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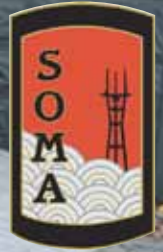
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Issue #40 • December 2013



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URBAN VELO

Issue #40

December 2013

Brad Quartuccio Editor brad@urbanvelo.org
Jeff Guerrero Publisher jeff@urbanvelo.org

Contributing Editor: Krista Carlson

On the cover: BikeBike 2013 attendees look out on New Orleans, LA after a group pedal. See more images on page 32, and read about BikeBike 2013 on page 60. Photo by Brian O'Doherty, www.odohertyphotography.com

Co-conspirators: Andy Singer, Bruce Carver, Matt Kabik, Joe Baur and Bob Perkoski

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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Bike shops, check out urbanvelo.org/distribution

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EDITOR'S STATEMENT

By Brad Quartuccio



Recently I found myself digging through a box I'd not opened in over a decade. Labeled "Old Bike Magazines" it might as well have been my adolescent school books. My eleven-year-old self could have never predicted what followed from that first copy of *Bicycle Guide* purchased from the grocery store magazine rack in early 1993—the beginning of a serious obsession, and a few boxes of back issues in my adult attic. I poured over them as a kid, studying every issue as I picked them up at the newsstand or eventually had them delivered by subscription. Particular covers, images, articles and ads stand out in my mind to this day.

The bicycle media I picked up then planted the seed of what has become a lifestyle, influencing countless decisions along the way. Even with some bumps in the road I've got to admit that it's been a great ride, one that still feels like it's just beginning. Bicycles have taken me places I couldn't have imagined, opening doors to further unexplored lands along the way.

From the first issues produced on a copy machine in 2007 through to the *Urban Velo* of today, thanks to our readers and contributors forty issues later we have a short stack of back issues to add to the extensive written record of bicycling. I can only hope that along the way *Urban Velo* has inspired a few to look at their bicycle and think of new possibilities. 

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



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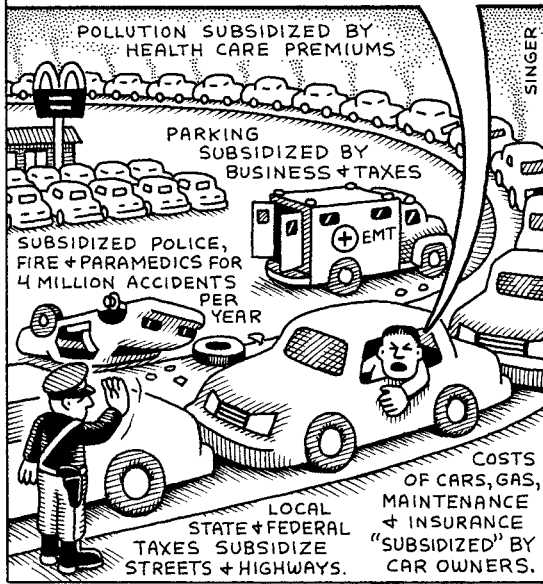
PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

By Jeff Guerrero

NO EXIT

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PUBLIC TRANSIT WASTES MONEY. IT ALWAYS HAS TO BE SUBSIDIZED!



I've known Andy Singer for quite a while now. At first I was just another art director who published his work. As I came to know him better it became clear that he's a serious non-motorized transportation advocate. Maybe more serious about it than anyone I know. And while his comics are typically lighthearted, they often carry a serious message, too.

Andy's first book, CARtoons, took aim at automobile culture with 88 comics accompanied by various facts, anecdotes and quotes. Following the release of that book, he did a series of speaking engagements, including one here in Pittsburgh. Though I wasn't able to attend the formal lecture, Andy basically recited the previous day's presentation for me in my living room. I was mesmerized. He essentially broke down the world of transportation politics in one fell swoop.

Andy's new book, *Why We Drive*, is a more elaborate version of that talk, complete with comics, maps, illustrations, photos and more. It's easy to read and totally entertaining, yet it has the potential to be incredibly powerful. While Andy Singer isn't quite a household name, his work reaches a large and diverse audience. And for those who have already opened themselves up to the idea of alternative transportation, *Why We Drive* just may be the impetus for making a change.

The book is filled with facts, not opinions, so even if you're a transportation activist, you might learn a thing or two. A typical passage from the book reads:

This loss of property tax revenue is a hidden subsidy that motor vehicles receive from our society. This cartoon shows a few of the other subsidies. These include the billions of dollars in healthcare costs and lost productivity associated with air pollution, and the costs of subsidized parking to businesses, employees, and customers. Seventy percent of all state and local law enforcement activities are expended on cars and traffic management issues. Fifteen percent of all fires and sixteen percent of all paramedic calls are related to cars.

Why We Drive is available for \$10. Check out www.andysinger.com.



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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Angelo Aversa

LOCATION: Paris, France

OCCUPATION: Woodcut Artist

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

I am an Italian-born woodcut artist, and I live in Paris, France. It is a friendly biker's city with many exclusive bicycle lanes.

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

So far, Paris. I live near the Canal Saint Martin in the 10th arrondissement, which, if you follow it north-east, takes you outside the city and in a half hour you are in the country far from the chaos. I bike every day, because I don't like to take the metro. I buy supplies with my bicycle; go around to exhibitions, meet friends, and more.

A place where I would like to bike is Portland, OR. I heard it is a very green city and super bike-friendly. Who knows? Probably one day I will ride around there with my bicycle gallery.

Why do you love riding in the city?

Two wheels are my favorite way to go to a meeting. Bikers here are very well accepted. It's the fastest way to get around.

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

I started the very first bicycle art gallery and the smallest art gallery in Paris, in which I sell my woodcut prints around the city. I am meeting lots of new people every day. Even at the stoplights people chat with me asking information about my "different" bicycle. I can't count the number of pictures people take of my bike.

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Pablo Maugis

LOCATION: San Francisco, CA

OCCUPATION: Carpenter

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

I live in San Francisco. Here you can find a bike route to almost everywhere. Go downtown, cross the Golden Gate, around the bay...

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

I am from Italy and I love bike travels, so I've seen a lot of cities, but my favorite is San Francisco.

It is not a very big city, it's easy to cross (well, there are "a few" hills), and you can go from the beach to the mountains, from the Bay Area to the sequoia woods in just one day. The weather is also perfect, never too hot, never too cold. What more could you want?

Why do you love riding in the city?

Because it is a little adventure every day, because there is always something on the road that takes your mind far away from life's problems.

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

I love the bike as a mode of transportation in life, I don't have a car, just the bike. It is fun when I say, "I can come, but I need two days to get there!" Live the life on wheels, live slowly.

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Josh Wilkins

LOCATION: Frankfurt, Germany

OCCUPATION: Software Architect

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

I live in Frankfurt, Germany and bike every day, rain or shine. It is my main form of transportation. Urban cycling is big here—something like every sixth commuter does so by bike. There is, of course, the expected aggression between cyclists and motorists, but it is rather limited in my experience. There is also a high rate of bike theft, so you have to be wary!

