Tonight's ride was awesome and inspirational. I sense a fundamental change in the ride, and new possibilities opening up before our eyes. The last time I felt this way was the very first time I went on a Mass ride.

I'll tell all about the ride my mini-mass(es) went on, but first I've got to mention the most important thing: We were being cheered everywhere we went, and I do mean everywhere! Folks were cheering us from cars and cable cars, from the sidewalks, and from their houses, leaning out of their doors and windows taking pictures. All told, I saw hundreds of well-wishers tonight!

As the Mass grew in size it had turned into something of a herd being led around by the police. We didn't get into contact with a lot of people that way. I remember the cheering from the early days of the Mass. It's really good to have it back.

My ride was great, even though it wasn't the one I was planning to go on. I was planning on the "Family Mass" ride. I don't have a family started up yet, but since there are always some enterprising folks at the Mass I figured I could adopt a little tyke and get a nice Burley trailer in the deal. Fate intervened: my front brake had gotten munged and I wasted time trying to fix it with my broken Cool Tool, so the families and tykes and trailers were already gone when I showed up. I hightailed it towards the Embarcadero, hoping to catch up with a friend who was riding in a mini-mass that started at Pier 7.

As I got near the end of Mission Street I came upon a not-so-mini-mass, and I noticed that they were stopping at red lights and going when the lights turned green again. I hooked up with them and rode for a few blocks.

I broke off to see how things were going at Justin "Pee Wee" Herman Plaza, where the SFPD had recommended we not con-verge or embark from. Shame on me.

There were, of course, thou-sands of people there. Lots of flyers and some high-quality stickers. The fluorescent ones harkened back to the heyday of ACT UP and Queer Nation, with messages like "One Less Body" and "Willie Brown Can Sniff My Bike Seat." Shame on them (and where can I get some?).

I joined the cyclists embark-ing from Pee Wee Plaza, back down to Mission Street. We stopped at the first intersection because we had a red light. The cross traffic was a mini-mass! We all waited our turns. We slowed down to pay our respects to the two cyclists who were killed this week while biking on M arket.

After this I had a notion to somehow just bail from M arket Street. It's not much fun and a good number of us don't like getting in the way of the streetcars. We made some concerted efforts to make way for the streetcars, though. An intriguing thought occurred to me on M arket Street: No form of transportation gets as many passengers down M arket as fast as Critical Mass. This is true even though our journey is now slowed down considerably by stopping at every red light.

This got really tired, so mini-masses started to form, and they broke off down side streets. And that's when things really started to get interesting.

I've talked to a number of people and it would seem that there were at least a dozen mini-masses criss-crossing their way around the city. We would split up here and there and other minis would join up when they met. It was particularly fun at intersections where the cross traf-fic was another mini. Folks would ask where the mini was going and join up if they liked the sound of it.

I was in a mini that split up at Broadway. Half headed up to the Broadway Tunnel (where they met another mini headed through the Tunnel from the other direction). I went with the other half. (I've been through the Tunnel plenty of times, on skates.) We were going to Golden Gate Park. Then we changed our minds and climbed Lombard Street. A cable car stopped and every-one waved and cheered and took pictures of us. And then we went down the crooked part.

I was stressing out a bit here, due to the condition of my front brake. I managed to stop at the STOP sign, though, as did everyone else. Yep, we stopped at STOP signs as well as red lights, and the cops didn't seem to mind.

We obeyed the traffic laws! The worst infractions I witnessed were a few folks rolling on the sidewalks.

Sometimes there were delays at green lights, general-ly with good reason. At one point on Van Ness there was a delay at the green light because we didn't want to run over a pedestrian who'd crossed against the light. A unobtrusive police officer pulled up a car and blew the loud obnoxious horn at us for this.

After Lombard Street, we made our way through Chinatown and met up with another mini who were head-ing down from the Broadway Tunnel. They weren't the folks who split off from us earlier, this was an entirely dif-ferent group! We joined up and headed to the Stockton Tunnel. Another cable car came by with beer-spewing drunken male yahoos on board, really our only major neg-ative encounter aside from the police car. To Hell with them. We tore through the tunnel, yelling our lungs out.

We cruised down Stockton, crossed M arket, and met up with another mini. We all headed down Mission, eventually meet-ing up with yet another mini, and made our way up to Dolores Park, where we parked the night. Then we went home and watched the idiots on the teevee news attempting to explain this thing.

This is it, this is definite-ly the next level. We don't need an escort and we don't need cocking. My mini made things up as it went along so we don't even real-ly need routes—though it seems to me that having a number of route ideas is a good thing to go. On this ride I was on that Liberat-er Bicycle Excursion for Free Souls mini-mass and didn't even know it. I never did find that Family Mass, though. I'll never forget this ride.

by Jym Dyer: jym@igc.org
There was a time when you needed to bring a bag to Critical Mass to carry all the handouts that were distributed before a ride and when massers themselves are often seen as intimidating figures on the streets. These "corks" were asked for opinions on the police presence and the bicycle cops need to get farther out front, which is safer than cop cars, etc.). They seem to have become more than a critical mass of human beings on bikes, but I will say that the motorcycle cops that are supposed to be out — increases their awareness of bikes — maybe more bike cops will be seen as a result. The bicycle police must stay home because they are irrelevant to the original intent of the ride. Unfortunately, people outside the ride seem to understand armed police presence more than a critical mass of bicycle cops. I like the idea of innocent people being held at gunpoint and mowed down at this rate. The police decided their best strategy was to get the ride over with as soon as possible. (They complained about Critical Mass's costs to the public and the strain on manpower.) So a fleet of police cars, paddles and motorcycles brought back the rear of the ride, and the only those who were not kept away by the police would start to leave. The police held up traffic. A stand-off between bicyclists and police held up traffic. A stand-off between bicyclists and police! It was April 1993. At the intersection of Guerrero and Market a car was at the head of stopped cross-traffic, with the police presence. I've seen problems with the so-called "escorts" the other police presence have before a ride. Now I do because the ride joined critical mass and the ride came to a hill and I didn't take it as quickly as I might have — a.m. overweight cyclist co-capt was backed up to me "Hurry up!" I told him and he said "Try harder!"

