and sweating all over the counter, The Bad Seeds constantly reverberating in my head, being called 'faggot' by passing motorists, getting away and around all much faster than those who 'share' the streets with me, and simply experiencing that feeling you get when you have dreams of flying. Hell and Heaven all wrapped up in one package.

Check out www.howtoavoidthebummerlife.com

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NAME: Rachael Spiewak
LOCATION: Atlanta, GA
OCCUPATION: Executive Drivetrain, Sopo Bicycle Cooperative

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

I live in Atlanta, and riding in my city is like a good game of frogger. The most obvious routes are the most harrowing, so we've created our own bike routes through the neighborhoods, which is nice because you're guaranteed to pass another friendly cyclist along the way. The summer is too hot, but at least it never gets too cold to ride. There's usually a swimming pool or a bar at the end of your ride, anyway. People hear that it's not safe to bike here, or that Atlanta is a car city. Forget the haters...we ride hard!

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

Aside from Atlanta? Chicago and Pittsburgh are fun. Sprinting across the flats in Chicago makes us giddy. Pittsburgh is pretty... the bridges and murals make for good eye candy.

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

Come see us in Atlanta. We're more than an airport and the World of Killer Coke. We've got hot dance parties, a great music scene, the best vegetarian soul food, mint juleps, a different kind of South, and a spectacular bike co-op.

Check out www.sopobikes.org



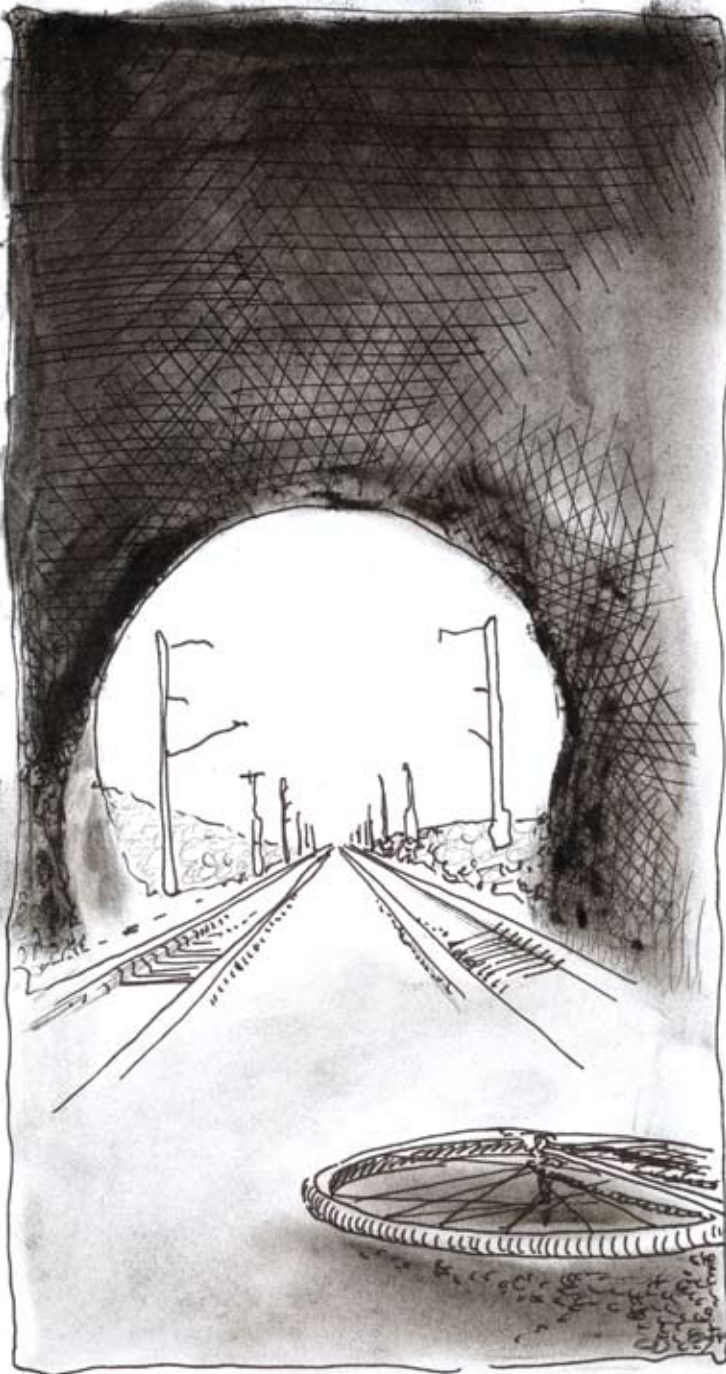


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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: de Vie
LOCATION: Tucson, AZ
OCCUPATION: Musician, poet, & mystic cashier

This is a poem about falling in front of Epic Cafe in Tucson, Arizona. There are trolley tracks on Fourth Avenue that seem to exist almost solely for the purpose of brutally toppling urban cyclists. I was initiated that day, and gave thanks at how okay I really was.

smacked

you departed by saying
you would see me anytime.
you held my hand and closed your eyes.

i went for a bike ride
calm & elated.
passed a coffee shop
rang the bell at a friend

found myself
smacked against pavement
watching blood issue from my head.

returned home with broken skin & bike
knew i was all right
remembering the source of my wound
i am filled with gratitude

Check out myspace.com/yourdeVie

Illustration by Casey Droege, www.spokepunchers.com

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I Love Riding in the City



NAME: David Gardiner
LOCATION: Edinburgh, Scotland
OCCUPATION: Graphic Designer, Bike Sales and Hires, Bike Trainer

Where I live...

I live with my wife and daughter in the 'old town' of Edinburgh. The castle is 100 yards up the road and the cobbled Royal Mile at our front door. I don't own a car, but we do have a tandem (and a few other bikes). In my view cycling will continue to be more attractive for people in a hurry. The satisfaction of overtaking a line of 30 cars stuck in a jam can never be underestimated.

Favourite?

Gothenburg/Göteborg, Sweden. We arrived by ferry in the centre of town after overnight crossing the North Sea. It was rush hour and it was great being part of the wave of bikes crossing the River on their commute home. My daughter was seven at the time and thought cycling off the ferry was amazing.

Or say whatever you want...

A few years ago I started Laid Back Bikes, providing guided tours for people that want a different kind of bike experience. It's a 'faith in the future' kind of thing. If we are to get all sorts of people riding, it should be possible to use any bike in the city safely. Recumbent bikes are fine, and they have mirrors, so they're actually very safe.

Check out www.laid-back-bikes.co.uk

NAME: Josh Cole
LOCATION: Long Beach, CA
OCCUPATION: Triumph motorcycle mechanic for South Bay Triumph in Lomita, CA

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

Riding in Long Beach is just like any other congested city—lots of cars, lots of smog. But all in all it's a very fun city to ride in. The bicycle culture has exploded over the years. There a lot of really cool people, and a lot of cool places to go for art and music. Pretty much all my friends are connected to a bicycle in one way or another.

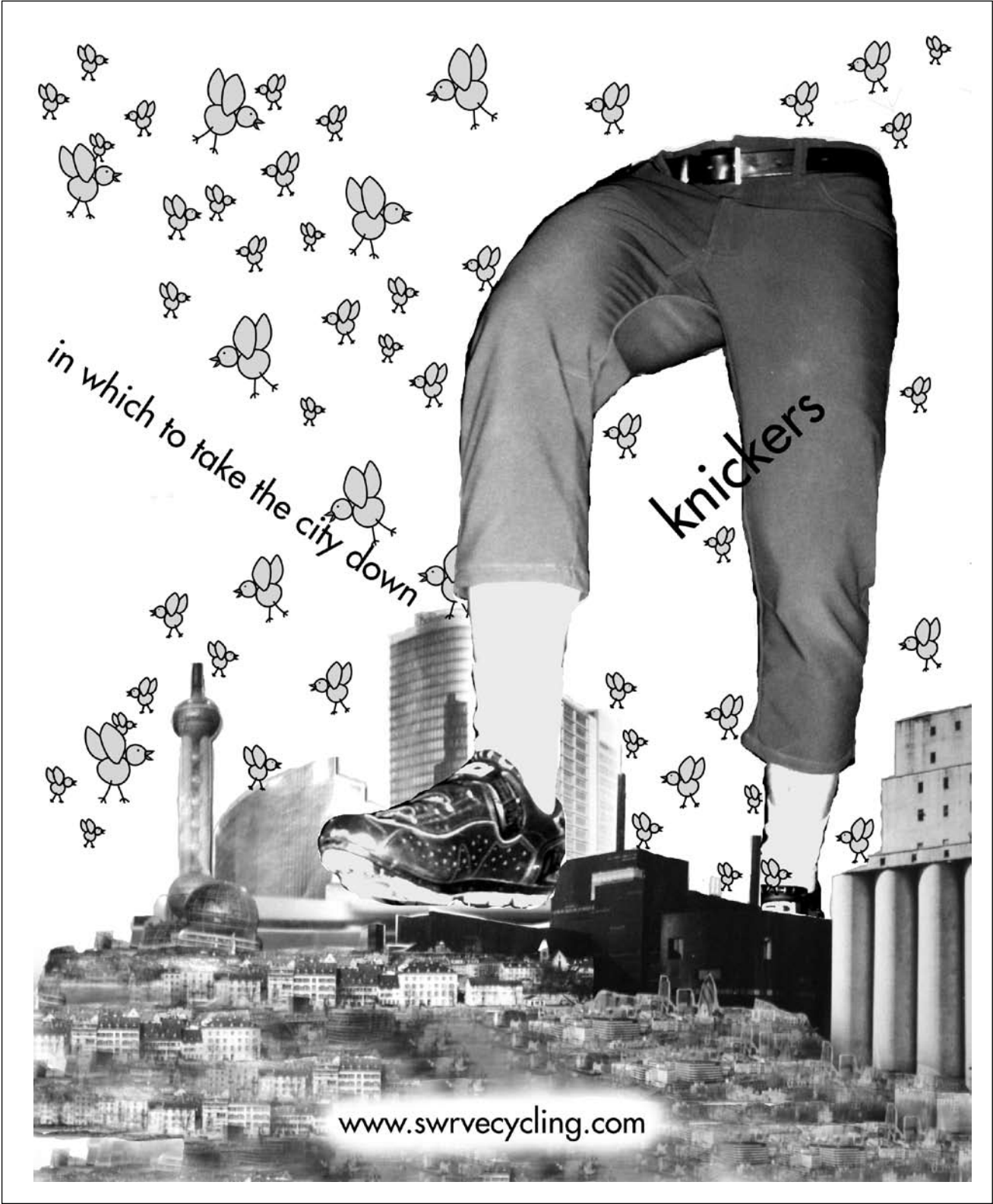
What's been your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I like riding on Catalina Island. You can go from one side to the other within hours, and you can go swimming on all sides!

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding in the city because you can feel the city breathing and hear its pulse. It's a living sorta thing that's hard to explain but each city has a different heartbeat. People riding and living in all cities are amazing!





Tell them you saw it in Urban Velo!

I Love Riding in the City



Photo by Jeff Guerrero

NAME: Jebby

LOCATION: Philadelphia, PA

OCCUPATION: Bike shop girl, barista, perpetually on the list.