I grew up in California and Oregon and spent many years mountain biking. The bike scene here in Europe is very different. The bike is not only for exercise, but it is a normal part of everyday life. Everybody rides, from toddlers on their Laufrad to seniors on their Hollandrad complete with a wicker basket on the handlebars. Somedays it's just crazy how many people are out there on two wheels.

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

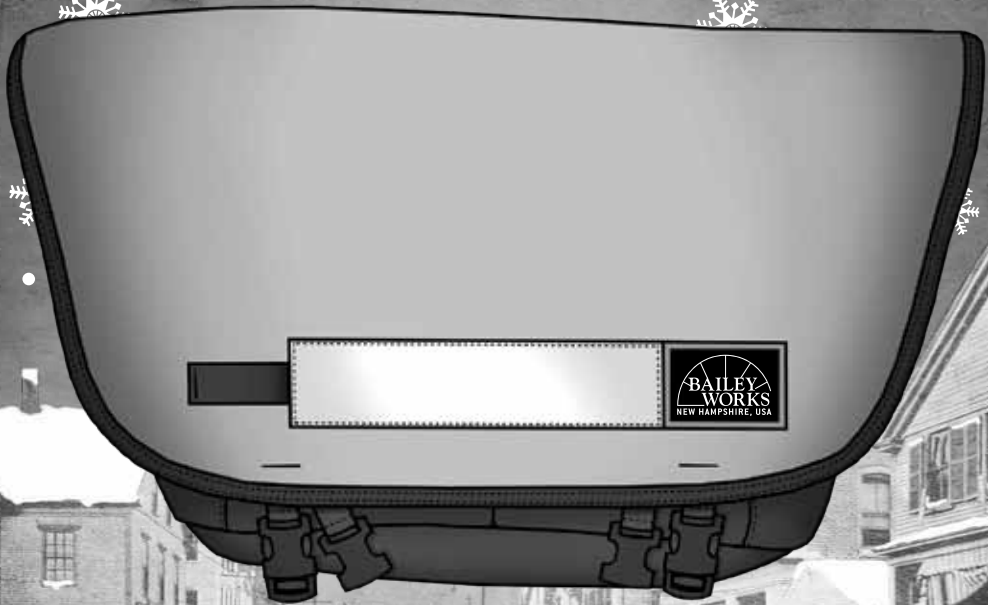
Eugene, OR. The city has a nice mix of flatland and steep hills and you can get out of the city easily and ride the back roads out in the country.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It's never boring. You have to keep all the senses tuned. Kind of like driving the autobahn, alertness is key! I love using the bike as an all round utility vehicle. I get a major kick out of transporting things using my own power. I adore the freedom it allows—come and go when I please, no need to worry about when the train is coming. Combining exercise and the daily chores is just damn cool. It is also a great feeling to fly past all those cars stuck in rush hour traffic.

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NAME: Terrell

LOCATION: Richmond, VA

OCCUPATION: Student

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

I live in Richmond, VA and there is amazing riding here. There are a lot of bike lanes all around Richmond and we have a very great bike community that's growing every day. The weather is great as well, it never gets too hot or too cold to go on a good ride.

Why do you love riding in the city?

There is nothing like taking that daily ride through your hometown. Riding to me is more than just a source of transportation, it's a lifestyle that I believe everyone should adopt.



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Bamboo is lightweight, stiff, and about as strong as steel, making it an ideal material for bike frames—so why don't we see more of them? While bamboo bikes typically come with a steep price tag that extends upward from a cool grand, **Greenstar Bikes** has found a way to offer a bamboo bicycle for a much cooler \$400. www.greenstarbikes.com



Lucetta is a small pair of magnetic bicycle blinkies from **Pizzolorusso Industrial Design**. Easy to place on your (steel) bicycle when you head out, easy to snap together and put in your pocket at the end of the ride. They claim that the lights will stay attached over rough roads, but you can color me skeptical that a pothole or curb wouldn't claim them. www.pizzolorusso.com



Merino wool is popular for all the right reasons (warm when wet, doesn't retain odors, heat-regulating) and has made its way into more clothing items at home on and off the bike. **Chrome** has reworked their wool offerings with the \$140–160 Chrome Merino Cobra line of pullover, full-zip and hooded riding sweaters. www.chromeindustries.com



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2013
WORLD
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BIKE

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CHAMPIONSHIP

By Matt Kabik

Photos by Bruce Carver

The first World Hardcourt Bike Polo Championship was not much more than an addition to the much larger, much more well attended Messenger Championship in Toronto in 2008—and even in this, there are some who will say that this was not the first “real” World Championship of bike polo. Point in fact, from the CMWC 2008 website; the event was booked simply as the “CMWC Bike Polo Tournament.”

At that point there were no real expectations of a continuation or, more correctly, that anyone would be particularly interested or able to have another World Championship for bike polo. Instead it was simply a way of having some fun and satisfying the itch that can only be scratched with competition. But as it turns out, there was something of a legacy brought forth during that first World Championship, and that legacy has grown and expanded into a recognized event where the best of the World compete for the title of World champion, if not the glory of saying that they are.

The 2008 Toronto World Championship and the 2009 Philadelphia World Championship were, by comparison to where we now are some four or five years later, a much more homegrown affair. In 2008 there were only a relative handful of people who were aware of the sport (much less involved with it), and out of those, only a few were really doing it as more than a way to pass time while waiting to do something else. It was a game played with borrowed equipment from other sports, on any kind of bicycle available—though often fixed gear as that was what messengers were using—with limited safety equipment and only a few rules.

That kind of sport, with its strong DIY and counter-culture, brought in the very sort of people one would expect to see. The growing hipster scene created perhaps the most fertile crops of bike polo player, with young men and women who were interested in the sideline time of drinking ironic beer and seeming disinterested as they were in playing. The players were not, even if you stretched the word, invested in the survival of the sport. Certainly one could find passionate players, but you'd be hard pressed to find people who were willing to put up much more time dedicated to growing the sport than they were at welcoming new players to their own pick-up days.

And that environment was the one in which the first World Hardcourt Bike Polo Championship occurred. With little structure or set-in-stone rules, the Championship created some sort of beginning—a starting gun blast—to the idea that the sport as a whole wanted to have a yearly tournament for the entire World of bike polo.

From that point in 2008, however, the seeds took hold. Bike polo proved itself an intoxicating agent for those who sampled it even for a brief amount of time. It took hold in North America and the world at large, with clubs sprouting out across the continents and organizing themselves into hubs of hidden courts and re-appropriated gas pipe (the early favorite to make mallet heads from). Players began travelling more heavily to nearby clubs and tournaments, using up vacation days or taking hits as part-time workers to travel away from home for the larger tournaments of more cen-



tralized polo locations. The following World Championship in Philadelphia had more money to work with than Toronto and, as one finds with something that is young and has money, more problems to face. In the earliest days of the Championship, the responsibility to facilitate all aspects of the event relied solely on the local organizers—and as Ben Schultz, President of the NAH explains, the Philly Worlds relied mostly on just one individual. The Championship had a lot of faults, but also a lot of lessons. “Certainly, he proved himself to be a bad planner. But, he was right about a great many things regarding the future—membership and ownership of the game being two of them.” Schultz explains.