One of the reasons Critical Mass was started was to be a social space — people might congregate at the intersection, but off the street. The police's job is to manage traffic and the bicycle cops need to get farther out front. The police presence was to get the ride over with as soon as possible. (They complained about Critical Mass's costs to the public and the strain on manpower.) So a fleet of police cars, paddles and motorcycles brought back the rear of the ride, and the only those who were not kept away by the police would start to leave. The police held up traffic. A stand-off between bicyclists and police held up traffic. A stand-off between bicyclists and police! It was April 1993. At the intersection of Guerrero and Market a car was at the head of stopped cross-traffic, with the police presence. I've seen problems with the so-called "escorts" the other police presence have before a ride. Now I do because the ride joined critical mass and the ride came to a hill and I didn't take it as quickly as I might have — a.m. overweigh...
TRUCULENCE DAY!
San Francisco, July 25, 1997

Came from Excelsior and arrived at JHP 5:45. Went crazy on my own xerocopy and handed out 350 flyers. We were a line of riders, some of us got a lot of dirty looks, but this I’m used to in my daily life. (A though I did feel really disoriented when I walked up to a group who looked like some Marin Bicycle Trail Council or SFBC, with their one idea I talked on. Baseball cap, type dudes, looking at me with disdain.) I left off all the middle-aged people of standing riders with respect, some who didn’t give me an inkling; for we could ride counter to the flow for a while, and I turned on Grove to another left on Van Ness.

Office). Turned right on Grove to another left on Van Ness. At Ninth Street another right on Market, and we proceeded toward the right, but instead of my biking to Van Ness, we turned around and got together another big massive group of riders, and we rode down Market Street whereas the other people were back on Grant Avenue.

It was not until nearly seven o clock that I maneuvered to the correct path. I rode into the middle of the road, and I read later, got beat up in the scramble.

I do want to point out that I approached Sansome and the mini backed up to this intersection. We saw, we said “See ya.”

We bailed and went one block over and saw screaming police vehicles slam to a stop and cops literally jump out running towards Sacramento St.... We were right there on the sidewalk on Clay and they could have grabbed us if they had the inclination, lucky for us we didn’t catch up to the leaders of this mini-mass. Even a reporter on bike, we later got beat up in the scramble.

We were out there... later on saw some video on tv and heard of the 250 [later it was determined that only 115 or so were arrested], and less than 10 were cited for anything but a traffic infraction—ed. I was arrested, we warned the people who were around us at Sansome and Sec and I hope they weren’t stupid enough to stand around any-way to get arrested, unless they wanted to. So we barely escaped the wrath of the M and disappeared into the night. Chintownian, went up Pacific to Stockton, 4th and Townsend and Potrero and Bayshore and Silver and all; it’s a thin line between love and hate. Love takes work, hate is easy. And the lines are being drawn now... not bike lanes! Still, it’s up to riders to decide where to go... From here...

We could start from Pier 7 again... —looking Jim

Letter of intent to protest peacefully.

I expect that the police department and its officers will discharge their duties in accordance with the correct path? Why do you have 5 or 6 motorcycle cops sitting in the MUNI parking lot at Stockton and Muni just watching everyone go the wrong way? Most of these people have no idea they aren’t on the ‘official’ ride!

These people have babies on the back of their bikes, more truculence on page 4

Another View

After a Friday’s complete DISASTER, I’m a little frightened to ride alone on Muni street. (Sorry folks, I can’t keep up with the posting—don’t bother trying to convince me. I’ve tried to explain this above the post and I can’t see how uncivilized (MUNI) can lead to positive change.)

I do want to point out that I joined the Mass on Friday and rode for two blocks. I turned around at Spear and Mission when I realized this was not the official route and rode back to JHP, found Capt. Martell and Capt. Hubbard and asked them:

"What the fuck is going on? WHERE is the police escort that you promised to provide? Why wasn’t Mission blocked at Steuart so that the M ass would be directed on the correct path? Why do you have 5 or 6 motorcycle cops sitting in the MUNI parking lot at Stockton and Muni just watching everyone go the wrong way? Most of these people have no idea they aren’t on the ‘official’ ride!"

These people have babies on the backs of their bikes, more truculence on page 4

TRUCULENCE DAY!
San Francisco, July 25, 1997

I’m speechless. It was the ugliest thing I’ve ever witnessed, yet it was also a thing of profound BEAUTY and I am proud to say that I was a part of it. I do want to point out that I approached Sansome and the mini backed up to this intersection. We saw, we said “See ya.”

We bailed and went one block over and saw screaming police vehicles slam to a stop and cops literally jump out running towards Sacramento St.... We were right there on the sidewalk on Clay and they could have grabbed us if they had the inclination, lucky for us we didn’t catch up to the leaders of this mini-mass. Even a reporter on bike, we later got beat up in the scramble.

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These people have babies on the backs of their bikes, more truculence on page 4
from pg. 3, More Truculence, SF July 25, 1997

they're not here to protest! WHAT'S GOING ON??
You're not following through with your part of the bargain
to facilitate this ride! You came prepared for a riot not a ride!

I WAS PISSED!! The response I got was:
Cpt M arket (at 6:30pm), "This is it! This is the last
CM ride."

Cpt H ubbard, "We just got a call that there is an
incident on the bridge. We don't have the man power
to facilitate the ride. It's not our responsibility. The
route was published. Everyone should know the route. We
handed out 2,000 flyers.

Me: "You don't have the manpower???? W hat about the
agreement? W hat about the non-existent escort? You
only printed up 2,000 flyers! There were 3,000 people at
last month's ride alone—and you didn't anticipate
more than that showing up for this ride? If you were going
to print up 2,000 flyers, why not 4,000? W e had cost an
extra $10 bucks!"