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


I recently moved to Philadelphia from Pittsburgh, and riding here feels very different. The flat cityscape and gridded streets make for fast and easy navigation, and the impression that one is not riding as fast or far as they might be. On days when you feel more inclined to relax, the Kelly Drive loop is amazing. This scenic road is closed to motorized traffic on the weekend, and loops out of the city and through Manayunk, where you can stop on the mainline for coffee or microbrew. All in all, I love riding in Philly.

What's your favorite (or the most exotic) city you've ever ridden in, and what's special (or memorable) about it?

I taught English in Xian He, Shandong Province of China and as part of my teaching contract I received a bicycle to use as transportation to and from school. It was a blue coaster cruiser with a front basket, rear rack, and comfy

seat—it was so much fun. Every morning I would ride down beautiful, wide, tree lined streets with multiple lanes of cycle traffic, a few pedicabs and the occasional car. For once, as a cyclist, I was part of the majority. Aside from the cycling aspect, the scenery so vastly different from my narrow western experience mesmerized me. From the undecipherable street signs to the outdoor markets full of unknown foods and distractions, riding around the town challenged my sense of adventure and equilibrium.

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THE RISE & FALL of a BIKE SHOP THAT NEVER WAS

By Scott Spitz

I probably had no business trying to open a bike shop. The perception I have of business owners are people who have studied business as a major, took years to amass knowledge and resources for their idea, and are generally wealthy enough to open shop at the drop of a hat. I, on the other hand, am a dreamer. An idealist as some people say. So instead of business classes and a trust fund, I simply had lots of free time to ride my bike around the city and observe the world around me, which ultimately led me to the following conclusion.

This city needs a bike shop.

Now, it couldn't just be any old bike shop. No, that wouldn't work. This had to be a creative, well thought out, niche-specific bike shop for commuters and utilitarian riders, not any of that high-gloss, rainbow-bright kinda crap. Zeus knows we have an excess of that in these parts. No, this had to be a shop for the rest of us. Why? Cause I said so, that's why. This shop was going to be commuter specific, with showers and bike storage, a network of communication for commuters, themed group rides, movie nights, winter riding culture, a touch of activism, and a general air of coolness never before seen in this Midwest cultural void. It was gonna be awesome.

So began the mental process. I'd be riding around the city, going about my daily business, and trying to figure out just why I don't have the ability to open my own shop, so I'm generally told. I knew the culture well enough, so the not understanding the needs of cyclists wasn't the issue. I had experience with filling out numerous and lengthy legal forms, so that wouldn't be a deterrent. I was flat broke, but I had some ideas about financial assistance. Each time I mentally overcame my apprehensions about what I was told

I couldn't do, my resolve to open the shop grew and grew. The rest was a whirlwind.

I researched the process, figuring out what forms I needed to fill out and where to mail them. I learned about how to register my business and what this meant in terms of liability. I learned about the different processes to become a private enterprise or non-profit. I learned about applying for loans. I learned about business plans and just how much work it takes to finish one. Simply jumping headfirst into this process was like getting an associates degree in business, and my confidence grew and grew as each task was completed.

I, admittedly, am an egotist, so it didn't take long for me to get the word out to others about what I was trying to do, and with that came more support than I ever expected. I networked with friends, strangers, business owners, lawyers, and the city for chrissakes. And again, my confidence continued to build.

There were obstacles though...namely money.

If you want to play by the rules of capitalism, you gotta have capital, and if you don't have capital, you gotta find it. Plain and simple. But not that simple actually. The first attempt I made at opening this shop was going to be as a private enterprise, which meant I needed to apply for a loan. A \$35,000 dollar loan to be more precise. My naivety bit me in the ass on this one, as I innocently assumed that my strength of character, convincing business plan, unique approach, and fiscal responsibility would translate into a done deal. Not so. Banks want money, and lots of it. They want to know, despite how upstanding of a person you are, that you have lots of assets to back up your loan in case the business falls through. This means a house, which

I didn't have. This means money, which I didn't have. This means a car, which...well, is just plain offensive. I thought the fact that I made an attempt to live simply and reduce my dependence on physical resources would be seen as a financially responsible outlook. It's not. Banks don't want to know that you aren't indebted to mortgages, credit card companies, loan sharks, etc. In actuality, they want to know that you ARE indebted to them, but have the ability to stay ahead of their demands. Welcome to Capitalism 101. It was a longshot, but I applied for the loan and tried to subdue the butterflies in my stomach for the next week.

I finally got the call from the bank. No deal.

I was crushed. I was ready to throw in the towel when a friend of mine who was very supportive of the idea pushed the non-profit route on me. Starting a bike shop as a non-profit puts some restrictions and regulations on your functions as a business, but it also opens up all kinds of avenues for start-up revenue. There are grants, donations, transportation funding, etc. etc. It was like I was staring at a pot of gold, or so I hoped.

I decided to start the non-profit process, with a lot of groundwork already completed by going the private business route, and got to work. Let me tell you something, when it comes to playing by both the rules of capitalism and government regulation, it can feel like waiting in line at the BMV...excruciatingly, painfully, long and boring. What it takes to become a non-profit is not a big deal, but to become a non-profit eligible for grants and donations is like writing a novel, but in triplicate. Still, I knew this shop just HAD to open, and trudged on.

In the meantime, while waiting for 501c3 status from the government, I was busy finding board members, networking with the city, and securing retail space. As that moved along we held our first public unveiling of the idea, a huge benefit show with bands, art, a raffle, a silent auction, presentations on alternative transportation, movies, coffee, and so much more. The turnout was unreal and we raised 3,000 dollars in one night, enough to get some merchandise in the works, pay back board members for their expenses and work, pay off filing fees, and put the rest away for coming business expenses.

The physical realization was just over the horizon, so close I could taste it. Naysayers be damned, this sucker was going to open. First, we just had to clear a couple more hurdles.

We needed approval of 501c3 status. We needed "promised" transportation funding from the city. And once those were secured, we needed to sign the lease on our retail space. I started making future plans for how I was going to conduct my days once the shop opened, gauging how long I

could stay at the shop in a given day, if we would decide to fix the police bikes (leaning towards "no"), what programs we were going to start, dreaming of our impact on the city, etc. etc. etc. I was ready to declare victory.


Then it all came to a screeching fixed gear skid, getting side-swiped by a city bus.

We got a call from the 501c3 application representative, informing us that our revenue plan didn't fit into the parameters of a non-profit (expecting a certain percentage of money to come from sales), so we'd have to completely redo our projections. Then the city officials I was working with became entirely unresponsive to our plan and basically said there was no funding available to us (the second time I've been screwed by them with that excuse). Finally, the space we had "promised" to us, located in the center of downtown, was sold to another owner, effectively forcing us to recreate our entire set of financial projections. It wasn't like someone had let the air out of our tires. It was like they had stolen our wheels, crumpled our top tube, slashed our seat, and shit on our handlebars.

All that effort, all that dreaming, all that support, was like a Vanilla track bike with the paint peeled away to reveal a Huffy without a derailleur. Useless.

I wish I could tell you that we persevered, ultimately met an eco-millionaire dying to fund a creative upstart and opened up the shop, but we didn't. We cut our losses, cursed the city, and distributed our benefit money to three different bike organizations around the city. And that was that. Please stop asking me about it.

On one hand, the bike shop was a failure, but on the other, the lessons I learned from playing capitalism's games, dealing with city authorities and shady landlords, and generally carrying through a lot of tedious bullshit has given me a new level of experience and perspective I never would have gotten just casually riding around the city complaining about our lack of bicycle counter-culture. I took all that with me and rode away, taking the fight elsewhere.

So although things didn't work out as we'd hoped, here's to your own dreams and visions of the new world. Keep keepin' on. 

Postscript – I always said if we didn't open this shop, some clueless bike shop owner who caught onto the potential of a downtown location would open up, do everything wrong, and quickly go out of business. A local shop I started working for did that very thing. They opened up downtown, carried the wrong product, made no effort at creating an urban culture, offered no amenities to commuters, went through all the wrong advertising avenues, and closed shop a year later. I hate to say I told you so, but...

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★ GHANA ★

BY ERIC MATTHIES

www.emp23.com

Accra, Ghana is like most port cities in developing nations, which is to say hot, choking, congested and functioning on an urban plan that will not make sense to most Western minds. Riding a bike there can be a wonderful adventure or a new definition of hell. Perspective is a beautiful thing.

The roads themselves are predominantly in disrepair and filthy and therefore not much different than cities everywhere. However, there are also no demarked lanes, not many traffic signals and almost zero semblance of any road rules that you or I would find familiar. Want to merge? You merge. Want to turn, just do it. In a hurry? Use the oncoming lanes if they're empty. Signaling, right of way, stopping, these are petty inconveniences mainly ignored by the average motorized Ghanaian.



Photos by Tricia Todd




Everything is rush rush except when it's not. Traffic jams crop up like bad pop songs. Two stroke fumes, burning tires, open sewage flowing in deep uncovered trenches along the side of the street and a general haze of exhaust add to the toxic stew otherwise referred to as fresh air.

Adding a bicycle to this mix is, in a word, risky. Risky that is to a foreigner. The locals glide through it all on their old pig iron Phoenix bikes as if protected by an aura of invincibility. I found it incredibly lucky to make it from my friend Sammy's bike shop to the restaurant we were having lunch at without shitting myself or dying. Apparently it takes a particularly steely form of Zen confidence to pedal around this vast labyrinth of a city – a confidence I did not particularly care to acquire.

Once out of the city, the whole cycling experience changes. Vast swaths of tarmac gain you access to warrens of dirt and mud tracks that lead to all manner of other towns, villages and communities. Once on the dirt and salt roads of Songorinya, often the only obstacles were sheep sleeping in the road. The people of Ghana are amazing; using a bicycle to get around ensures that you can pause to greet and converse with all manner of peers, elders, workers and students.

Our friend David Pekham, who founded the Village Bicycle Project, often cycles for weeks all over the region, starting in Accra and pedaling as far as Burkina Faso, pausing in friendly villages along the way. The folks in the communities who receive bicycles from VBP tend to sprout many other converts to the cycling lifestyle. One can see the frustration in the eyes of taxi men as more folks find two-wheeled human power as a means to get themselves and their goods from point to point.

Apparently there are some cycling clubs and even races cropping up in Ghana, particularly around Accra. Watch out ProTour racers; these kids won't need 'roids or EPO to kick some ass if they ever make it to the European peloton. As a visitor, cycling opens up such a beautiful world in a place like Africa that would otherwise be blocked by a bus window or a car seat. Using a bicycle allows one to truly experience a culture and a country in ways that more familiar, traditional methods of transport simply cannot. 

For more on cycling in Ghana, check out the Village Bicycle Project at www.pcei.org/vbp



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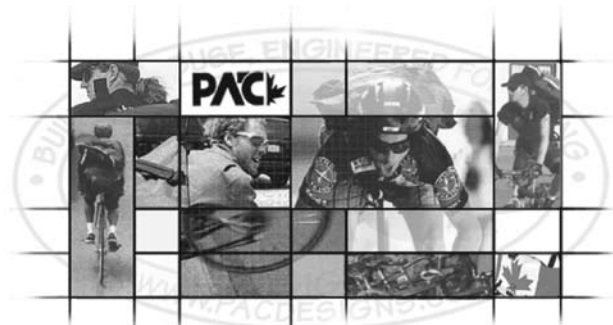
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A curious integration of bicycle and vegetation as seen on the streets of Turin, Italy.