This all of course led up to the creation of the North American Hardcourt Bike Polo Association, or the NAH, in 2010. While the mistakes of the Philly World Championship were certainly not the impetus for the creation of the NAH, the NAH took an ownership of World Championships on American soil from that point forward.

The NAH’s original 21 representatives (elected democratically from the existing seven regions) was

tasked with standardizing rule-sets and tourney structures, two things that it still triumphs and struggles with today. With the creation of the NAH, bike polo took a decidedly quick turn towards normalization and standardization, which naturally lead to an ongoing series of struggles with the DIY origins of the sport, but that’s an entirely different subject from the one I’m exploring today. In short, the NAH’s involvement in World Championships is just one more element that helped move it along as a cemented event for bike polo as a whole.

Which brings us back to the 2013 World Championship in Weston, FL, which is perhaps the location most suitable to show how the Championship has changed since its earlier days. Whereas past Championships took place in Toronto (’08), Philadelphia (’09), Berlin (’10), Seattle (’11), and Geneva (’12), Weston is decidedly not an international city. On the surface this may strike a reader as a sign of decline, but in fact, it’s the opposite: the ability to host a World Championship in a no-name (no offense, Weston) location successfully shows the ability and standardization that the

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organizers and the NAH are able to enforce.

Those abilities were not lost on competitors. “The locals were great, they did an amazing job organizing a massive event and getting behind all of the small things of a tourney. The ladies bench worked really well. The live streaming was amazing, for us who’s friends and family are on the other side of the Earth it is amazing they can tune it and watch our games and spectate along with us,” explained Ollie Wykeham of Brisbane, Australia. Indeed, the ability to bring a live feed over the internet successfully would be unimaginable in 2009, not because the technology didn’t exist, but moreover because bike polo as a culture was not concerned with broadcast—at least not enough to consider it alongside court surfaces and assuring that matches happened when they should.

The event in Florida is spread out over four courts—only one of which is modified by the organizers, and only then because the original court would be too large for play. In short, the location is as close to ideal as the sport can hope for without a player winning the lottery and building a polo court compound, and another far cry from some of the courts seen in previous World Championships (hay bales in Philadelphia, pallets and plywood in Geneva).

The polo players—33 teams in the wildcard tournament and 48 teams in the main event—learn to acclimate to the court surface almost immediately. While in the past players and organizers were happy to secure even a fair space to operate (and not always with the cooperation of townships or park authorities), the bike polo champions of today expect a certain level of quality to the space they compete in. This Championship is a far cry from the humble beginnings of our sport, at least in this respect. These players, with the exception of a few local teams who are shoe-horned in to compete, qualified through regional and national tournaments throughout the year. They are not just fly-by-night hobbyists who happen to find themselves in the same location because of another event (as it was with the 2008 World Championship in Toronto). These players are competitors who are present solely to challenge the best from around the World, and they do so in perhaps the adolescence of a new age in bike polo tournaments.

Unlike other tournaments I’ve attended, this one is as expansive as it is DIY. Chandel Bodner, tournament organizer for the NAH, is clearly and deliberately orchestrating the event. By her side is Jerod Scott Waltz, whose voice joins her in calling out upcoming matches, reminding people about rules and updates, and generally adding to the sounds that have become so familiar with a bike polo tournament at

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most every level. They work alongside local organizers and the volunteer team of pop-up refs who are pulled from the ranks of those who are not yet playing or who have just played.

Fixcraft, Northern Standard, MILK, St. Cago, Magic, VeloLucuma—they are all setting up and ready to sell. Furthermore, Origin-8 has a tent, and Dunkin Donuts is offering up free coffee and donut holes. But even they are acting in the same manner as the players and organizers alike: overly confident and a bit nervous about making sure they are ready to make back whatever expenses they put up in order to come. While bike polo equipment makers have been a presence at World Tournaments for more than a few years, bike polo still isn't a sport that makes money for very many people, and it surprises me just how many of these polo equipment sellers are here, and how much they are hoping to move. But the impulse is correct, I think, in that the people competing here are more than likely particular about their equipment, and are likewise as likely to drop money on having exactly what they want rather than depending on a borrowed piece of equipment.

And while it's true these changes occurred—more purpose-built courts, more organization and retailers, the look overall is still one of a regular tournament. There are still blankets and pop-up tents scattered across the park. There is still a scramble to get onto the courts within the allotted time. If not for the sale of polo equipment and near constant drone of announcements, one would not be wrong to think of this event as a regional competition. Point in fact, the first day was shut down while games were still occurring because the park closed, making for some interesting start-ups on the following day (players finishing out the final few minutes of games, PM brackets from Thursday finishing Friday morning, etc).

But it is certainly not a regional competition, which becomes so much more evident on the second day.

Players are not so far removed to be different people than those present at every other World Championship of the past, something that NAH Tournament Committee Chair Chandel Bodner reminds me of.

“They are the same people, mostly. I'm finding that everyone is enjoying the facility and they think it's safe and good. There is an expectation now, I think, on the hosting group (NAH and hosting club). I know in

Europe they have different expectations and a different style of organization, so for our group to host something at this caliber, they're looking at the refs and the solving of problems by organizers,” Bodner explained.

While I'm sure there are plenty of players who will disagree with the quality of the reffing which occurred at Worlds (which is a perennial complain of any competitor), it's clear to me that those who were able did so well, and the calls they made from the second day of the competition on were spot-on.

Again, this is a stark difference from the first World Championship or even from some of the regional NAH tournaments of this year: refs are exercising their power, and players are honoring (if not respecting) those calls. With refs being recognized as part of the sport instead of a fabricated, un-necessary piece of overall NAH involvement, it becomes clear just how much bike polo has grown up. Surely there are still tense moments—still times where the ref needs to walk off with a player to explain why they made the call they did—but this is no different than other professional sports, and it speaks highly of where both the player and the sport are in the growth of the game. Was this Championship happening even four years ago, it'd be hard to imagine a player removing themselves from the game on the penalty call of a ref; but here we are.

And this the biggest difference between the first Worlds (whichever you'd like to define the first “real” Worlds as) and the most recent one: player expectations. Players don't accept that the only thing they should expect is a place to play. Now, players expect housing, food, transport, and other creature comforts for the expense they are agreeing to. Organizers understand these demands, and attempt to meet them. As Ben Schultz explains:

“The problem was that those expectations largely materialized at the event; it was like a family dinner table drama. The criticism that resulted was absolutely justified in several respects, and we learned, but it wasn't a very constructive discussion. This scenario has definitely changed since 2009. Standing in stark contrast is that organizers worldwide are now acutely aware of expectations, and on average have done a much better job of meeting these expectations, even as they've increased. And though polo's overall culture of criticism hasn't made the same strides, it is, in part, because of an increase in people's willingness to

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constructively discuss and find solutions to problems (in polls, NAH events, LOBP threads, blogs, etc.) that organizers are able to have these expectations more clearly in mind.”