To this end, let me just say that I strongly feel the
SFPD dropped the ball BIG TIME here. I truly feel they
anticipated a riot and prepared for that and that alone.
That being said, I personally witnessed the mayhem
that occurred at 4th and M arket (I was not a part of it—I
hung out a HP for a long time talking with F) Johnson of the
M ayor's staff, a reporter and a couple of other people
who attended the meetings last week and left to go home
the same way I do every day—straight up M arket). I saw
cyclists barreling through red lights (as if they had the
right of way), snaking right into oncoming traffic who
DID have the right of way, then kicking, spitting on or
otherwise assaulting the cars as if the cars were doing
something wrong. I witnessed this flier getting his smug
little ass arrested and felt sick to my stomach that a nice,
safe (i.e., police escorted) ride turned into such a mess.

If you want to participate in future rides (certainly not
to be called "Critical Mass" anymore) that will be spon-
sored by the city and have police escorts so that traffic
laws are adhered to in a lawful, dignified way please
respond to me. I also, if you found yourself caught up in
Friday's critical mess because you thought you were on the
'official ride', please let me know.

—Stacey McCanahan
<stacey.mc.cahan@ArthurAndersen.com>

UNRAVELING THE STORY (AS OF 8/2/97)

Quick recap with some important new information:

1. Police did not provide escort to group. That's clear.
None of the public safety experts with whom I've spoken
can imagine the logic of abandoning 5,000 people
down town at rush hour with no warning or notice for any
reason. Local media still finds this issue a yawn.

2. Fewer arrests than reported. 115 (110 possibly),
not 250.

3. Very few arrests on "serious" charges—7 for assault
and at least one of these is highly suspect. See #4.

4. Police charge professional photographer and pedes-
trian Bennett Hall with striking them with his $5,000
camera. He was taking pictures of the police bashing
pedestrians and cyclists in the Powell/M arket area approx.
7 PM.

5. One woman, who came to Hall's aid—she tried to
rescue his camera from police—was in jail until
Wednesday because she couldn't make bail. All charges
now dropped against her.

6. The people arrested at Sacramento Street were
lucky. An illegal, but humane mass arrest. The
Powell/M arket group was savaged, knocked off bicycles,
clubbed, their bicycles thrown to the ground in an attempt
to break them, kneeling on one cooperative detainee
neck for an extended period etc. etc. The people assault-
ed included pedestrians and at least one pedestrian was
pepper sprayed.

7. Also, many who were assaulted were not arrested.
Some were completely ignored with their bicycles.
Some bicycles were taken without receipt from people
who were not charged. Some people were arrested and
their bicycles left in the street.

8. Video photos show that immediately prior to
the police attacks, the street was clear, traffic was flowing
and the cyclists and pedestrians were peaceful.

The photograph assailed is a well known commercial
photographer with a studio on Powell and a long history
of civic volunteer work. Where's the local media on this?
(Busy complaining. I just got a long letter from one of
our private investigators organized and ready to help.
2. The report of the pedestrian photographer and two
other pedestrians assaulted and arrested in the
Powell/M arket area is at:

http://www.e-media.com/cm/hall.html

The first and last Critical Mass rides took, left a April
1993 (Numb 1) and a April 1995 (Numb 23). Various
themes, reports from elsewhere, tactical suggestions,
sometimes proposed routes, and occasionally political
commentary, published for almost every Critical Mass ride for two years.
The main protagonists of this small
publication were Jim Swanson and Chris Carlson with
participation, writing, discussing, distributing, etc., from
Markus Cook, Stephen Bodzin, Joel Pomerantz, Dierdre
Crowley, Anny Canayat, Hugh D'Andrade, James
Kem, Michael A. Kitt, Travis M. Roche, Dave Snyder,
Victor V eysey, and Kathy Roberts (sorry if we forgot
anyone!) By the end of two years it had increasingly
become the "official voice" of San Francisco's Critical
Mass, a role those of us doing it didn't want. In fact, we
and fight for them as well!

1. WEB SITE NOTES:

1. IMPORTA NT Reminder: people with legal prob-
lems and/or eye witness testimony see:

http://www.e-media.com/cm/legal.html

Let people know there are volunteer attorneys and pri-
vate investigators organized and ready to help.

2. The report of the pedestrian photographer and two
other pedestrians assaulted and arrested in the

http://www.e-media.com/cm

June 1996, Howard Street at 4th, San Francisco

Happy 5th Birthday San Francisco Critical Mass

WHAT'S NEXT?
Nonviolence and Action
August 29, 1997

by Josh Wilson

What the hell is this Critical Mass thing? Is it a party?
A protest? A new way of commuting?

That’s the underlying concern, I think, behind this and any other Critical Mass. People may have different ways of expressing it. Some want to ride together to be safe, and have a friendly ride. Some want it as a protest for safer streets. These are flip sides of the same coin.

A protest to the police riot of July 25th, 1997, Critical Mass, to define it or regulate it. Such efforts usually fail over the long term. The best they can do is nudge it. One route or modus operandi may prevail one month, then sink into oblivion the next.

In San Francisco people have tried to establish regular routes, and were ultimately ignored. The police tried a heavy-handed approach to stopping the Mass, and are now facing a lawsuit by illegally-arrested cyclists.

Meanwhile, the monthly rides continue. Critical Mass is a social habit, a collective expression of a community, rather than a hierarchically-organized parade. Like the folks who dog the roadways with automobiles during “drive time,” Critical Mass is simply nothing a lot of people have gotten into the habit of doing. It fits into their lives. It’s useful on many levels—as a commute option, a political statement, a social experience. And in a very real sense it is the embodiment of grassroots decision making, fraught with splits and cross-purposes, as well as reconciliation and community problem-solving.

Consider San Francisco’s present quandary:
At the July 25th Mass we had a police riot, followed by a month of vicious press-prepping the public for another display of “lawless, cyclist anarchy” in August. But widespread violence was obviously a media fiction. The police started a riot, and less than ten people out of roughly 6,000 cyclists were ever charged with anything other than a traffic violation.

Then, come the August Mass, we had a breathtaking demonstration of restraint and overwhelming, nonviolent determination.

Now, people complain that Critical Mass is boring, or has caved in. To that I flip the fastest “FUCK YOU!!!” Seriously. Fuck that “jive-ass mentality, that adolescent schoolboy attitude. Fight! Fight! Fight!” Fuck your stupid violent little boys and girls. Fuck you! That’s violent silly pampering. I’m not punk rock, that’s schoolyard “Us versus Them” Gangland mentality. That’s the same mentality that has perpetrated slaughter in Northern Ireland and Cambodia and the Balkans and the Middle East and Rwanda and who-knows-where-else. It’s the philosophy of Hatred and Revenge, and it has been a plague upon the human race since the time of the first civilization.