Photo by Ubik

cycling.ubiks.it

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This summer Dublin hosted the 2007 Cycle Messenger World Championships. And what messenger event would be complete without a track skid competition?

Photo by Jade O'Connor

www.myspace.com/littlemisszen

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Spoke cards and shoes at the Bicycle Film Festival in Paris, France.

Photo by Joaquin Sanchez

www.geocities.com/joschz

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London's cycling community is as diverse as can be, but a guy riding a cargo bike in a tailored suit still turns heads.

Photo by Sean Whelan

Delivered by **WALD**sports.com



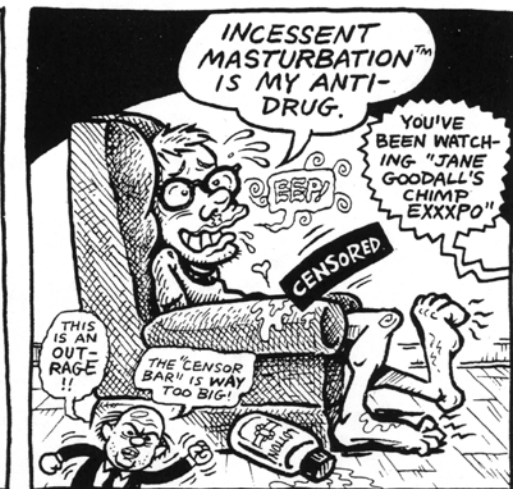
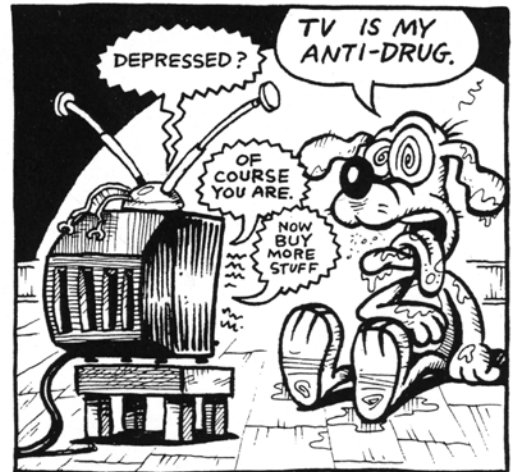
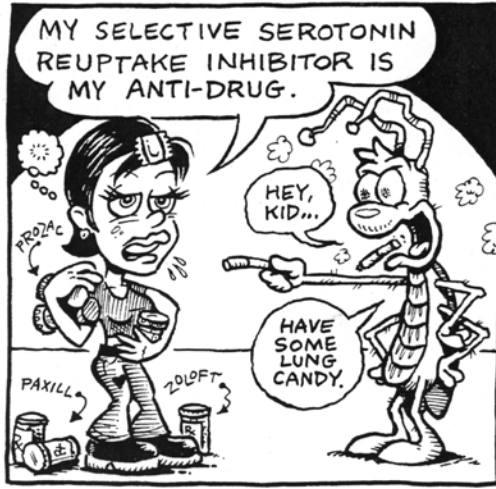
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In China, cycling is not so much a hobby or an alternative form of transportation. For many, it's just a way of life.

Photo by Jane Price

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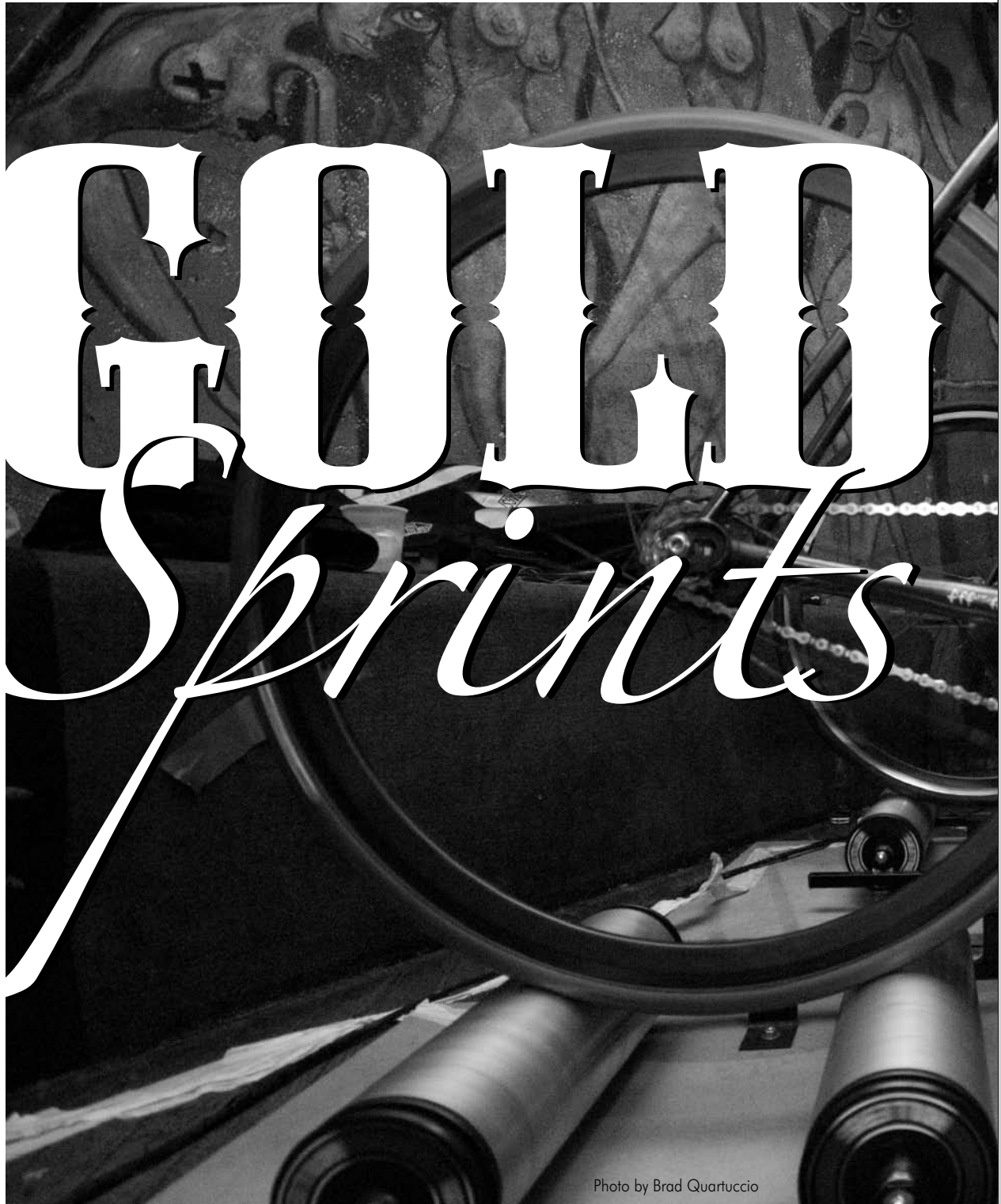
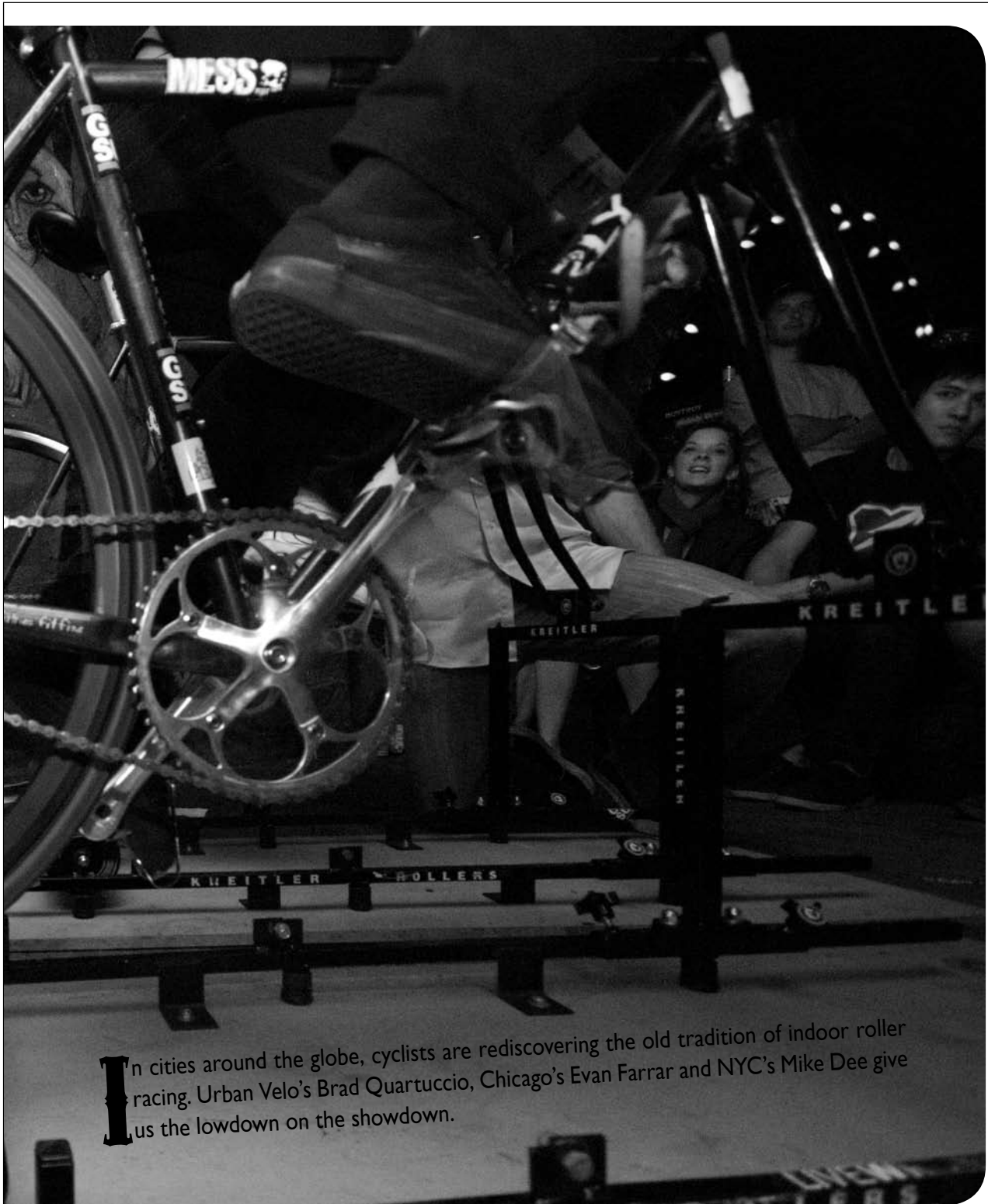