When the third day comes, the entirety of the experience is different. I find it harder to make eye contact with players, as most of all of them have some level of predator in them. Each game carries an immense weight to it—two losses means you’re out of the Championship and just another spectator. I watch teams I did not expect much out of, such as Niño Dios, creating such an unexpected stir among teams that I begin to doubt what the final 10 will look like. But that is perhaps too strong a statement, as the predictions I heard from players and observers alike all still point to The Beavers, Call Me Daddy, and the Edisons as the top teams to watch.

The organizers (both the local hosting club and the NAH representatives) are exhausted. They are friendly enough, but often times do not ask if a player can do something—they tell a player to do something. Again, this is another sign of where bike polo is heading: we’re all still friends and just trying to have a good time, but there is an undertone of requirement and expectation. Chandel Bodner might be a very friendly, nice person, but when she tells you to do something, you do it, and certainly when she tells you to hop-to at a World Championship. That’s the nature of leadership in a leaderless sport, and it’s one that will more than likely bring bike polo to the next point in its development.

The refs begin to become more dogged in their calling and observation of games. This is due in part to higher level players getting knocked out of competitive play—and this is something that has not changed in any level of bike polo tournament structure: it is hard to come by the very best refs at all points because, generally speaking, the very best refs are made up of very strong players—players who would rather play than watch games and blow a whistle every time another player does something against the rules. There are notable refs that I was as entertained watching as I was the games (Joe Rstrom, Zack Blackburn, and Aaron Hand come to mind immediately, as does one other fellow who could easily be a model for a Florida beach, though I never catch his name), but overall there is a grumble forming up from the past two days that the refs are not consistent with calling fouls—though by

Saturday, that complaint is all but extinguished.

When I do manage to sit down with Chandel, she explains how she is responsible (and has been for three and a half years) for every NAH tournament, and the Seattle Worlds of 2011, though in a lighter capacity. She explains how the NAH has become far more involved in Worlds since Seattle.

“That was the first year we had a tour (2011), and it’s grown and changed since then. The expectation, requirements, and budgets are so much higher now. The Florida teams aren’t known as much in North America, but fortunately I did, and the facilities here pretty much dictated where we should host,” Bodner explained to me.

“The facilities in Seattle had six courts for usage, but they only really used four. They did the most they could with the budget they had—the idea of paying \$100 per team was unbelievable back then. They were tennis courts with 4-foot walls, and that worked for the time. But even here, with the stronger checks, we’re getting some talks about the fourth court that we built one side for is a bit rough, but that’s about it,” she explained.

The final games between The Assassins, Edisons, Call Me Daddy, The Control, and The Pilgrims all smack of pure skill. Tensions are high, and the spectators are at near riotous excitement. There is a sudden down-pour which helps to calm down the entirety of those gathered, but as soon as the rain stops the excitement resumes, with stunning goal after stunning goal leading to a final set of games between The Assassins (3rd), Call Me Daddy (2nd), and the crowned champions of bike polo, The Beavers.

The 2013 World Championship will be remembered, I believe, as one where the courts were outstanding, the level of play was terrific, and the atmosphere was positive. I also think there will be lessons for next year’s organizers in locational amenities (how close the nearest bar/restaurant/etc.), and establishing refs before the beginning of the tourney. But, in reminding oneself that this is a young Championship in a young sport, there is nothing now that cannot be addressed.

If nothing else, it’s apparent to me that bike polo is healthy and growing. It’s taking its first steps towards independence and self-realization, and we’re going to be here to watch that happen.





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BikeBike 2013: New Orleans, LA

“It’s hard to learn all of these things, because you’ve got to learn about bikes themselves, you’ve got to learn about the bike industry, you’ve got to learn about non-profits and advocacy and how cities work. There’s just so much stuff to learn that if you’re just kind of trying to do good stuff it could take you forever—so this is kind of like a fast track—instead of trying to work really hard and bumble your way through the next 10 years, just go to BikeBike and figure it all out.”—Nona Varnado

Read *Cultivating Conversations at BikeBike 2013: A Recap* on page 60.

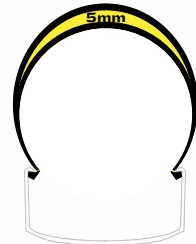


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Bike Bike 2013

by Brian O'Doherty





Bike Bike 2013

by Brian O'Doherty







Soma Tradesman Cargo Bike

It's a certain lifestyle or business that necessitates a cargo bike, where carrying around more than most would consider possible by bicycle is commonplace, and not something usual racks and bags can handle. Front loading cargo bikes are the next logical step from a large front basket, with delivery bikes featuring welded-in frame-mounted racks popular throughout the first half of the 20th century. The Schwinn Cycle Truck produced from 1939-1967 defined the short wheelbase, small front wheel cargo bike, with the Soma Tradesman being a modern take on the classic arrangement.

Cargo bikes are many times limited by their very carrying capacity—many urban dwellings just can't handle a long wheelbase bike for one reason or another.

The basic design of the Tradesman with mismatched 20" front and 26" rear wheels moves the cargo lower for stability while maintaining a close to mountain bike length 1115 mm wheelbase. The welded-in rack doesn't flop around like fork mounted racks do. The stock 14.5" x 20" rack is plenty large, but narrower than the bars. You can get this bike up porch stairs and through doorways with just a bit more effort than any other 37 lb bicycle, making it a viable cargo bike for tight urban housing.

The chromoly steel Tradesman has disc brake mounts front and rear and fits a "standard" mountain drivetrain (no provisions for internal gears or single speeds), with my review bike setup with a Avid BB7s and a SRAM 3x7 setup. Rack and fender eyelets on



the frame and fork maximize your weather and cargo capabilities, and a welded in kickstand plate means a fancy double-legged kickstand will hold the bike very securely. The tabs for the front rack are sturdy, and easy as any to fit to a custom cargo container. Perhaps the only finishing touches I'd add would be tabs for a chaincase and custom toptube sign. The one size fits most frame seems to work for people in the mid-five-foot to just over six-foot range, as long as one can clear the 30.5" standover requirement. A definite plus for multiple-rider households.

The Tradesman more or less handles like a regular bike thanks to the steering geometry. Rather than a sluggish turning long wheelbase cargo bike, you can carve through traffic and narrow sidewalks much the same as more regulation bicycles. The rack being welded to the frame keeps the weight from shifting back and forth with every steering motion, keep the load centered and the front wheel steering underneath the rack rather than with it. The rack is supported by a pair of tubes that start at the seat-tube and extend past the headtube, providing a solid platform for carrying.

One quirk of the handling is that I experienced front wheel shimmy no matter the load. Even with the rack unloaded riding no-hands wasn't possible for long as the bars oscillated out of control. Put 75 lbs of cargo on the front and the bike is nearly unrideable as the wheel fights back and forth—that was a harrowing ride back from the big box store. The handling is likely a consequence of load being relatively high (even with the small front wheel it

sits 24" off the ground) and cantilevered over the front wheel. All great for some aspects of handling, but any flex or instability in the system is felt through the path of least resistance, the handlebars. This might be the problem bicycle steering damper solutions were looking for. Keep your loads manageable and your hands on the bars.