A letter to the September 10th SF Bay Guardian reads “...I went to [August’s Critical Mass] prepared to see some good street fighting and instead I felt as if watching the most boring demonstration of civil disobedience I have ever seen.”

What’s that? This person came to “...good street fighting”—not participate in a collective act—just doing the good old American spectator sports thing. Sorry we can’t entertain you. We’re an organic technology performing remorse over a lack of violence threatens people’s lives. Critical Mass isn’t fucking M ortal Kombat, you knuckle-dragging armchair anarchists. This is a political act, for the sake of ideas and principles, not leaders or a political party. People are out there for the sake of the same goals and principles, not leaders or a political party. You have a choice—do you violently confront the benumbed status quo, and make enemies out of the people you must share the roads with? Or do you challenge their imagination by breaking out of their expectations for you, and showing them a positive approach to problem solving?

Ride peacefully, and ride in Mini and Commuter M as as much as you can, avoiding and defusing road rage. Help create an overwhelming display of nonviolent solidarity. Demonstrate, every day, not just the last Friday of the month, the strength and superiority of your commitment. Do it with charm and good humor. Because if Critical Mass is violent, it becomes a POLICE PROBLEM and the legitimate political concerns behind it will be ignored by a prurient media looking for sensational headlines. That reinforces the status quo people who act violently are destroying our power and community.

There are huge numbers of new cyclists on the streets of San Francisco, perhaps twice as many people riding downtown as compared even a year ago. Our presence on the streets is an education and example to everyone. If Critical Mass evolves into a new way of riding together on a daily basis, with the Big M only Riding serving as a ritual affirmation of community, then what we will have is the beginnings of new transportation habits, new transportation patterns, a “Paradigm Shift,” baby, with all the inevitability of the tides. We need to change the deeply ingrained, destructive habits of the car culture. It’s environmental, it’s political, it’s empowering, it’s personal and—necessarily—collective.

We start to solve the impossible problems of our world by changing the fundamental habits thousands, millions of individuals share. If we eat, where we get it, how it gets to us. What we eat and why, what makes us buy, how they make it, how we get around, what systems we support when we make our transportation choices.

Changing these habits is challenging—buying only organic food, after all, is more expensive. Trying to figure out how your company is designed is more than either can be a depressing exercise in futility. It’s easier to just buy the damn product and use it. M aybe, though, after a while, simply accepting the status quo and getting on with one’s business becomes less easy, more difficult. Our participation in a product becomes impossible to ignore.

Critical Mass is, for me, a ritual affirmation of my efforts to make new habits for myself, and for our whole American culture. Critical Mass is on the leading edge, and in San Francisco we are the model for the whole world.

DO THE UNEXPECTED! BE POLITE! BE CONSIDERATE!

Have fun! Your pleasure is a way more inspirational and subversive than any postponing or anger or force you may bring to bear. Remember: The world only owes you the best. But it only delivers if you’re lucky! —Chris Carlson
Yellow Bikes Come to San Francisco

WHAT IF I NEVER BECAME A BICYCLE COMMUTER?

I would alternate between mass transit, and dri-
ving a car, because I would have never gotten rid of
car.

While taking mass transit, I would be greeted
every day by grum faces ready to begin the workday.
I may as well be waiting for the 2nd coming, if I'm wait-
ing for Muni, and certain buses would have the
oppressive smell of sweat and urine mixed with
equally oppressive heat.

While driving, I wouldn't mind paying through the
teeth: over $1500 for gas a year, $1200 for car
insurance, and perhaps $1000 for miscellaneous
repairs/replacements. That's $3,700 a year, $22,000
over 6 years the average time it takes before the
average American considers getting a new car. On
top of that I would spend on average, ten forty-hour
weeks behind the wheel. (Conservation Law
Foundation, August 1996) I wouldn't notice all the
pollution (pounds of it) that I'd be throwing into the
faces of pedestrians and cyclists.

Since, I live in the Sunset, I would be supporting
a retrofit of the Central freeway. If I did have a car, I
would California stop through thinking only of
me, and just not caring. I wouldn't be voting "NO"
on proposition H, because I wouldn't consider my
California stop through signs thinking only of
a retrofit of the Central Freeway. If I did have a car, I
would never get rid of

"Hi, my name's Michael. How are you?" I shook
the offered hand. "Your bike is cool!" I thought it
would shamefully hide my bike in an attic, and drive
to Golden Gate Park. Once on JFK drive, I would
ignore those folks petitioning for a car-free JFK.

The day of the August Critical Mass, 200 asking
cyclists to smile, stop at lights, and meet at
Dolores Park would have never been passed out.

Would I ever engage in constructive dialogue
about transportation issues? Would I see myself as
not an innocent, but as somebody who in some
small way is part of the problem rather than part of
the solution?

Well, it's really not good to dwell on what might
have happened. Ride a bike!

By Jim Barcelona

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS MASS AND MASS FELT GOOD

A personal account of 5 years of Massing, with no guarantees of accuracy or relevance. By A. Sojourner

"I'm just too busy to have a birthday!"

"Happy 5th Birthday San Francisco Critical Mass!"

I've been thinking about mass all year long, and have lost track of how many times I had a birthday in the last four
months. My last one was a few weeks ago, and I'm sure I'm
not the only one who is thinking about it.

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months. My last one was a few weeks ago, and I'm sure I'm
not the only one who is thinking about it.
To Cork or not to Cork, that is the question.

(Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the pepper spray and batons of outrageous policemen...)

North Beach and your group can decide whether to do it or not or to even split. The mini-masses will split and regroup dynamically like a living organism. Critical Mass won't be a boring parade anymore. It will be alive. It will be able to change its direction, even when lights are red. It will always be new and different.