Photo by Brad Quartuccio

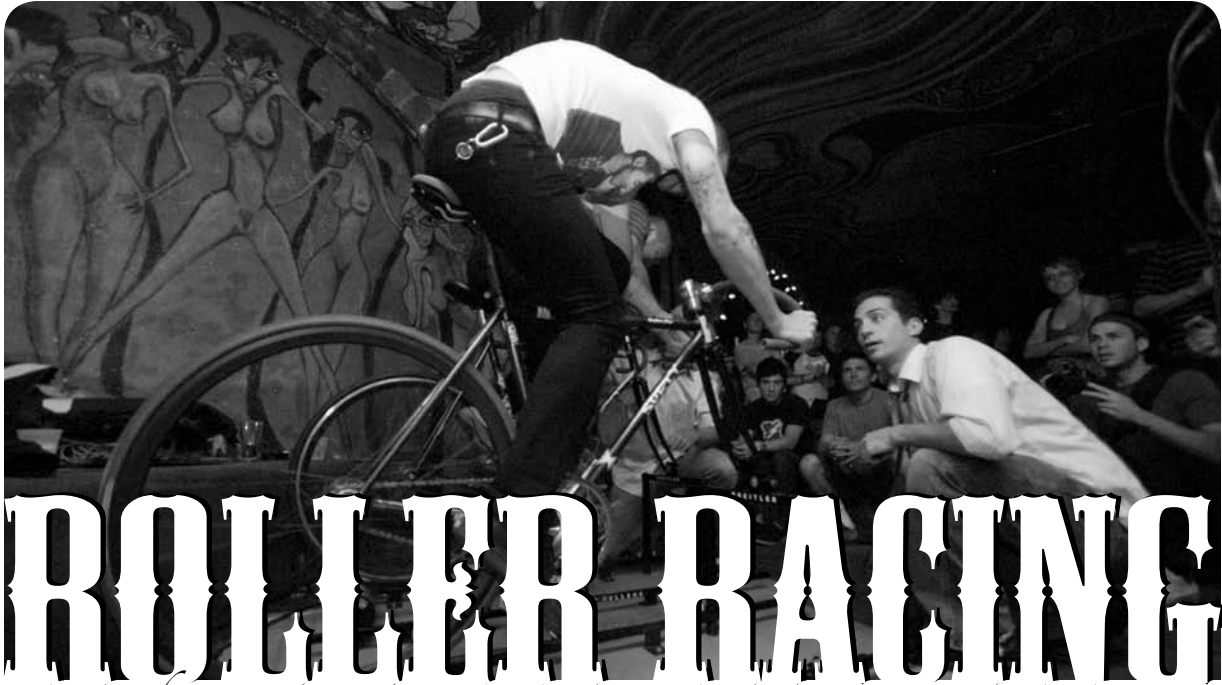
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In cities around the globe, cyclists are rediscovering the old tradition of indoor roller racing. Urban Velo's Brad Quartuccio, Chicago's Evan Farrar and NYC's Mike Dee give us the lowdown on the showdown.

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By Brad Quartuccio

Like many things “bicycle,” others have been there before. Roller racing is an old school sideshow that emerges here and there, each with a different flair suited to the era. We’re talking about a little know part of cyclesport that dates back to at least the 1920’s, and likely further. While current setups sport laptops and projectors, one must admit the belt-driven, clock-like mechanical beasts of old have a certain elegance to them.

Yet another thing current urban cycling culture owes to the bike messenger scene of the 90’s is the resurgence of roller racing. Back at the ’99 Cycle Messenger World Championships in Zurich, a couple of trainers and cyclecomputers set the ball rolling. The “Goldsprints” term was coined and it shortly thereafter crossed the pond to, you guessed it, New York City.

The premise is simple; head to head indoor stationary bicycle racing. An all out sprint, a test of spin not power. Rollers offer very little rolling resistance, and no air resistance allowing one to spin out of huge gears on the way to the finish. The USCF has rules and gearing limits (99.1 gear inches) for “official” racing, but that’s pretty well for the birds even if it does lend some legitimacy to it all. Typically, track bikes with identical gearing, tires and rollers are used, with fork stands added to the rollers for safety. The bar isn’t the place to learn how to ride rollers unsupported, let alone

race on them.

With the help of some computer nerds and a projector, a timing system is within reach albeit the hardest part of the setup to get together. Events themselves are up to the organizer – bracketed sprints are typical, and no matter the length brutal.

Short sprints of 250m are anything but when you’re the one doing the pedaling, but are otherwise pretty ideal for fostering crowd participation. Not even the legendary climbs of the Grand Tours allow the spectators such close access to the racers. Literally in your face, a roar of encouragement to turn those pedals even faster. Right up on top of you. The racing itself is an anaerobic effort that only hits you once you’re done. A heart-throbbing, teeth-gritting experience of spinning past the pain, and faster than the other guy.

For 15 seconds or so, it can transport any rider to the realm of heightened glory and defeat that only comes with an all-out effort in front of a rowdy, engaged audience. Then its over, on to the next pair, one moves up in the brackets another falls off and so on until a nightly winner is crowned.

Goldsprints are not a substitute for anything, only an addition to the cycling experience. The social interaction is unparalleled in other competition. From screaming spectator to racer and back again in a blink of an eye.

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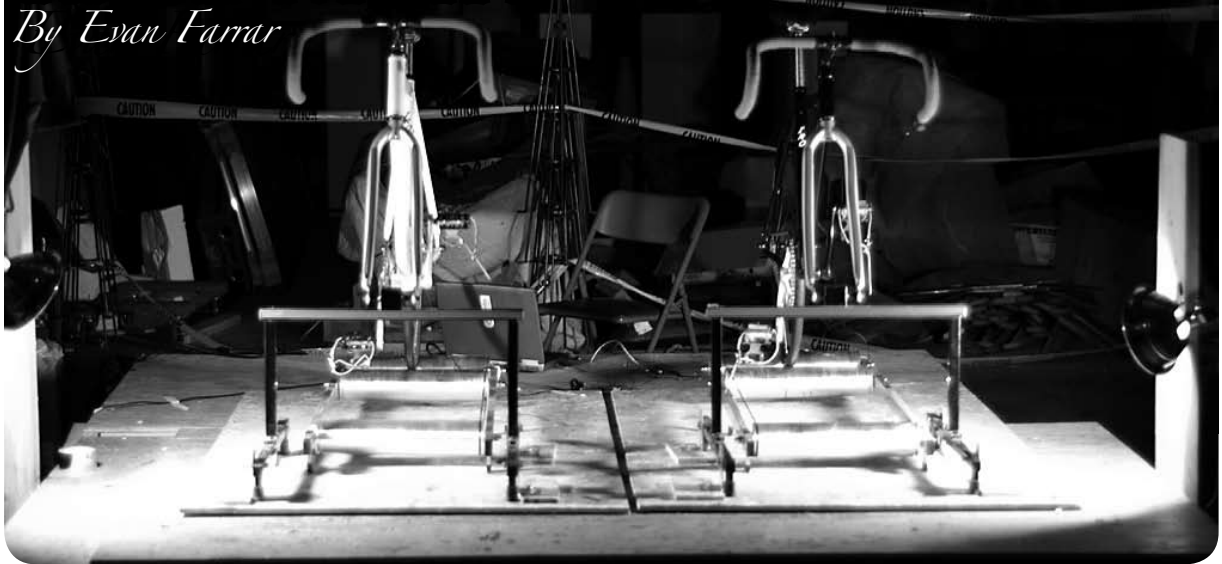


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RACE NIGHT

By Evan Farrar



Race night is quite a feeling for me. All of my work and perspiration come together to make a winner, and a night of fun. It's a 200 meter race in a small room. It's a party with a structure. It's the meeting of my favorite things: technology, bicycles and friends. IRO Sprints is "just another Goldsprints(tm) setup", but the namesake is in honor of the company that donated our bicycles: a nice pair of complete IRO bikes. When Chicago's bike nerds saw Goldsprints at Velo City's '06 afterparty they all said "We have to build this." Some people worked on pooling the parts, some people worked on making it work, and it was ready to race by late spring 2007.

Informal bicycle races never start "on time." Friends prefer the expression "bike time." It is a time estimation technique designed to take into account factors such as yesterday's mileage, weather conditions, pissed off motorists, street sweeping schedules and mood. Tonight's race is due to start at 8pm. By 9:30 we were just about ready to go. Bike time notwithstanding, people were getting antsy. The bar was nearing capacity and we had the numbers for a good time—40 to race, 60 to watch, and 20 to fencedit. The racers are all working on a couple of beers and getting rosy cheeks; I am pale-faced and frantically doing a few last minute tweaks. The night before a race is inevitably filled with hacking late into the night with final adjustments on race-day.

48 URBANVELO.ORG

Eventually the first two racers step up and the countdown begins. The crowd can't help but scream along. When the screen says "Go", both racers will spin those crank arms as fast as their hearts, lungs, legs, and stomachs will allow.

"[IRO Sprints is] a vomit-inducing machine," Nat Grote says post-race. The bikes are resting on rollers, which give almost no resistance to the racer, making it a battle of spin. The 200m distance may sound short, but by the fourth round any racer will wish it was shorter. We are on a stage but the crowd spills onto it. The racers don't seem to care or notice, they just put their head down and pound out the distance. The winner moves on to the next round, the loser is left to watch and wonder when the next race night may be.

Once it begins, the racing goes on back to back for several hours, round after round. The most intense moments are when two racers are absolutely matched pedal-for-pedal. The leader displayed will seesaw back and forth, each swing making the crowd howl louder for their favorite.

Check out www.opensprints.org for guidance in making your own sensors and downloadable open source software to help get races in your town.

Photo by Chris Ege, www.flickr.com/photos/ffonst



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GOLDSPRINTSNYC AIN'T ALL BITCHES, MONEY AND ALCOHOL

By Mike Dee, the Fourth

Check out www.goldsprintsny.com

When spectators come to GoldsprintsNYC all they see is a well oiled party machine: the tunes are bumping, the racers are fast and we get topless hula-hoop dancers when we can. It's not all that easy. This is New York City and the scene at an alleycat after-party is like feeding time at the monkey cages in the Bronx Zoo - look out for flying shit. Shit like beers, frames and fists. Luckily, our crew rolls deep.

People all over the world want us to bring the rollers to their town. We have thrown legendary parties at Asylum in Washington DC, the Double Down Saloon in Vegas, the back of a pickup in Baltimore, and at the Independent Fabrications factory. Another time in Boston, we did a race after party at the VFW in Southie. With a big smile on his face, the post commander said, "I kill people for a living." He was smiling, but he wasn't joking.

For urban bike peoples like us, road trips suck. Not only is it expensive but we don't drive, so we have to get by with a little help from our friends. This past summer,

the DC crew asked us to do GoldsprintsNYC as part of a multi-stage event, Destination Dublin, the winner of which got a trip to the Cycle Messenger World Championships in Ireland. Now, I'd rather take a \$20 Chinese bus trip than have to sit in a car with Jeff the Wrench for eight hours. Bike mechanics are weird - it has something to do with the grease. On the drive down Jeff was so tired that he let me drive, which was exciting since the last time I drove was years ago on the island of Bali. After twenty minutes of my Indonesian-style driving, Jeff demanded we pull over before I got us killed. Being a city boy, I never had had the experience of driving around wasted in a pick-up truck and passing out in the back. Now I have.

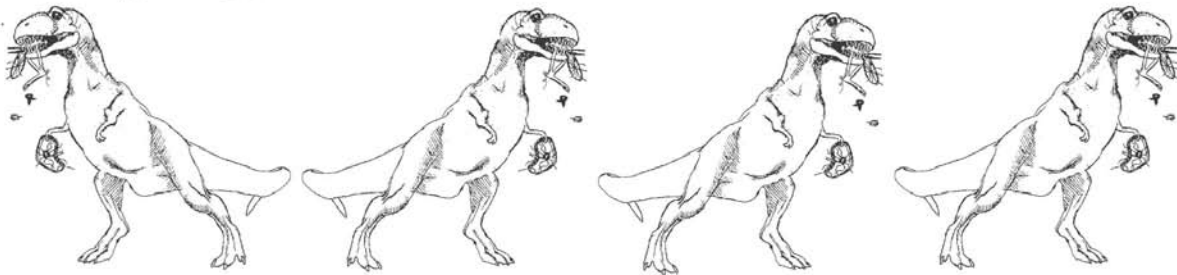
GoldsprintsNYC is more than racing bikes on rollers. Lots of people can do that. GoldsprintsNYC is more of an attitude. Like "I can wear my underwear outside my tights and race in a Mexican wrestling mask" or "who cares if half that PBR goes over my head, I haven't had my beer shower today anyway?"