The Tradesman excels at bulky (if not overly heavy) loads, with a large Wald delivery basket up front I was able to load up with most anything I could imagine carrying home on two wheels. Groceries, packages, copy boxes, party supplies, my backpack—it's handy to have a cargo bike around. Throw it in and go. The bike is well balanced, enough that the bike doesn't want to tip forward when being loaded, or when hitting a curb cut when riding. Riding the Tradesman around town opened up a new realm of what was possible to bring home without a car, helping to minimize my auto use. Quell the steering shimmy and I'd be a full convert to the cycle truck way for anything aside from construction runs.

The Tradesman is available as a frameset in either black or sparkle orange (including front rack) for \$700, with a complete build as pictured estimated at \$1400. www.somafab.com





Swift Industries Pelican Porteur

Rear racks and panniers are the first choosing of most if for nothing other than availability and general ease of installation, but over the years I've learned to love front racks and baskets for most of my cargo hauling. Full touring brings out the traditional side mount panniers, but day to day it's a backpack for the essentials and a front rack for everything else.

The Swift Industries Pelican Porteur bag is an 11" square bag made specifically to fit the CETMA 5-rail cargo rack. The 3 lb 14 oz bag has a Cordura outer and vinyl tarp interior combo to keep the elements on the outside, with a set of four clips and straps to attach to the rack. The rolltop design stands tall for overloading, with a large flap and long straps keeping everything secure. There are a few pockets for organizing pens and small items on the inside, with a single zippered outside pocket on the front. Corrugated plastic inserts in the sides to give the bag shape—while the rolltop is pliable, the body of the bag is rigid. Reflective strips, a light loop and a top-mounted clear map pocket round out the features.

Over the course of the summer months I used this bag for daily errands and an overnight camping trip, maxing out the capacity and giving it a run at how most people are using it. The capacity is more than enough

for most anything I'd imagine wanting to commute with on a daily basis; my camera, laptop, lunch, and a change of clothes all fit. The weatherproofing keeps cargo dry in a downpour, enough that I wouldn't worry about electronics in anything but a deluge you shouldn't be riding in anyway. You can haul a fair amount of groceries home in Pelican Porteur, and the rigid sides help to protect delicate fresh cargo. The bag swallowed up my weekly CSA half-share without a problem.

While the bag is easily removed from the rack, I found myself leaving it at home for some in-town trips as I didn't want to fuss with it at every lockup. Not an issue with longer commutes, but for running into a few different places in short order I found removing and reattaching it a burden.

Riding with a loaded front rack takes some getting used to, and is perhaps the main criticism of the Pelican Porteur bag. With such capacity it's easy to overload the front end which can lead to unstable handling, especially to those not used to riding with weight over the front wheel.

The Swift Industries Pelican Porteur bag is a lifestyle item, as at home on the commute or the overnight tour. Everything you need for the day fits and stays dry, and the construction is up for daily abuse. The \$200 asking price is on par with high-quality backpacks and other bags, especially given the Seattle construction out of a small shop of dedicated makers. www.builtbyswift.com



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DZR Marco

The DZR Marco is a polo-specific SPD-compatible high-top built around a nylon shank that provides a strong, stiff platform for efficient power transfer on the bike, in a style you can wear off. Polo can be a rough sport on the ankles, but the Marco's high-top design includes a surprising amount of protection. The ankle padding feels like a cross between a lightweight hiking shoe and the pillowy interior of a skateboarding shoe without making them look like a set of clogs. I've never really been one for wearing high-tops, but after taking a few knocks, I have to say that I may be converted.

The Marco's sole is well designed for both clipless and flat pedals. While I ride clipless for polo, I was impressed with the grip the sole had on flat BMX pedals. On the clipless side, the new fiberglass filled nylon shank is noticeably stiffer than earlier DZR models, and reportedly much more durable under serious abuse. The recessed cleats rarely touch the ground, a huge plus for folks using soft cleats, though be prepared to use a spacer under your cleat if you prefer clipless ped-

als with a platform. Another benefit of the large cleat area is that I didn't have a problem with mud gumming up my cleats when the weather turned sour. Despite the stiffness of the soles, I was very comfortable wearing the Marcos for the full length of a polo weekend including the six-hour drive to the tournament.

Stylistically I really dig the black with gum sole, and the embossed mallet on the lace strap. The toe box and sides of the Marco are perforated to allow for better ventilation in warmer weather. Given the perforation, I was surprised to notice that my feet never felt as though they were sloshing around in the shoe, even in a torrential downpour. My feet were very wet, but the ventilation made sure that the shoes didn't fill up with water.

The DZR team has been very receptive to comments from the polo community with regards to what players want from a polo shoe. The \$130 Marco addresses the issues I've had in the past with other clipless shoes for polo and is worthy of being the first purpose-built polo shoe. www.dzrshoes.com



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Five Ten Freerider VXi Elements

Five Ten's Freerider VXi are high-performance cycling shoes for use with flat pedals. Their primary features are the use of Stealth Mi6 rubber, Five Ten's new Contact outsole, and DWR treated uppers.

Stealth Rubber was designed for rock climbing—several iterations later, they've tuned their rubber technology for the cycling world, adding durability and additional shock absorption to the sticky outsoles.

The Contact design is treadless beneath the ball of the foot. This allows the rider to adjust their foot position without hanging up on the pins that are often used on flat pedals. While not of the utmost concern for the average rider, myself included, this feature is especially useful for technical applications such as jumping and trick riding. Rest assured, the soft and sticky nature of the Stealth Rubber more than makes up for the shoe's lack of tread, even in wet conditions.

The uppers are DWR treated for water resistance. They're well crafted with an emphasis on durability, and they feature a bit of moisture wicking insulation for cold weather riding. Honestly, I didn't notice the insulation, so I suppose the Five Ten design breathes and wicks better than average.

These shoes remind me of the skate shoes I used to wear back in the '90s. In addition to the Ocean Depths color scheme pictured here, there's a slightly more subdued Dawn Blue/Pewter model.

The Freerider VXi Elements is available in US men's sizes 2-15 and retails for \$120. www.fiveten.com

NiteRider Lumina Micro 220

NiteRider has taken their very successful Lumina headlight and made a lighter, more compact version. The mounting system and the one-button control and styling is virtually unchanged from the previous version.

The Lumina Micro 220 is impressively bright—220 lumens, as you might have guessed—but it's notably smaller and at 126 grams it's 46 grams lighter than the Lumina 650 we reviewed last year.

Burn times are similar to its high-powered brethren—1:30 on high, 2:45 on medium, 4:00 on low and 14:00 in "walk" mode—but remember it also has a smaller battery. The upshot is that it's fully charged in 3:30.