The impact of multiple groups enabled by not corking can be huge. Each group can start to think of how to implement other Critical Masses throughout the world so we can still have the same feeling of safety and streets without those silly cars, but the groups can spread out all over a neighborhood. Instead of Hundreds of people on only one street, we will be everywhere. People won't be able to avoid us. We won't piss people off but we will affect people even more.

That is true power. Standing still can be a step in the wrong direction.

There have been police free mini-mass rides for months. They started because people got tired of the main ride. It wasn't the threat of the police that started mini-masses. It was the desire to explore, to take things further than they could be with the monolithic maxim. Lively, fun, surprising, social.

So if you see a bunch of police up ahead and you don't want to be part of that scene, turn right onto another street. If you find yourself just going down boring M atk St. again, check out the Tenderloin. With a Big Critical Mass of bikes, it's always safe. Sure it's messy but it sure beats just standing there. And you can see what is going on.

It isn't about the police. It is about how we interact on the streets. People in cars or buses aren't going to talk to each other and decide where to go next. So wherever you want, make some noise. Enjoy yourself and enjoy the people around you. It is your Mass. Make the most of it.

— by Michael Smith

For Internet information: http://www.sfcc.org/~tcp/spacecassini/
Critical Mass Cities

These are the cities that have (or have had) Critical Mass rides since they started in San Francisco in September 1992:

- Aalborg, Denmark
- Aarhus, Denmark
- Aiqueque, NI
- Antwerp, the Netherlands
- Aarhus, MD
- Arita, CA
- Athens, GA
- Atlanta, GA
- Austin, TX
- Barcelona, Spain
- Berkeley, CA
- Bergen, Norway
- Berlin, Germany
- Bloomington, Indiana
- Bonn, Germany
- Buxton, MA
- Boulder, CO
- Brisbane, Australia
- Burlington, VT
- Chicago, IL
- Christchurch, New Zealand
- Cleveland, OH
- Columbia, MO
- Columbus, OH
- Copenhagen, Denmark
- Portland, OR
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Philadelphia, PA
- Newcastle, Australia
- New Orleans, Louisiana
- New York City, NY
- Ottawa, Ontario
- Perth, Australia
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Portland, OR
- Poznan, Poland
- Reno, NV
- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Sacramento, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- San Luis Obispo, CA
- Santa Fe, CA
- Santa Rosa, CA
- Seattle, WA
- Silicon Valley, CA
- Swendborg, Denmark
- Sydney, Australia
- Toledo, OH
- Toronto, Ontario
- Tucson, AZ
- Vancouver, BC
- Washington, DC
- Waterlo, Ontario, Canada
- Zurich, Switzerland
- "The Critical Mass Times"—Washington, DC.

Critical Mass in the UK

http://www.pplw.ac.uk/~janb/green/sum.html

Critical Mass in the US

http://www.sfi.org/policy/gov/AGin.html

Critical Mass in the Netherlands

http://www.cessenbommelaar.nl

Critical Mass in Sydney

Ed Gentner
< ed@ physics.usyd.edu.au >

BERGEN, NORWAY

This is something we do, because it is fun! Come by on your way home, and join us for a ride around the downtown. The conditions for bikers in Bergen are bad. It is important to show people that there are many bikers despite the lack of bike roads and -lanes. Only this will force the politicians to consider our interests! Dates for actions: 3 July, 7 August, 4 September and 2 October.

Critical Mass in Bergen was started in September 1995. The first year we biked through the winter. The second year we took a three-fourth break to avoid the worst storms. (We don't really have that many snowstorms here, but we have snow, and it is wet and slippery to bike. Especially, because the snowplows plow the snow to the shoulder of the road, which usually is used by bikers. And as if that is not enough, all walkways are shot down by the house owners and the snow is deposited on the road shoulder.)

The number of bikers attending varies. Our record is 75, but usually we are around 30 bikers. We have a "soft" profile: we try to follow the traffic rules, and people seem to like us! We have had a lot positive attention from the press. The City Council has approved a plan for walkways and bike roads for the City of Bergen (excluding downtown), but they did not budget money for the plan. With the current level of investment it will take from 35 to 65 years to finish the bike road system. So, the most important task we have now is to create a opinion that allows (and forces) the politicians to put the money where their mouths is!

Keep in touch!

http://home1.inet.tele.dk/chrris/propaganda/kritiske.html

http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/8622/

http://www.semiotek.com/cm.html

http://www.sfi.org/policy/gov/AGin.html

"The Critical Mass Times"—Washington, DC.

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

Sunday, 1 October 1995: The international bike brigade is discovering strength in numbers, observes A.na Burnside. Banding together with 80 others on Critical Mass's rush-hour-stopping ride through Edinburgh or around 40 in Glasgow gives the worm a chance to turn. On the last Friday of every month cyclists defy the rush hour to ride en masse through the city centres, wearing placards identifying bike routes...The rest of the cost, £183m, will be met by central and local transport plans. Only this will make the country an attractive destination for two-wheeling tourists. What it won't do is to force the politicians to put the money where their mouths is!

With no leaders and no party lines, anyone can join in. The government wants to encourage city cycling, and the Millumisation Commission has awarded civil engineering charity Sustrans £42.5m to build the National Cycle Network, a 6,500-mile system of routes, by 2005. The rest of the cost, £183m, will be met by central and local transport funds, countryside funds, the cycling industry and charity.

This network should revolutionise leisure and long-distance cycling in Britain and make the country an attractive destination for two-wheeling tourists. What it won't do is encourage city workers to swap their cars for cycles.

Improvements cannot come soon enough for the Critical Massers. When you are one of 80, the pace is slow, the traffic holds back and the road is yours. Then the demonstration is over, and it's back to the real world.

Danny Wright, cycling with Jamie, 9, and Ruby, 7, thinks it's outrageous that this is the only chance young children get to cycle on the road. "They love cycling, and it's such an appropriate form of transport."

Protestor Keith Davidson notices the difference immedi-ately. "When the ride breaks up and you cycle home on your own, you feel scared. You're into the traffic, everything is moving at 30 or 40 miles an hour, and you feel a lot more vulnerable because it's so much more dangerous."
BIRMINGHAM ENGLAND

(home of the Industrial Revolution!)

Birmingham's CM is now almost 4 years old, and has been blessed with a number of enthusiastic riders!