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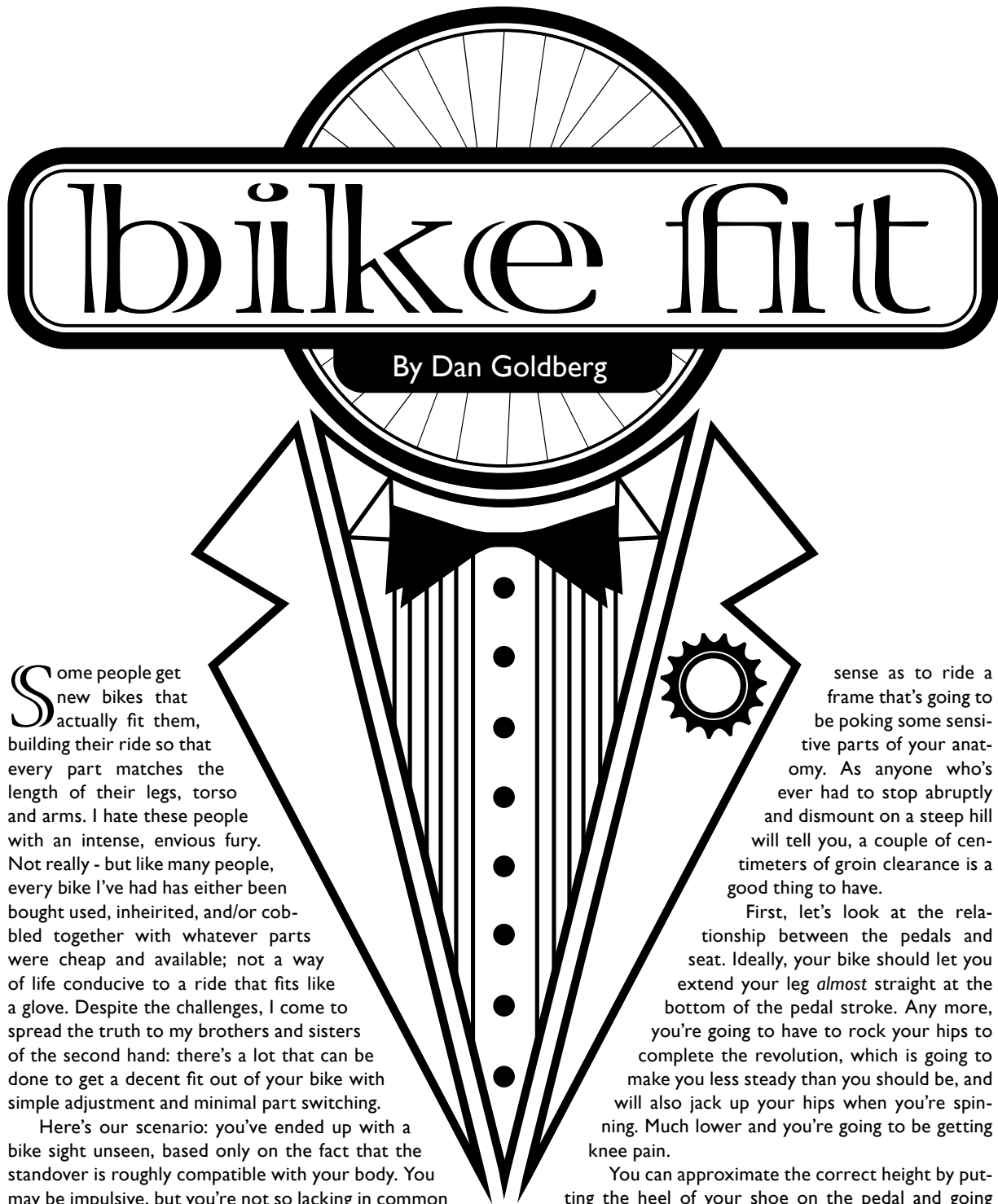
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Some people get new bikes that actually fit them, building their ride so that every part matches the length of their legs, torso and arms. I hate these people with an intense, envious fury. Not really - but like many people, every bike I've had has either been bought used, inherited, and/or cobbled together with whatever parts were cheap and available; not a way of life conducive to a ride that fits like a glove. Despite the challenges, I come to spread the truth to my brothers and sisters of the second hand: there's a lot that can be done to get a decent fit out of your bike with simple adjustment and minimal part switching.

Here's our scenario: you've ended up with a bike sight unseen, based only on the fact that the standover is roughly compatible with your body. You may be impulsive, but you're not so lacking in common

sense as to ride a frame that's going to be poking some sensitive parts of your anatomy. As anyone who's ever had to stop abruptly and dismount on a steep hill will tell you, a couple of centimeters of groin clearance is a good thing to have.

First, let's look at the relationship between the pedals and seat. Ideally, your bike should let you extend your leg *almost* straight at the bottom of the pedal stroke. Any more, you're going to have to rock your hips to complete the revolution, which is going to make you less steady than you should be, and will also jack up your hips when you're spinning. Much lower and you're going to be getting knee pain.

You can approximate the correct height by putting the heel of your shoe on the pedal and going



Ideally, when the cranks are level, your forward knee is directly over the pedal spindle.

through a rotation - you should just be able to maintain contact all the way around. If your knee is not straight at the bottom of the stroke, raise the seat a little bit and try again. As always, there's a bit of personal preference in there, but if after a few miles your knees are bugging you, it's time for an adjustment. It's worth noting that you will not be able to put your feet flat on the ground with the saddle at the proper height.

From the vertical adjustment, let's move on to the horizontal placement of the saddle about the seatpost. Knee position is crucial. Ideally, when the cranks are at 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock, you want your forward knee to be over the pedal, with your calf pointing straight down. The best way to check this is to set the saddle to the center of the seatpost clamp and to find a convenient wall. Hold the brake and sit on the saddle in your usual manner while propping yourself up against the wall. Put the cranks into a horizontal position, put your feet on the pedals with the ball of your foot over the pedal axle, and see where your knee ends up. It might be handy to have another set of eyes to the side; it's difficult to judge position from above.

Now that we know the grim reality, it's time to reach the glorious ideal. To determine the correct position, move

your knee forward or back to where it's supposed to be and see where your butt ends up, then move your saddle to reflect that position. It may take a couple of tries to get this right.

As a sidenote while we're in the area, let us briefly touch on saddle angle. The saddle should be more or less level, and is rested upon by the sit bones, which are those pointy things in your backside. The soft tissue around those bones should not be bearing your weight, or else you're going to be uncomfortably numb. If your saddle is too narrow, your weight is going to be absorbed by the soft stuff and not the sit bones, which is not good. Beyond that, adjusting the angle of the saddle makes a big difference - try moving it a little (up for dudes, down for lady folk) from the standard flat position and see how that does. If you're still having problems, there are a number of anatomical saddles on the market of varying costs, but if you're using an old-fashioned convex saddle, try out a more modern flat one before hunting down a more expensive anatomic one. You should be able to perch on the saddle without having to push yourself up the saddle with your arms. If your wrists and hands are bugging you, saddle angle could be the cause.

Speaking of hands, onto the handlebars. Basically, you

want to be able to put your hands on the appropriate places on the bars while keeping your elbows at a comfortable angle, somewhere between straight and 90 degrees. You shouldn't feel particularly stretched out, but you should be able to take deep breaths. The bars should be low enough so you can climb hills easily, but not so low that your back gets stiff. Other than that, it's a matter of personal comfort. You're not going to mess your arms up with a weirdo positioning like you might with your knees, but you'll probably end up stiff, sore and unhappy.

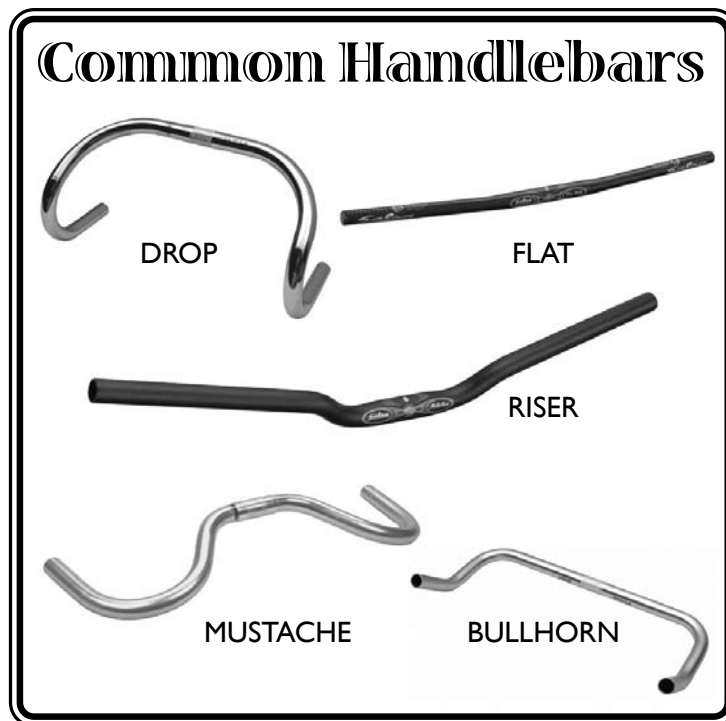
So, let's look at the distance between the saddle and bars. The old saw is that when you butt your elbow against the horn of the saddle, your fingertips should be close to the flat of your bars (or 2-3cm in front of your fingers, depending on who you hear it from... and this truism applies most truly to drop bars). Raising and lowering the bars changes the distance - if the saddle and the bars are at the same height, that will be the shortest distance between them. If the bars are lower than the saddle, you're leaning forward more than if they were at the same height, so it's effectively farther. Raise the bars up

past the saddle height, and it's a shorter distance, since your torso is (hopefully) on the top side of the bars. If you've got a threaded fork and quill stem, you can use this principle to do some cheap experimentation: If you raise your stem from flat and the distance seems better, you probably need a shorter stem. Vice versa, you need something longer. Those with threadless forks can join the party by flipping the stem (assuming your stem has some sort of rise) and/or moving the spacers around on the fork to raise or lower the stem, and thus the bars. If you find the distance to be better but the bar height to be a dealbreaker, try getting a stem

that's 1cm more or less than what you have. Unless you've started out with a stem that's really long or short, you're probably not going to need more than that. Before buying a new stem, check your local bike-related messageboard or craigslist affiliate - very likely there's someone who's in in the reverse situation and would be happy to swap.

If you're not wanting to replace your stem, and you don't have combination brake/shifter units to contend with, you can consider non-drop bar options. Drops put your hands a couple inches below the stem, increasing the effective distance from the bar to your shoulder. With bars that go out or forward, this isn't an issue. Some popular styles include:

flat bars (which some people swear by but allow a limited number of hand positions, so perhaps not best for very long rides), risers (same as flats, but with a rise at the ends for those that like to be a little more upright), mustache bars (which look sort of like a lower case 'm'; same general idea as flats, but more hand positions and the ability to move a little more forward), and bullhorns (u-shaped with a number of variations in form; unique in giving the rider the ability to stretch further forward without having



to stretch down (which some find optimal for climbing).