Even on low power, the \$70 Micro 220 does the job admirably in the city at night, with high-powered (and higher-priced) options available if your needs dictate. www.niterider.com





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HD WITNESS

By Krista Carlson

Of all the uses that have been found for mountable cameras like the ever popular GoPro, the role these mountable cameras have played in bringing dangerous drivers to justice may be the most valuable. When helmet cams first hit the market they were tailored to extreme sports enthusiasts, made to capture the exploits of surfers and snowboarders, and of course cyclists were quick to adopt the technology for their own purposes.

At first the small cameras were being used to document recreational cycling activities: races, tours, social rides, downhill plunges; all the fun stuff. Somewhere along the way cyclists developed yet another use for the cameras they had mounted to their helmets and handlebars—as a vital witness

“The most important thing you can do after a crash is record the driver’s information and a helmet cam can do that for you,” says Boston bike attorney Josh Zisson.

Last year two Brazilian cyclists riding in Berkeley CA, were hit by a black car while climbing uphill. The driver, David Magliano, hit both cyclists and sped off, but footage from the camera mounted to one rider’s handlebars led to the driver’s identification and eventual arrest. Across the country in Washington, D.C., another motorist was caught on camera colliding with Evan Wilder on his way to work. Wilder never saw the driver, but his camera caught both the license

plate number and the angry obscenities the driver of the pickup shouted before impact. The driver, John W. Diehl, was charged with leaving the scene of an accident.

Apart from being hit, cyclists face a barrage of harassment, hostility and dangerous behavior from motorists on a day-to-day basis. While safe passing and anti-harassment laws have been put in place at a growing pace—in 23 states and several cities with local laws—the enforcement of these laws has become another matter altogether.

“Vulnerable Road User Ordinance violations are very hard to observe and enforce outside a dedicated operation,” says Austin Police Commander Fred Fletcher. While the state of Texas may lack any sort of safe passing or anti-harassment laws, the city of Austin enacted its own safe passing law in 2009, and the Austin Police Department launched its own Safe Biking Initiative to enforce the law this year. The Safe Biking Initiative entails plainclothes officers on bikes equipped with GoPro cameras mounted to the handlebars. Other officers, watching nearby, pull over drivers who pass too closely.

“Only a couple [citations] had been issued in the entire city since 2009 before we started the initiative. That is actually the reason why we started this initiative,” says Commander Fletcher, who reports 139 citations and 4 arrests during the undercover sting.



Andy Booth's video evidence has helped prosecute two drivers for violating the law. Here a pickup truck passes at an unsafe distance. The driver was fined and received points on his license.

As the small cameras become more affordable and more readily available with more makers entering the market, more and more cyclists are hitting the record button before hitting the road. Wesley High ordered a small keychain camera off of eBay before he bought his Contour Roam in November 2011, following six months of daily commuting and breaking the first camera.

"I'd have an incident where some person would do something stupid, or malicious, and I would sometimes get into a verbal altercation with them, and sometimes not, and just be really angry that there was no way to prove that anything happened," says High.

The month before getting his camera, the first anti-harassment ordinance established to protect cyclists became law in Los Angeles. The ordinance recognized "That harassment of bicyclists on the basis of their status as bicyclists exists in the City of Los Angeles," and that current laws did not provide enough protection or recourse to cyclists, harassment endangered cyclists, and that people had the right to ride safely in the street without such endangerment. The law made it possible for drivers to be sued in civil court for treble (triple) damages—but it's tough to make the charge stick in a he said, she said environment.

"In many instances, the only witnesses to an incident are the parties actually involved," says Commander Fletcher. "Video recording may provide a valuable piece of evidence above and beyond the testimony of involved parties."

This legitimate rationale in combination with the potential legal repercussions unsafe drivers faced has prompted many more urban commuters to arm themselves with their own digital witness. Like High, Pittsburgh cyclist Amy Super strapped a camera to her helmet shortly after the passage of another law was enacted to protect cyclists. Within a year of Pennsylvania's Governor Corbett signed the Safe Passing Bill into law, Super had submitted footage of a driver who had repeatedly harassed her without recourse.

"When the incidents started, I did not have a

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helmet cam,” reports Super. “I documented the dates and times and description of the truck the first three times. The fourth time and fifth time, I caught it on my new helmet cam. On the last video, you can actually see him swerve in towards me, and then back away toward the yellow line after passing me, despite the fact that cars in front of him passed me safely, and the ones behind him did too.”

Finally there was more than just her own verbal accounts and mounting frustration that could be taken to the police, who took a greater interest in the complaint once Super offered video footage. Filed on the weekend, the police had contacted the driver and issued him a warning by Monday.

“It’s my opinion that it would have been pursued either way, but that the footage helped the police really do due diligence with my complaint,” she says. Based on the footage, the detective working on the case told Super she has grounds to press charges for harassment, and possibly Reckless Endangerment of a Person if the driver was problematic in any way. Super chose not to press charges, partly because the driver lives in her neighborhood, but still considers the exchange a success.

“I haven’t seen the truck at all in almost a year despite biking that road pretty much every single day,” she says, adding that her helmet cam is always there with her.

Another Pittsburgh cyclist has taken his footage even further, into the courthouse. Since getting fed up with drivers yelling, swerving, and throwing things at him, Andy Booth has presented video evidence that has twice led to the prosecution of drivers who exercised poor judgement while the camera was running.

“[The video] showed me proceeding home on my commute and riding in the center of the right lane, and it showed as I crossed through an intersection and continued down Washington Road,” tells Booth, describing the scene that eventually came under review in court, in which a pickup truck came uncomfortably close. “He came up close behind me and then he passed me and swerved back in front of me very close, within a foot.”

Even though Booth read aloud the truck’s license plate number to ensure he could reference it later, it turned out the HD camera was efficient at capturing

a clear image of the vital information. And while the driver made his best attempt at arming himself with his interpretation of the law, by highlighting sections of the state vehicle code that he thought entitled him to act as he had, he was nonetheless found guilty of violating the safe passing law, and received a fine in addition to several points on his license.

In the two years that he has filmed his weekday 15-mile commute High has been fortunate to avoid any collisions, and although he submitted one of his videos of a driver performing what is known as a “punishment pass” for review to a bike attorney and the city’s LAPD bike liaison, neither thought it would hold up in court. That hasn’t stopped him from posting videos of what he sees on his commute. High’s YouTube channel, Weshigh, includes more than 70 videos, mostly of drivers performing careless or hostile maneuvers.

While none of his footage has led to any drivers being cited for a violation, it has had several positive impacts, most notably an educational opportunity brought about by a Los Angeles sheriff who pulls into the lane with High and insists that he ride to the right of the sharrows, rather than in the center of the lane. The video, in which Sheriff Teufel demonstrated that not every law enforcement officer is up on the rules of the road when it comes to cyclists, made its way to the local news broadcast, noting that sharrows are not part of the California Vehicle Code and bringing to light the fact that not everyone on the road knows what those markings mean.

Other instances of educational helmet cam videos include one in which High records an interaction with a valet employee who isn’t concerned with keeping the company’s sandwich signs out of a high-use bike lane; another by Booth catches the employee of a car dealership cutting off a cyclist while entering the car lot. In Calgary one truck driver lost his job after yelling at one of the NiceGuysYYC couriers while his camera was running. A common practice among cyclists posting videos on YouTube is listing the license plate number in the title so that it is searchable for others who may have a problem with the same driver.