Spring 1995: Birmingham Critical Mass bike rides began in December 1993 and have happened on the first Friday of every month since. We meet outside the Cathedral on Colmore Row from 5 pm and the ride normally starts at about 5.20 pm. We always begin by riding around the inner ring road (Quayside) and then head off along one of the radial routes into the city to finish, at a pub about a mile or two from the centre.

Birmingham Critical Mass rides have now become a renowned social event for cyclists as well as being a demonstration of our right to use the roads.

We have had very little trouble from the police. For a few months they were present at every ride and provided a motorcycle escort; partly in response to some irresponsible behavior by a few hot heads. They made no attempt to stop us and helped us get around difficult junctions, although they did clamp down on red light jumping cyclists without lights etc, which is only to be expected.

There was a period when they tried to get Friends of the Earth to take responsibility for the rides and register it as an official demonstration, but dropped the idea when they realised that CM is not organised by FoE or any other group and is simply a spontaneous and coincidental assertion of cyclists right to use the road. Participants of other CM rides should take care to ensure that they can not be made to take any responsibility for the rides otherwise they could face legal action should there be an accident.

At Birmingham CM we have always recognised that many people who come on the rides do not normally cycle in busy traffic. We always keep in a tight group, rather than allowing the rest of the traffic to couple up and get in front of us. Excellent for it's educational effect.

The ride normally starts at 5 pm from outside St Philip's cathedral (home of the Industrial Revolution!) and then heads to Digbeth with a certain sense of relief.

The ride on Friday 2nd February saw one of the best rides for a long time (IMHO). There were 50 riders - pretty good for a cold, dark February night. There were no unpleasant incidents, and a couple of positive ones. Especially coming down the inner ring road, where the bus lane was full of cars. A few corkers rode through the traffic to stop the cars moving, explained to the drivers the error of their ways (buses, taxis and bikes only), and allowed the rest of the ride to stream round them to the front. Excellent for it's educational effect.

Last on Colmore Circus (a large multi-laned round-about), the mass was spreading across the lanes nicely, when a car came weaving dangerously through on the inside. This character was soon surrounded by riders, and brought to a halt, letting the rest of the traffic go. It was a great moment - cyclists getting back for all those times that they've been cut up, and enforcing a little bit of consideration for the more vulnerable.

It's moments like these that give Critical Mass it's buzz, and make it all worthwhile. Just think, light evenings by next month! And don't forget that next year is the centenary of the bicycle at the Olympics.

Jonathan February 1996

Critical Mass London

A hundred for the summer months.
— Marcus, December 1995

Happy 5th Birthday San Francisco Critical Mass! 9

Meet at the Women's Building 18th Street between Valencia & Guerrero 7pm.
Come swing with some female scorchers.

38 cities in the United Kingdom

First Friday of every month

Birmingham—5pm St Philip's cathedral
Chester—5pm — Town Hall
Leeds—5pm — City Centre
Preston—4.15pm The Flag Market
South London—6.15pm Windmill Pub, Clapham Common
Walsall—5.15pm The Hippo

First Saturday of every month

Brighton—12.30pm at St Peter's Church by the sea
Norwich—5pm Green St car park

Second Friday of every month

West London—6pm Shepherds Bush Green, opposite the Empire

Second Saturday of every month

Cardiff—2pm outside City Hall

Third Friday of every month

Kidderminster—5pm Green St car park

Third Saturday of every month

Worcester—12 noon at the racecourse

Last Thursday of every month

Reading—5.30pm Forbury Gardens

Fourth Friday of every month

Nottingham—5.15pm Market Square

Last Friday of every month

Bath—4.30pm Abbey Courtyard
Belfast, Northern Ireland—4.30pm outside Town Hall
Bristol—5.30pm, Arnolfini.
Cambridge—5.30pm Parker's Piece
Coventry—5.45pm Railway Station, St. Botolph's Roundabout
Edinburgh—5.30pm Royal Scottish Academy on the Mound
Exeter—5.30pm Paris Street Cafe near bus Station
Gloucester—5.30pm Kelvingrove Art Gallery

Glasgow—5.30pm Kelvingrove Art Gallery

Argyle Street
Guildford—5.15pm Guildford Railway Station

Lancaster—4.30pm Dalton Square
Leicester—5pm Town Hall Square
Liverpool—5pm Mann Island, Pier Head
London—5.45pm NFT building under Waterloo Bridge (South Bank)
Manchester—5pm St Peter's Square

Oxford—5pm The Plains (Magdalen Roundabout) See also their leaflet

http://users.ox.ac.uk/~mert0063/green/cmaz.html

Sheffield—5pm Sheffield Station
Wolverhampton—5pm St Peter's Square (outside the civic centre)

York—6pm Barbican Centre

See also their leaflet http://users.ox.ac.uk/~mert0063/green/cmaz.html
Sheffield—5pm Sheffield Station

Saturday after last Friday of every month

North London—12 noon Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street

Last Saturday of every month

Aberdeen—12 noon Marischal College
Newcastle—12 noon Haymarket

Every Friday

Croydon—5pm at Speaker's Corner (outside City Hall)

Last updated: February 2, 1997

http://www.cmaz.org.uk
I ride everyday in and around Melbourne. It’s a quite a bike friendly city, it has a traffic problem (like every city does) and it seems that it’s in danger of becoming a huge traffic problem. Some state government is hell bent on cutting public transport and building freeways as an answer to continuing traffic build up. Melbourne’s based plan is to attract more commuters. If we have a chance to demonstrate an alternative mode of transport to motorists.

A great thanks to Ruth who was the catalyst in making Melbourne’s Mass happen.

Glenden
munaf.unimelb.edu.au

CRITICAL MASS, SYDNEY

Bicycle actions are infectious. A couple of years after the first Critical Mass ride in Sydney, a heap of new bike advocacy and related groups have been formed in suburban and city’s streets resonate with the jubilant whistles and bells of around 700 wheels (bikes, blades, skaters, tandems and trailers) fortifying, and equal amounts of energy have been directed into working on, and improving the conditions for Sydney’s cyclists.

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The Chicago Hold Up!