Assuming everything went right, you should now have a bike that gets pretty close to the kind of fit that those fat-cats without the student loans paid out the nose for. Feels pretty good, eh? Hit the road for a victory lap, you. A last word of advice before you go: if you're used to a 'bad' fit, you may find that a good fit feels a little weird or uncomfortable. Give your muscles a little bit of time to accustom themselves to a good form, stretch out before riding, and give it a couple of days before fiddling with anything or rushing out to the bike shop. Happy pedalling!



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Ignorance IS Bliss!

Words & Photos by Julian Birch

I was wrong. Wrong to think I wouldn't be in the minority. Wrong to assume everyone powering his or her own two wheels would (like me) be full to bursting with "the joy of bike." Wrong to think every passing cyclist would reply to a sincerely and innocently offered "Hello." Wrong, wrong, wrong. How could I have been so wrong?

Finally swapping London Transport's vagaries for the self-contained simplicity of journeying from home to work by bike could have been partly to blame. The prospect of getting to work could never have filled me with such ebullient buoyancy, that's for certain. I'm sure all those weathered, care worn and hard-bitten bike commuters saw me as just another over-enthusiastic, over-friendly new boy. Another two-wheeled

evangelist who hadn't yet learnt to keep his mouth shut. Some appeared suspicious of my motives, a telltale look that screamed "What's this weirdo after?" flashed across their wary eyes. That's when they did look at me and not completely blank me, staring straight ahead in full-on zombie mode, which was quite often. Ladies may have thought I was a bike creep trying to hit on them. Maybe some guys thought the same. So sorry to disappoint all those folks! Others doubtless considered me sad, lonely and desperate to force some interaction. I'm pretty self-sufficient though, approval or recognition isn't required to do what I do or to enjoy it. Besides I wasn't the one eschewing any hint of camaraderie so who was more pitiful? A few may have had an over-productive "competitive gland" seeing every other rider as a rival for speed and tarmac, fraternisation another sign of weakness not to be tolerated on their "commute of truth."

Bike messengers happily give each other the nod and acknowledge another fellow member of that semi-exclusive, semi-professional club. Why do so many others appear so unsociable or unwilling? Are they content

to stay in that most exclusive of clubs, boasting lifetime solo-membership to the "Club of Me"? Would they rather be another anonymous commuter, albeit one on a bike, instead of actually being perceived as a pesky "cyclist"? Do they feel embarrassed getting caught on such cheap, simple, economic and efficient transportation? If that's the case then I pity the poor, ignorant fools. Short of strapping on a pair of wings surely the humble bicycle is the most glorious, beautiful and liberating tool of conveyance ever born of man's ingenuity. In fact the bicycle might just as well be a pair of wings with a wheel at each end. Have I said too much, gone a little too far? No I don't think so. In fact I haven't the words to go nearly far enough in praise of my all-time favourite vehicle of choice.

Is every metropolis the same I wonder? Don't speak till you're spoken to and only if you really, really have to. Never initiate conversations with strangers, don't say "hello" or make eye contact – if I can't see them then they can't see me - just look at the floor and never mind the weirdo. That may be the ticket on London pavements, trains, buses and underground trains but I'd imagined city bike etiquette to be more polite,

even welcoming. There was a faint possibility my route took me through the capital's most miserable streets. I should've dug out my old London Cycle Guides and checked the key for a clue – "Grey: streets recommended for miserable git cyclists and ignoramus wheelers."

Eventually I became tired of contemplating the mystery and the mantra withered on my lips. I no longer bid each passing rider "Hello" or even ring my bell anymore. In the end those habitual and apparently disagreeable signs of civility were beaten out of me. You can only be ignored or looked at like some kind of pervert simply for attempting to exchange one-word pleasantries so many times. I'm sure they all had their reasons and who knows some might've even been valid but for the most part I doubt it. Whatever, it's not nice to be blatantly and regularly disregarded so on the whole I just stopped trying. Mutual respect isn't a one-way street.

In spite of experience and better judgement I still esti-

mate a rider's potential responsiveness on occasion. I can't honestly say there's any criteria, more of a feeling really. If it feels positive then I might venture a risky "Hello?" otherwise a more cautious and barely perceptible wave of the hand. Likewise pulling up at the lights, if there's already a rider there or I'm there and they pull up, should we happen to accidentally make eye contact I'll offer a nod, maybe even hazard a verbal exchange. Whether the greeted hear it, see it or actively choose not to register it, that's their choice, I'm not too bothered anymore, the ball's in their court, they can hit a return or let my throwaway greeting drop to the gutter.

Social interaction may appear irksome for some and I'll admit my social skills could probably use a little fine-tuning but I listened when my Mother told me, "Manners cost nothing."

However, it isn't all dumb, blank faces staring back at me, to every Ying there is a Yang and there are plenty of riders happy to chew the fat (even with me). Yes there are many bright souls among us and many of them even ride bikes, amongst other things. I count myself lucky to have met a few.

Then there's the ever expanding web and forum communities happy to offer advice, encouragement and empathy, with the odd side-salad of contradiction and vitriol too but all in some way setting the world to rights whilst striving for a more bike-friendly planet. There I go again overstating the case for the defence but I happen to believe that scores of those same e-cyclists, in the real world, would spare a fellow rider the time of day. I'm glad to report there are a few regulars on my roads that brave the prospect of contact. When I see them it's a welcome diversion and though we may slow down for a chat they always speed my journey. Even more prized is the nod, smile or hearty "Hello!" offered by the complete stranger. Like warm sun on my face those moments are a bona fide highlight of my weekday travels. Yes it feels pretty damn good to behold another "weirdo," another keeper of the faith pedalling into distant territory.

So, it's not just me then?





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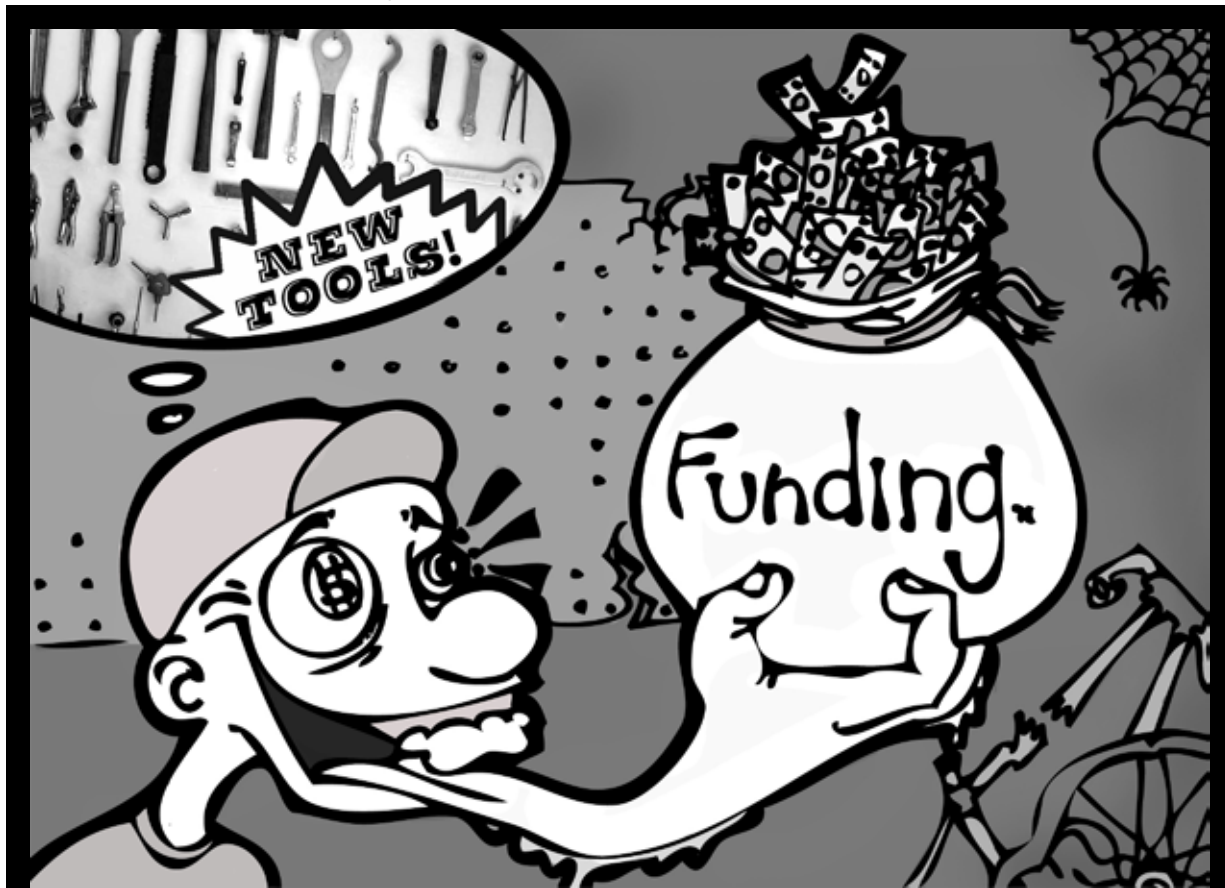
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Tell them you saw it in Urban Velo!

Starting A Local Advocacy Organization

Part 3

By David Hoffman



In this multi-part series on bicycle advocacy, Urban Velo gives you the tools to make a change in your community. This is the third installment, focusing on how to fund your organization and keep it sustainable.

Show Me The Money!

Bicycling, the Activity, needs only calories and will-power to remain an efficient and sustainable form of transportation. Bicycle Advocacy, the Movement, needs money to remain efficient and sustainable. In this installment, we show you where to find your funding “calories.”

Diversify

The first rule for funding your organization is to make sure that your sources are both diverse and not dependent on one another. There are three broad categories of funding: 1) membership and events, 2) foundation support, and 3) government and private contracts. The goal is to keep your funding sources balanced with approximately one-third of funding coming from each of the three broad categories. Don't get hung up if your organization relies heavily on membership and events (or either of the other categories) at first; as your organization matures things will begin to reach equilibrium.

Membership and Events

This category is by far the easiest way to obtain funding and has the benefit of falling under the category of “unrestricted funding,” meaning that you can do whatever you please with the funding to move your organization forward. This differs from “restricted funding” from contracts and foundations. Within the non-profit world, the generally accepted minimum “regular” membership is \$25 per year, though many organizations have moved to \$35 per year. For student and low/limited income people the yearly membership dues are in the \$15-20 range. One way to “jumpstart” your funding is to offer a “founding member” program where you create a special category of “lifetime” or “special attention” members – typically the first 20-100 that join at a substantial level (\$500-\$1000). Find examples of membership levels and benefits here:

San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (San Francisco, CA)
www.sfbike.org/?membership

Transportation Alternatives (New York, NY)
www.transalt.org/about/online.html

Iowa Bicycle Coalition (Iowa)
www.iowabicyclecoalition.org/join.htm

Urban Bike Project (Wilmington, DE)
www.urbanbikeproject.org (a great example of a volunteer-run, organization still trying to raise money to apply for their 501(c)(3) application...just like your new org!)