“Video evidence can be so compelling,” says Zisson. “With YouTube and Twitter as a way of getting it out to other people, they can highlight any sort of injustice that’s going on,” says Zisson. “It’s a very powerful tool.”



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SOMETHING ABOUT CLEVELAND

By Joe Baur • Photos by Bob Perkoski



Downtown Cleveland Ohio, its surrounding neighborhoods, and sprawling suburbs closely resemble other similarly sized metros that were developed with automobiles in mind. Streets, even those cutting through the heart of downtown, are as much as six lanes wide with cars regularly traveling ten miles per hour over posted speed limits. Cyclists are often left to figure it out for themselves among the pothole-laden asphalt, often without a bike lane to offer even some notion of protection.

This may sound bleak, but it's the reality for many individual cyclists in the Forest City. Speaking with advocates from non-profit Bike Cleveland to Joy Machines Bike Shop, you won't find many fans of the city's pace in accepting the cycling boom happening across the country. Jacob VanSickle, Executive Director of Bike Cleveland, points to Detroit MI, Memphis TN and Indianapolis IN as forward-thinking cities when it comes to increasing cycling infrastructure.

"Other cities are implementing these things faster," says VanSickle while discussing the pent up frustration among Cleveland's cycling community. "It needs to be made a priority."

Guerrilla Stripers

The frustration became painfully public for city officials when a group of five "guerrilla stripers" took it upon themselves to create a bike lane along a highly trafficked thoroughfare for cyclists in the near west side. Last fall the city secured funding for a 1.7-mile bike lane along Detroit Avenue that took a year longer than promised to become a reality. First the city blamed poor weather, then filming for the *Captain America* sequel.

While Detroit Ave went without a bike lane, the frustrated cyclists took action at 10 PM one late-August night using duct tape and chalk to create a makeshift lane that covered just about four blocks.

Speaking under the condition of anonymity, one of the stripers explains that nobody even attempted to stop them during the hour they spent creating the lane. "It was dark, but we had cones and people driving by, including a police officer who didn't care," the striper says. "The only people who said anything were people excited about what we're doing, including people driving and on bikes."



The next morning, cyclists were seen using the lane and motorists were careful to observe the new street marking. Unfortunately, the city was none too pleased with the activists and has vowed to investigate the matter. The lane was removed later that day.

Our striper sums up the cycling community's frustration saying, "There are people saying it's funny how quickly they removed them, but they were supposed to be done a year ago." But don't expect to city to admit that the guerrilla stripers sped up their action in finally finishing the bike lane in November 2013.

An Under-appreciated Gem

Other days offer cycling Clevelanders and visitors alike a glimpse at what riding in the city can be. In fact, ride on the last Friday of the month with the city's Critical Mass and it may seem as if the streets were made solely for cyclists. Even police officers, who originally ticketed riders in the middle of the street years back, are now happy to take part in the festivities, yelling "Happy Friday!" as they stop traffic for passing cyclists.

James Little, an organizer with Cleveland Critical Mass (the group likes to avoid official titles due to legal and liability issues), remembers seeing just 30 cyclists out when he started riding with the group years ago. The August 2013 ride, however, saw 715 riders making

the trek from downtown's Public Square to the east side suburb of Euclid. Mayor Bill Cervenk greeted the riders at the city's Shore Cultural Centre, calling the diverse group an "under-appreciated gem."

Little credits social media for the growth of the monthly rides and believes the momentum has shifted in favor of cycling, even if the city itself isn't reacting as fast as many would like.

For advocates like VanSickle, Critical Mass' growth is just one of the many signs that the attitude toward biking and creating cycling amenities for riders is changing. Leaders of a city that struggles with obesity and other related issues are recognizing the health and sustainability benefits of improving bike infrastructure. Young professionals moving or returning to the city are ditching the car for pedals.

Last year saw the opening of a \$4.5 million protected lane on the Hope Memorial Bridge connecting downtown with the near west side's Ohio City neighborhood. The funding came in from the Ohio Department of Transportation's Inner Belt Bridge project after cycling advocates lobbied for cycling amenities in light of another hundreds of millions being spent on motorist projects. And though cycling advocates continue to complain of the city's glacial pace at improving the overall cycling scene, other projects in the works continue to draw near universal support.

In The Pipeline

The Rotary Club of Cleveland is continuing to push for an ambitious Red Line Greenway project that would create a bike path along the city's rail transit line for three miles through six neighborhoods. Supporters liken the idea to Cleveland's own New York High Line, estimating a fourfold return on investment based on the latter's \$4 billion return in economic development on the \$1 billion project.

Elsewhere the city continues to expand the Ohio & Erie Canal, better known as the Towpath Trail. The cycling and hiking path follows an old canal route built over seven years from 1825 to 1832 by Irish and German immigrants. The 309-mile route was at the time one of the largest canals ever built. Originally the path was dug to create a link between the Ohio River and Lake Erie, connecting farmers to southern markets.

Today, the increasingly popular recreational route traverses 100 miles of revitalized trail from Cleveland's



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Harvard Avenue in the south side through Cuyahoga Valley National Park, downtown Akron and Canton to New Philadelphia, OH. The goal is to continuously connect the trail from Cleveland's downtown-adjacent Flats neighborhood to New Philadelphia by 2020. Construction of the Flats leg also comes courtesy of the Inner Belt Bridge. Construction workers created the paved path for use in construction of the bridge and will keep the path open to cyclists for the Towpath Trail when the project is completed in 2016.

Running alongside the Towpath is the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad; a historic rail service owned by the National Park Service that offers \$3 "Bike Aboard!" fares for cyclists. Nine stations currently exist throughout the Cuyahoga Valley National Park system and additional stations are planned as the Towpath Trail continues to be rebuilt.

Back in the city, advocates continue to push for a \$5.6 million off-street trail for cyclists and pedestrians along West 65th through the city's west side and the conversion of former streetcar medians into a bicycle expressway. The idea for the latter is to essentially create a cycling boulevard down the middle of the street that would allow cyclists to coast on the earned momentum rather than having to stop every other block at red lights or stop signs. Supporters are also eyeing a 2016 completion date.

Perhaps one of the greater success stories within the city limits has been the construction of Ohio's first velodrome in the Slavic Village neighborhood. As the name would indicate, the neighborhood maintains strong ties to its Slavic heritage, but is more famously known as the epicenter of the 2008 housing crash.

Gary Burkholder with Cleveland Velodrome says talks of a permanent track in Cleveland have been ongoing since the '80s and '90s. Conversations finally became serious in the spring of 2007 with construction breaking ground in May of 2012. The 166-meter outdoor facility constructed from marine-grade plywood and galvanized steel opened on August 30 of last year and welcomes beginners of all ages.

Though a velodrome admittedly does very little for the commuting cyclist, Burkholder adamantly believes they're playing an important role in the city. "It helps harbor Cleveland as a cycling destination," he explains, saying they've drawn cyclists from neighboring states and Canada. "It's really about keeping the momentum

going with our own facility and the cycling culture in Cleveland as a whole."