Critical Mass, the Windy City

Jim Redd, Chicago, September 11, 1997

My son, Adrian, and I bike a lot together. We’ve ridden the entire Blue Ridge Parkway, spent a week camping and biking the old mining roads in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, and, last January, we single-tracked Tarahumara Indian trails in the Copper Canyon country of Mexico. In Chicago, I bike to work every day, and Adrian is a bike messenger during the summer.

He goes to college in Olympia, Washington. This summer, when he came back to Chicago, he mentioned that he had participated in something called a “Critical Mass” in Olympia. He showed me pictures of bikers riding through the middle of town. He explained to me that “Critical Mass” was big on the West Coast, especially in the Bay Area. We talked a little about the philosophy behind it, and I also entertained the notion of something like that in Chicago, but neither of us pursued it.

Then, on a Saturday, my neighbor mentioned a news item he had picked up from the S.F. Chronicle Web page. He printed out a hardcopy of the Chronicle’s report of the arrests in the S.F. Critical Mass. I read it, and I was amazed that mere bicyclists could cause such a commotion. But when I real-
ized the scale of the whole thing (5,000 riders) I thought I should do the same thing that the bicycle revolution has begun to do for my wife, only half-kidding. I immediately got on the web to find out the details of how such an event could happen. Latoya, the other rider, a few more came up. I gave out a few route maps. A few more came. We were all just looking around at each other: no one knew exactly what to do. So far, we were nowhere near a critical mass. Then, around 5:40, people started showing up from all directions. I couldn’t believe it! I started passing out strips of colored streamers in an attempt to make things look festive. I was so excited. I looked back and there it was: the Chicago Air and Water Show and the Grant Park Jazz Festival. We stood on the lakefront bike path and handed them to passing cyclists.

Then, when I began to see “clones” of the flyer appearing I knew it was working. I met Michael Burton, who volunteered to do media promotion. We planned a meeting to talk about the route. A dozen people showed up. I proposed we ride down State Street and up LaSalle (the heart of the financial district). Some said the route was “too aggressive” for a first Mass. I invoked Burnham’s dictum, but we developed a “Plan B” anyway in case we didn’t have the numbers to “hold our own” in the Loop. But the enthusiasm displayed at the meeting convinced us that we were on the right track, and that this thing might actually happen. I resumed my flyer ing with renewed dedication.

The day of the ride I was apprehensive. A long lines of people passed out “This is the midwest, not California. People just don’t do this sort of thing here.” I feared the worst: maybe 10 riders (just my family and a few friends) outnumbered 5 to 1 by Chicago cops. What a joke it would be! I arrived at the Plaza at about 5:00. I saw 1 (one), unorganized one, and about fifteen cops standing around. I said to myself: Oh shit. A lot! I sat and chatted with the other rider, a few more came up. I gave out a few route maps. A few more came. We were all just looking around at each other: no one knew exactly what to do. So far, we were nowhere near a critical mass. Then, around 5:40, we started to get a feeling of something happening. We knew we were on the right track, and that this thing might actually happen. I resumed my flyer ing with renewed dedication.

I passed the word that the horn would be the signal to start. (Mark never told me how to actually START the thing!) It’s supposed to be “anarchic” I thought. But, in reality, it just briefly raise our bikes and then be on our way, so I put my bike down and headed south. But this time, no one followed. I looked back and the entire Mass was still in the intersection, holding the corner of the street. I looked out for cops. One by one, I lifted my bike again and joined in. Then, as the silent signal was given, the riders lowered their bikes, mounted up, and headed toward the park. A squad car showed up, but there was no one to arrest, no trace of what had happened. Car traffic had resumed. It’s normal flow, all was right with the world.

My original plan was to have a keg of beer in the park after the ride. However, there had been a keg of beer in the area, and the dope needed — to bust us for public consumption of alcoholic beverages. Fortunately, one of the riders volunteered his side yard for the festivities and we had a “mini-mass” over to his place, about 4 blocks away. There, we tapped the keg, socialized, and drank to our success. But we were already so high on the psychic energy of the event that we hardly needed alcohol.

Well, that’s my perspective on the Chicago Mass. Various estimates placed the number between 250 and 300. We would have considered it a success if we had had only 70. Many people have volunteered services — making t-shirts & signs, creating Web sites, distributing flyers, etc., so I expect the next Chicago Critical Mass, Oct. 3, to at least double in size. We may have to taper off in the winter, but we’ll be back in the Spring and I expect to be up in the thousands by the end of next summer.

I want to thank everyone for making the Critical Mass a success, especially my wife, Marnia, for indulging me in yet another unorthodox project, to my son Adrian, the bike messenger connection, to his friend Arian Garcia, who hauled the keg around, to Tim M etzer who had the foresight to get a mailing list started at the party, to Michael Burton for his PR skills, and A Mara Baumgarten and her friends for sharing their experiences in earlier Chicago Masses.

Jim Redd is a bike-writer as well as a mild-mannered computer programmer. His most recent articles, “Ignore Your Granny,” appeared in the June issue of Bike Magazine.
Critical Mass

I rushed from the office at twenty past four. I raced with the traffic like never before.

The anticipation of a ring road ride

Filled me at once with fear and excitement inside

At the meeting place there were bikes galore

Some owned by friends, some I'd not seen before

I lingered and watched as others arrived

In time for the kick-off at five twenty-five

When the signal was given I heard what seemed

Like a thousand deafening whistling screams

With whirring wheels we had pedalling power

To challenge the city in the space of an hour

When my bike hit the road I felt a kind of release

Cycling in mass, my fear of cars ceased

Slowly we maneuvered to take up a lane

But the pace soon quickened when the traffic lights changed

Going through the tunnel the whistling screams

Were accompanied by hoots and yells, and streams

Of laughter. I sensed these were Halcyon days

Years from now I'd remember the heat and the haze

Yet another sound was reaching my ears

I turned, it was singing and strumming but here

I knew we were crazy, but this was how we got far

It wasn't just "Look, no hands", he was playing a guitar!

My thoughts raced—"We're here, we've got the impetus

To make this critical mass seem ubiquitous

No screeching brakes, we're a well-oiled crew

Get out of your car, you could join us too."