Hosting annual events can also be another lucrative source of income. Consider hosting a local or regional ride. This ride may highlight existing or proposed improvements. Some local and state advocacy organizations have been successful in partnering with existing events, sometimes getting the event sponsor to donate \$1 for every registration to the local bike advocacy group. Start small, dream big. Once established, some events can draw thousands of cyclists every year and raise tens of thousands of dollars. The Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (www.biketraffic.org) benefits from Bike the Drive (<http://www.bikethedrive.org>), an event drawing an estimated 20,000 riders in 2006!

Foundations

Obtaining funding from foundations generally takes more time and effort than most people first realize. This isn't meant to discourage you from applying for foundation funding; just a healthy heads-up. The vast majority of foundations like to know the organization that they're funding, and this means that you will likely have to develop a working relationship with them before you actually receive money.

Here is a short list of things to consider when applying to foundations:

Most foundations (if they already don't know you) will want to first receive a “letter of inquiry” before they will let you approach them for funding. See this excellent link: www.foundationcenter.org/getstarted/faqs/html/letter.html

Funding cycles tend to ramp up and down in three to five year cycles. This means that your first grant from a particular foundation will likely be relatively small, essentially a “test grant” to make sure that the two organizations are a good fit. If successful, subsequent grants will get larger, and then smaller again as funding for your organization ends. Most foundations do not fund the same organization in perpetuity.

Foundation funding is typically “restricted,” meaning that the funds granted are to be used for a specific purpose, and can't be applied to other projects.

Obtaining and keeping foundation funding is a complex and sometimes frustrating process – BUT – there is a great free resource available from the Foundation Center: www.foundationcenter.org

Government Funding and Contracts

This last category leaves many people feeling as though they're a rat in a multi-story-never-ending-always-changing maze. That's the beauty of government funding. There are more ways to obtain funding than junked Huffys and Magnas

behind bike shops.

Your best bet is to find and become very close friends with the bicycle and pedestrian “coordinator” within your local city (if they’re progressive enough to have one) and/or your local transportation planning agency. (Transportation agencies may go by any number of names in your area: “Metropolitan Planning Organization” (MPO), “Metropolitan Transportation Agency” (MTA), “Regional Planning Organization” (RPO), “Regional Planning Agency” (RPA), etc.) Your new best friend can help you understand the process and schedule for obtaining funding through their agency. For starters, take a look at Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding (almost always referred to as “CMAQ”, pronounced “see-mack”). See the following website: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaqpgs


Do you like working with kids? Do you want to help get more kids walking and biking to school. Tired of seeing the neighbor pile their kids in to the SUV and drive them two blocks to school? Safe Routes to Schools (www.saferoutestoschools.org) provides opportunities for local organizations to implement Safe Routes to Schools programs in their area.

“My org needs money to be legit, but nobody will fund us so that we can get legit. What gives?”

I’m SO glad that you asked this question! There is a simple answer: fiscal sponsorship. Fiscal sponsorship occurs when one “legit” organization takes on another organization as a “project,” providing bank accounts for funding, resources for accounting, and a “name” which resonates with which you can associate your organization. Fiscal sponsorship allows your organization to start working and applying for funding even before being completely set up. However, fiscal sponsorship does come at a price – typically 10-15% of the money that you receive will be taken by the fiscal sponsor to help defray their costs of managing books and helping your organization to be successful. Technically, the “parent” organization receives funding on your behalf, and is thus legally responsible for the money.

For Further Reflection

Finding funding and keeping your organization sustainable will be an ongoing, ever-evolving process. Sometimes it can get pretty hard to find funds for your organization. Print this out and tape it up somewhere visible:

“Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” –Margaret Mead 



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TECHNICAL GUBBINS

Winter Survival Guide

BY JEFF GUERRERO



Self-portrait after a brisk 15° F morning commute.

You don't need to give up on cycling just because the temperature's dropped below freezing. You just need to prepare your bike, your body and your mind. Riding in the winter may not be the most fun time to do so, but any riding beats not riding at all. The following information comes from years of experience cycling in virtually all weather conditions. It also comes from the wisdom passed on to me by my friends who are bike messengers, mechanics, racers, industry insiders, year-round commuters and assorted bike freaks. The first step in preparing for battle with Old Man Winter is perhaps the easiest—preparing your bike.

WINTERIZE YOUR RIDE

In the winter, bike choice is not only a matter of personal taste; it's a matter of survival. Breaking down or crashing in the cold could be a real problem, so stability and durability are far more important than speed and aesthetics. Singlespeeds are a good choice for winter riding because the simpler the bike, the less chance for mechanical failure. Cyclocross and mountain bikes are inherently good choices for winter because they're purpose-built for adverse conditions. Of course, if the only thing you've got is an 87' Trek 330, it'll still work.

No matter what bike you're riding, it's going to need extra maintenance to get you through the winter. Bikes don't mind the cold, but they can't stand water. Unfortunately moisture tends to linger in cold weather, causing rust and washing away necessary lubrication. So the primary task at hand is water displacement and lubrication. Clean and oil your chain every week, if not every day. You can get away with lubing your cables far less frequently.

Grease is a bike's best friend, so don't skimp on the PolyLube. Every bolt on a bicycle gets either grease or Loctite on the threads, so get those wrenches spinning. If your hubs and headset aren't of the sealed cartridge variety, now would be a good time to repack the bearings. Don't forget to grease the seatpost, and perhaps most importantly, grease your bottom bracket shell. If you ride in extremely wet conditions, consider using anti-seize assembly lubricant—a paste that keeps tight fitting metal parts from bonding.

If you live in an area that uses road salt, you'll want to wash your bike fairly regularly to stave off corrosion. To avoid washing away too much precious lube, wash your bike with a bucket and a sponge instead of a hose. And it goes without saying that everything on your bike should be in good working order. Remember, it's better to be doing bike repair work at home than on the side of the road. So don't get lazy.

Fenders are especially valuable in the cold weather. The full-length bolt-on variety are the best, but clip on plastic fenders are way better than nothing. You can even make your own fenders from recycled materials.

With fewer hours of daylight, bike lights see a lot more use in the winter. Unfortunately, batteries discharge faster in the cold, so it's a good idea to carry extras. If possible, choose long-lasting LED lights over halogen.

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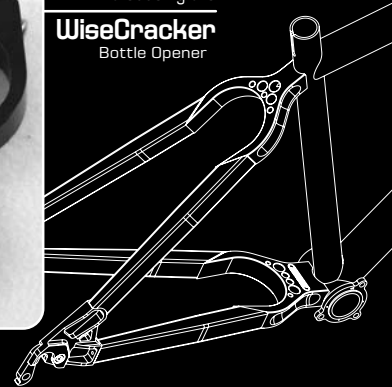
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WINTERIZE YOUR BODY

Dressing for cold weather cycling is complicated because you're balancing the need for insulation, wind resistance and water proofing against moisture transfer and ventilation. Then again, it's not rocket science—it's mostly common sense. The most important thing is to protect yourself against the elements. Of secondary importance is the ability to regulate your core temperature as to avoid overheating and generating too much sweat. With those objectives met, you can concern yourself with breathability and moisture wicking.

A wind and waterproof nylon jacket is the most essential piece of cold weather cycling attire, bar none. Up to a certain point you get what you pay for, so don't skimp and buy the cheapest one available. Zippered underarm vents called "pit zips" are an indispensable feature, and a drop tail is pretty nice, too. Many feature reflective piping and a stow-away hood, which come in handy.

Wind and waterproof shoes are nearly worth their weight in gold. If you insist on clipless pedals, you can spend a small fortune on a decent pair of winter cycling shoes. Neoprene shoe covers work fairly well with ordinary cycling shoes, but they're not waterproof. The smart money is on good winter boots and either flat pedals or toe clips. And unless you've got an allergy, you'll want to pair your shoe of choice with some wool socks. Wool wicks moisture, stays

warm when wet and naturally resists odor-causing bacteria.

Gloves are pretty important since you can't ride far with your hands in your pockets. There's a host of cycling specific winter glove choices, but I've found the best gloves come from the ski and snowboard world. Of course those are expensive. If you don't have a lot of money to spend, check out a hunting supply shop or Army surplus store.

Keeping your head warm is relatively easy; just get yourself a thin skullcap, doo-rag, knit cap or balaclava that fits under your helmet. Not a fan of helmets? Shame on you, but your choices are virtually limitless. Ordinary bandanas can come in handy, and ski goggles not only help you see, they keep your face warm.

When choosing shirts and sweaters, remember you can always take it off but you can't put on what you don't have with you. Everyone already knows you should dress in layers, but it's important enough to merit a reminder. Synthetics and wool are generally better than cotton, but sometimes you have to use what's available.

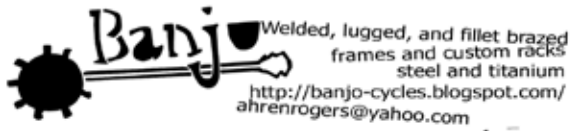
For down under, everyone should own at least one good pair of winter tights. Thicker than ordinary cycling tights, they often have windproof panels on the front with more flexible materials behind the knees. Used in conjunction with ordinary cycling shorts and baggy shorts or knickers (aka "shants"), you shouldn't need full-length nylon cycling pants. Weatherproof rain pants tend to be restrictive, however they're useful in extreme conditions.

With clothing and accessories squared away, the last step in winterizing your body involves simple conditioning. One mistake people make in the winter is not drinking enough water. The cold weather makes people forget you're both sweating and using water every time your muscles contract, too. So drink up. Your body also burns more calories in its efforts to stay warm, so it's important to eat enough food to properly fuel yourself for wintertime riding.

Finally, don't forget that rest is vital for proper muscle recovery. Everyone has physical limits, and it pays to know when to say when. Even if you don't want to take time off the bike, you can at least make sure you're getting enough sleep. Elite racers test their heart rate upon waking up to determine if they've got enough rest. For the average cyclist, just paying attention to your body should suffice. Among the first signs of overtraining are head colds and sore throats, so when you start to feel run down in the winter consider taking it easy for a few days.

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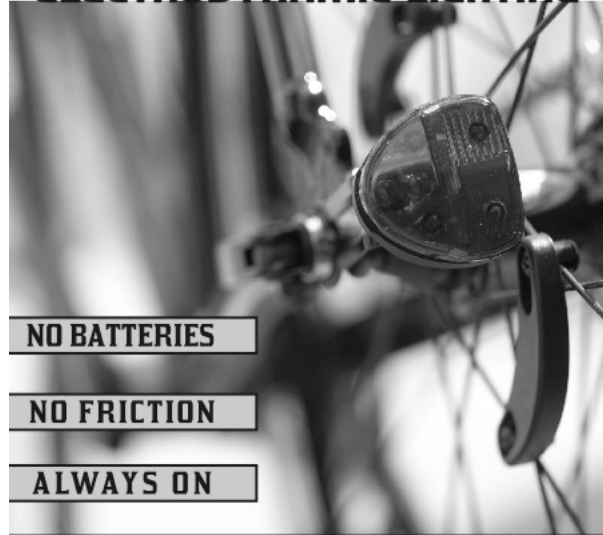
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WINTERIZE YOUR MIND

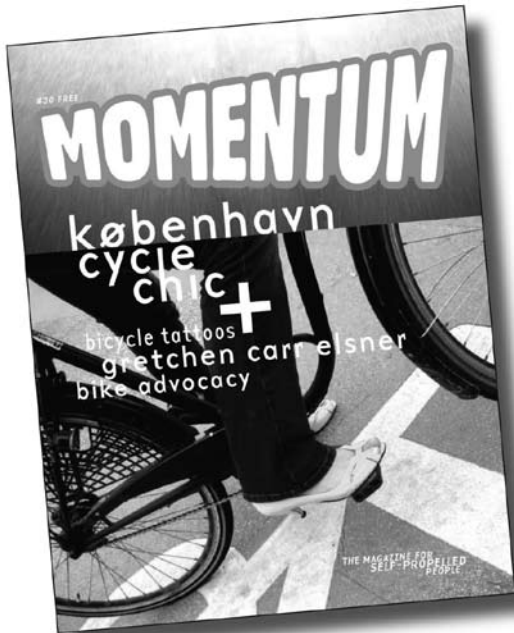
Don't forget that riding in the winter is fun. And there are plenty of nice days in the winter. Being prepared as discussed above makes it easier to think positively about heading out on a cold morning's ride. When you're dressed right the cold air is brisk and refreshing, and the world around you looks cool and serene. Even if you're not an everyday commuter, it pays to be ready to take advantage of the especially nice days.