Improving the cycling culture is precisely why Alex Nosse helped open Joy Machines Bike Shop in growing Ohio City.

"We really wanted to be an agent of change," says the 29-year-old on their decision to open in the city. "So our shop sells the bikes that are geared toward urban riding, and the people we work with are people who are riding their bikes in the city." Generally speaking, Nosse is after the transportation crowd – people who are riding everyday.



Uphill Struggle

Cycling in Cleveland remains an uphill struggle with a recent feature in a local publication charging that the city is stuck in "granny gear." Advocates feel they're being largely ignored by their government and aren't shying away from taking a hands-on approach to their activism. However, cyclists aren't turning their bikes in anytime soon. They'll continue to push for their right to the road through grassroots movements and non-profit advocacy with Bike Cleveland.

Soon, city leaders will have no choice but to listen if they want to continue to draw new blood to the city. Grassroots organizations and non-profits like Ohio City Bicycle Co-Op and Crank-Set Rides will only continue to grow alongside monthly Critical Mass gatherings. That's a good thing for Cleveland. And city leaders, says Nosse, should have a special interest in attracting cyclists.

"The people I've met through biking in Cleveland are some of the greatest I've ever met."



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Pedal Threading

By Brad Quartuccio



Right- and left-hand pedals are threaded differently to prevent them from loosening while riding, and to create headaches for riders the world over. A little knowledge can prevent a lot of frustration.

The right-hand pedal (drive side) is right-hand threaded, meaning the righty-tighty, left-loosey rule applies. Turn the right-hand pedal clockwise to tighten, counterclockwise to loosen, as viewed from the drive side of the bicycle. The left-hand pedal is left-hand threaded, meaning it is turned counterclockwise to tighten and clockwise to loosen as viewed from the non-drive side.

Right- and left-hand threads can be differentiated by eye if not obviously marked. As viewed vertically right-hand threads slope up and to the right, left-hand threads slope up and to the left.



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Cultivating Conversations at BikeBike 2013: A Recap

By: Krista Carlson

More than 300 individuals representing 80 organizations gathered in New Orleans for the 10th anniversary of BikeBike, revisiting the city where volunteers and organizers gathered at the first BikeBike, setting the wheels in motion for a cross-cultural exchange with biking at its center.

An opportunity to share ideas, stories, and support, the 4-day conference brought together a wide range of people and projects that represented the efforts of a collective bike community from across North America and reaching as far as Austria.

The topics addressed at BikeBike each year reflect the current goals and challenges of the various community bike projects that take on different forms in different environments. Accordingly, the focus has grown from solving internal organizational issues to building a network that can leverage shared knowledge and resources between groups.

“Global cross pollination is one of our long term goals,” said Victor Pizarro, executive director the New Orleans-based community bike project Plan B, the host organization for this year’s event. This theme reappeared in workshops throughout BikeBike, and built upon mutual shop-collective support, collaboration among projects, comparing notes on different cultural settings and facilitating national and cross-border exchange.

“There’s nothing better than face to engagement,” said Momoko Saunders of Portland, Oregon’s Bike Farm. “Particularly around some of the more touchy subjects of privilege, of sexism, creating safe spaces.”

“A lot of coops are just setting up and they want the info from coops that are 10 years old, sometimes older than that, and all the experience that they’ve learned and all the mistakes that they’ve made and try to make a better version of that internationally,” said JD Fairman. Before attending BikeBike for the first time this year, and signing on to see that attendees were provided with housing and loaner bikes, Fairman attended the Congreso Nacional de Ciclismo Urbano in Oaxaca in 2012, where he first met Pizarro as part

of a group presenting on coops in the U.S.


“The fact that all these different aspects can meet and talk and go on bike rides—it’s pretty amazing,” said Pizarro. “It’s the in-the-flesh kind of organizing that doesn’t happen online.”

“I wanted to find my peers who were struggling with the same things at the same point,” said Nona Varnado, “and I also wanted to be able to share my knowledge so that people can get to where I am faster, and we create more of a peer group of people who are trying to, from the bottom up, create this sort of social change.”

While it was her first time attending BikeBike, Varnado, a key organizer of ArtCrank, L.A. Bike Trains and the Red5Yellow7 bike-art gallery in L.A., is no stranger to community bike projects, and facilitated seven workshops throughout the weekend. “It’s BikeBike—if you don’t do it, it might not happen,” she said.

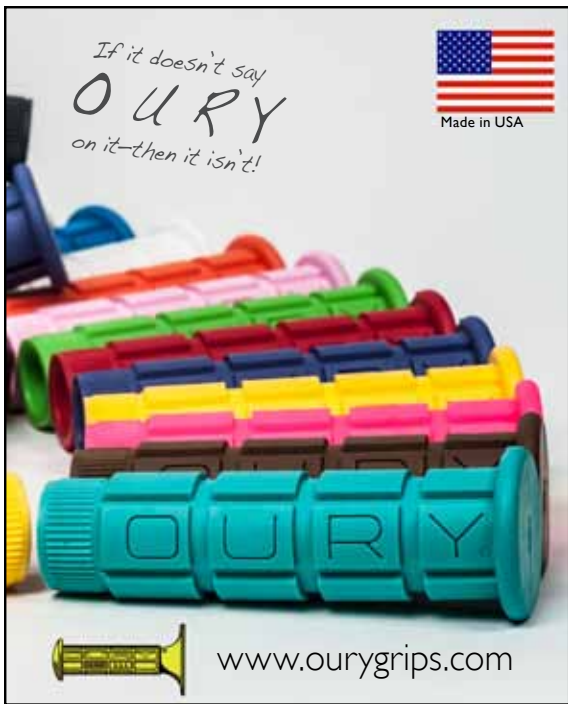

Long involved with integrating bikes are art to elevate one another, Varnado presented on guerilla bike art to a packed house, sharing ideas and examples of ways to use art to advance goals within the community. This workshop was one of seven that she hosted or co-facilitated throughout the weekend.

By comparing models and sharing ideas, the trial-by-fire experiences of one organization becomes a learning tool for other groups. Coming out of BikeBike a few years ago, an online think tank of more than 600 contributors provides a forum for information sharing and discourse between annual events.

“A lot of progress comes in the time between two BikeBikes. It all starts off from an idea being shared and getting folks really excited,” said Loconte. “One of the most surprising things is always how that problem your organization is experiencing and battling over and having a lot of issues with and not finding a way to resolve – most other shops will have very straightforward solutions that you never thought of.” 

BikeBike 2014 will be in Columbus, Ohio. For more information and resources visit www.bikebike.org.

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Via Bicycle and proprietor Curtis Anthony are Philadelphia cycling fixtures. There's no telling how many used bikes of all vintage have found new life under Curtis' watch since opening in 1982. The first floor is a working repair and used bicycle shop, the upstairs floors a veritable museum of American cycling open by invite only. Mention the password, get the tour. Listen and learn. Photos by Brad Quartuccio



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