Of course there are days when the weather really discourages riding, but if you consider those times a challenge and not a curse, you'll fair much better. Out on the bike, keeping a positive mindset helps immeasurably, whether it's dealing with a snowstorm, a four-mile climb, or both. Don't be afraid to pat yourself on the back for riding to work through headwinds and snowstorms—you're a badass. Once you start thinking, "this sucks," you're working against yourself. Think about the food you'll eat at the end of the ride, or the coffee, tea or beer you'll drink. If all else fails, try singing. Humming a tune may suffice, but singing out loud really won't hurt. Don't worry what other people think, anyone who sees you out riding in foul weather conditions already thinks you're crazy. Musical tastes vary, but a good relaxing tune like Bob Marley's "Easy Skanking" never fails to put me in the right state of mind.

And even the truly hardcore need to be careful not to get burned out on bikes during the winter. For some people that means staying inspired by immersing themselves in bike culture—magazines, websites, videos, bike events, etc. For others it means playing into the old consumerist consumption game. Don't feel bad—the time and money you invest in staying motivated is more than worth the rewards of regular riding. Almost everyone benefits from a change of pace now and again, whether that means taking a different bike, a different route or a different mode of transportation entirely. A couple days of driving in traffic or riding mass transit is usually enough inspiration to get back on the bike. 

Visit www.urbanvelo.org/winter for cold weather riding resources and to share your own inspiration and winter riding tips.

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THE OUTCAST

it's a singlespeed thing

Pour forth. Just empty yourselves on to the streets. Infect every crevice with your propulsive behaviour; your sweat and your clarity, your love and your passion, your pain and your loss. Don't hesitate. Don't deviate, but do meander if you need to since your route is your own – that is where deviance is to be celebrated and not to be confused with defiance – the implication is of governance. Ballot? Vote n/a. Pause and then pedal on. Make your mark with ballet. Define your own box. Meddle with minds and delve in to the dark corners or yourself and others. You are allowed to think those thoughts. Yes. Evil exists in us all. It fights love. Confront convention and ask why, and why not. Society is not so much cock as a hapless dildo. It is not the real thing. Strapping lads and lasses can do it their own way and create something else. Roads are conduits. Trails are evidence. Love can win. Niches aren't nice places to throw down roots. Rutting stags and waving willies only stifle expression and furrow brows. Browse the non-indexed and the tag-free reality of a bicycle ride with you at the helm and wherever as the B. All ends well when the tool is a bike. Forthright and proper. Give me my tool and let me ride 'til forever. Give me the filth and the love – I shall ascend to the nadir of acme-delights.

www.yeswearontheweb.com

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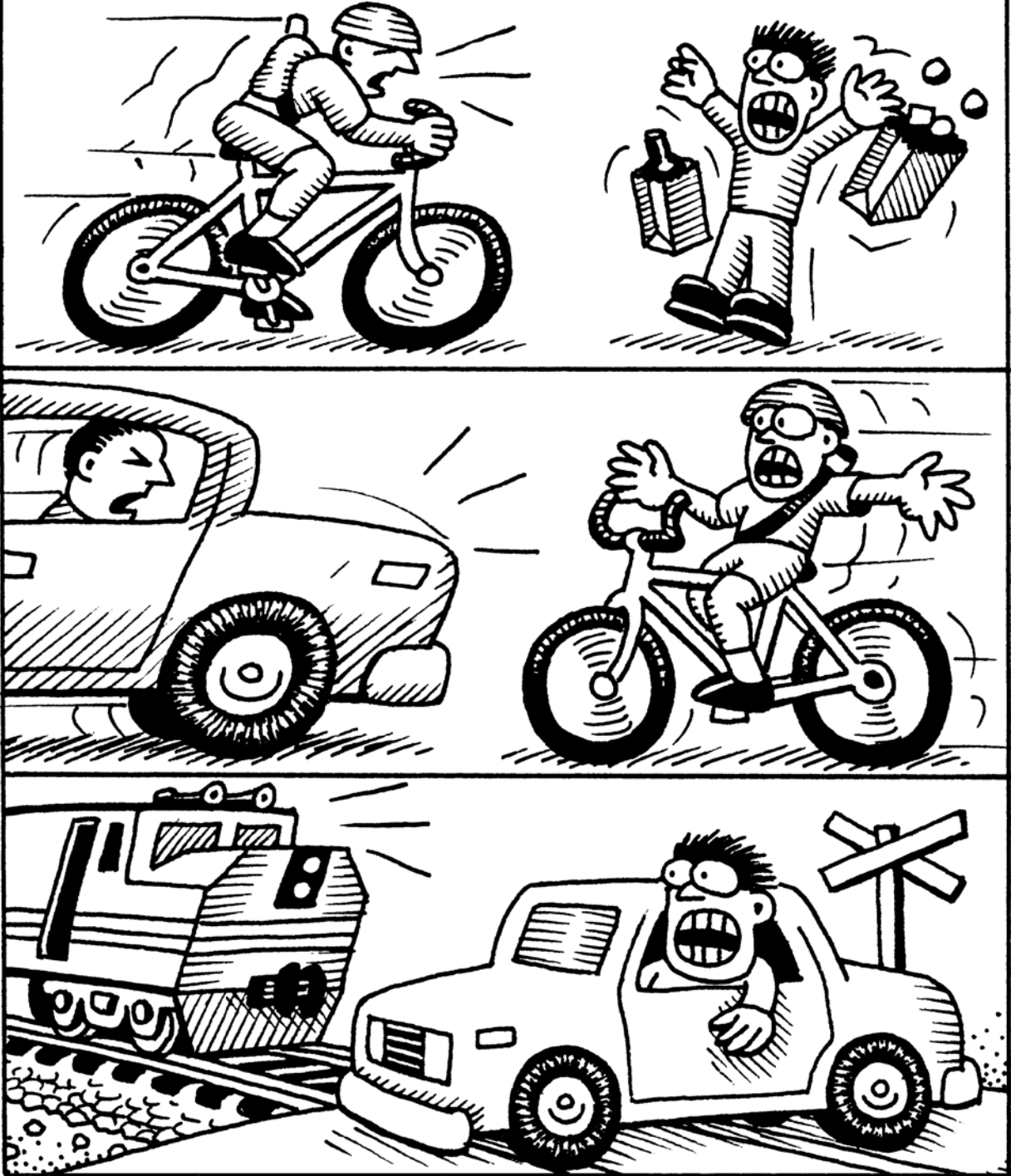
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NO EXIT

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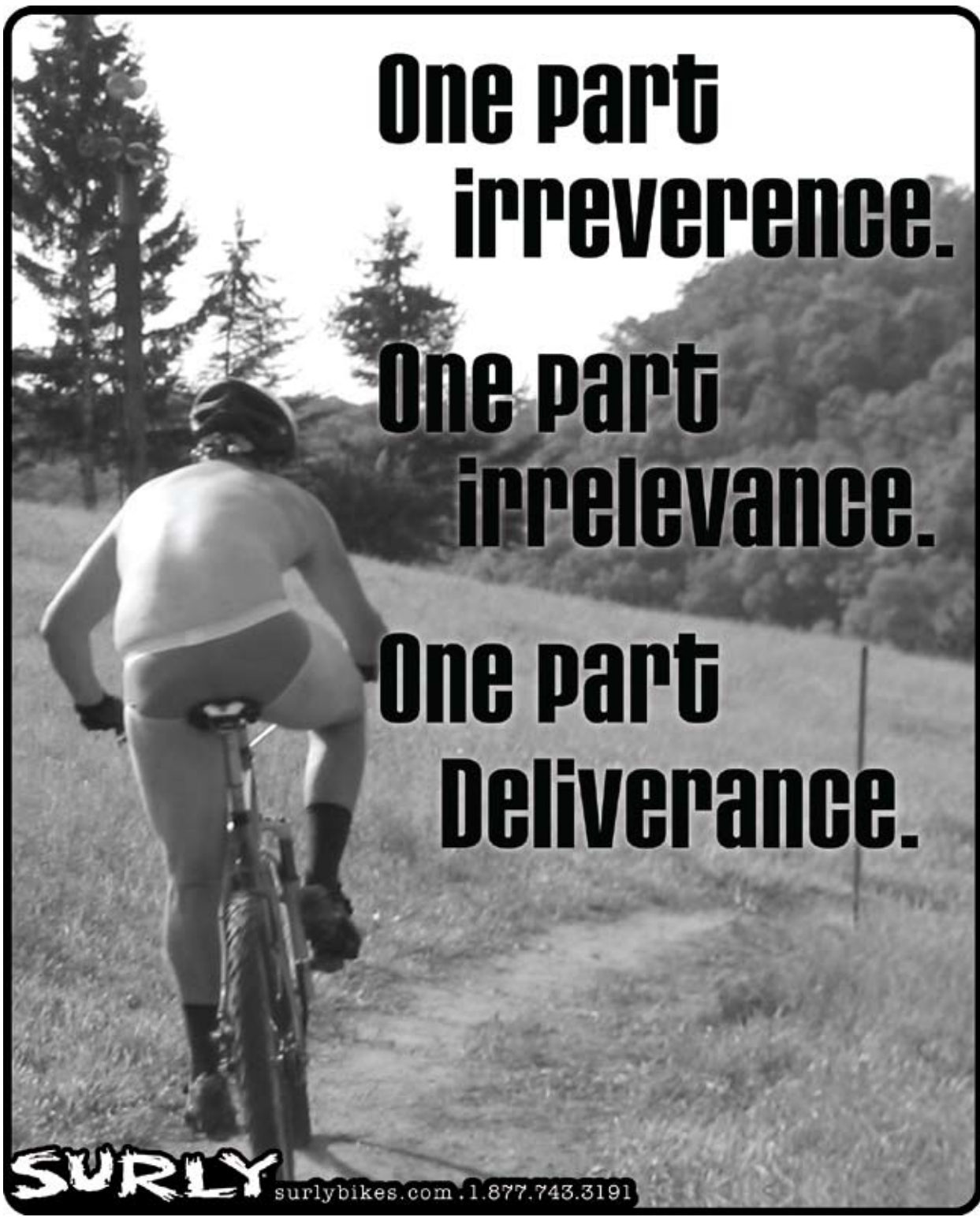
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