At each roundabout we sailed past the traffic

No screeching brakes, we're a well-oiled crew

"Get out of your car, you could join us too."

I felt the day ended with a sense of pride

Critical Mass, says the ride started happening periodically a couple years ago and this year has been held consistently on the first Friday of each month. There were fewer than 20 people at the first ride. Now there's a core group of 25-40 and that swells up to 100 people, like it did in August.

"We had extensive media coverage that was all car-centered. Our ride is right after the City's, so it gives you a chance to go to both. All the supposedly negative stuff [from July] came rolling over to us. Usually there are four police officers and this time there were ten. Our rides have become better organized. We've only had two police incidents, once when we crossed over to Sparks (the next town), and then last week a person got a ticket for supposedly not riding two abreast."

The Reno Police Department has been very supportive. It's taken a different shape than in San Francisco. We're not allowed to take two lanes. If we had 1,000-1,500 we could. But then we'd need a special event permit, a million dollars insurance, to pay over-time. If the police chief tells us we need to obey the laws like cars. You can ride two abreast and take up a lane.

A lot of people have different goals. For some it's a celebration of cycling and bicycle advocacy. For some people, it's their mission in life to be activists and participate in some sort of civil disobedience. Our core group of 10-15 people is wrestling with a group consensus about what we're trying to do. It is partly to make cars aware and educate people about bicycle advocacy. Right now we have the support of police and favorable press coverage. The coverage has not been critical of people participating in rides and has helped bring attention to a lot of other issues in the city. We're going to focus on routes where there are existing bicycle lanes and where we have proposed bicycle lanes. Where there's a bike lane you have to stay in it. In Reno we've got a lot going on in terms of a regional transportation commission that works with a bicycle council. We're looking at looking at it regionally. And there's the Nevada Department of Transportation funding for a program where Reno police officers will go into schools to teach about bicycle safety and every kid will get a free helmet. That's pretty innovative. There are things going on in Reno in terms of broader issues. It's not safe city to ride in. The roads are bad. Motorists aren't aware of bicyclists. We have a lot of work to do. As a movement we're just getting going. We haven't had the big breakthroughs. And now we're hoping to make it more consistent where we spread the word. We've got work to do there. With numbers it makes it more successful and it's fun. We're talking about doing costumes for the Halloween ride. Usually we end up at a park—Wingfield or another. We tow a keg, play frisbee, have a party, watch a band. It's supposed to be fun too.

For more information about the Reno ride, you can call Mark Newtowon at (702) 329-4899 or show up around 5:30 at the "Brock Park" next to Java Jungle down by the river in downtown Reno.
"A well-camera'd society is a polite society."

Depending on what town, what part of town, and who you ride with all the rights go out the window. In a beautiful part of town, you may be terrorized by a terrifying war zone, usually thanks to the actions of motorists and police. However, in a town that you know and that you can trust, you may find it possible to assert these abuses. Knowing our rights and gathering our own evidence is very powerful tools.

When we are organized and prepared, the dirty tricks that police use become liabilities to them and begin to lose their appeal. Showing that you know and are prepared to defend your rights is not only empowering and a defense against police abuses, but it helps break down the wall preventing communication between ourselves—the rollers—and they, the copper ones. Once that wall is dismantled, and assuming they are not under pressure to abuse our rights, they are much less likely to attack.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS. Simply knowing the Vehicle Code (VC) and basic citizens' rights puts you in good position. In California, the VC is available for three buck from the DMV. Groups like CopWatch hold trainings and have publications to familiarize yourself with how to deal with police abuses. This type of information is online, such as the "Bike Rights Survival Package" found at http://www.xnet.com/bike. In California, you have a right to observe from a "safe distance" and not to be charged.

A USEFUL RIGHT TO BE AWARE OF: You don't have to show ID unless detained with regards to some crime that the officer knows has happened or things is happening.

—OFFICER: "SHOW ME SOME ID!"
—YOU: "AM I BEING DETAINED?"
—OFFICER: "YES"
—YOU: "With regards to what crime?"

—If the officer can't answer this, you are being harassed. But if the situation doesn't allow you to get out of town before you've been abused. Fortunately, the availability of cheap, good quality camcorders has given the citizen activist enormous protection. Good video shows people without a doubt and moves them emotionally. Good video can be carefully analysed for details and used—at least in audio. And if the police turn off your camera, that will only go very much for them in court; as suppressing or destroying evidence. This leads us to the golden rule: NEVER TURN OFF YOUR CAMERA! The police may order you to turn it off—but if it's not in your hand, it's not much different from destroying a necklace. There's no reason for it to be off if it doesn't interfere with their duties. Even if you are in cuffs, the audio is important.

STILL LEGAL TO TAP VIDEO. If you legally record a cop on camera, your right. Your bike should be used to code, and you should not be violating even the smallest law. You need to be verbal when accepting the audio, you see that OK, and you will or if you're being roughed up or otherwise violated. "Hey that hurts, why are you pushing me". It is critically important that you maintain a professional demeanor. To be best protected, you need to act as a Legal Observer. A legal observer does not get involved in confrontations, fights, shouting matches, escalation, name calling or any law breaking no matter how minor, if at all possible. Legal observers tend to get special consideration in court.

"I CAN RECORD THIS?" Yes. If it's in public, you can record it—but you need permission to record an interview. Police have no reasonable expectation of privacy in California. In some states things are more repression and you may at least need to inform them you are recording. These rules go for audios as well. Phone calls are another story.

BUDY SYSTEM. It's very helpful to have a buddy to help you. Your buddy watches your bike and your back, has spare batteries and tapes, calls out license plates and badge numbers, etc. Because the police tend to cuff camerapeople first and on the up-and-up—maybe as quickly and subtly as possible. Aiso note that your tape may go into private hands if they confiscate it. If you know clearly you won't be able to record any more, or if you've been surrounded by police and have a chance, switch tapes and give your most recent tape to someone you trust who has no involvement. "Hey, that hurts, why are you pushing me". It is critically important that you maintain a professional demeanor. To be best protected, you need to act as a Legal Observer. A legal observer does not get involved in confrontations, fights, shouting matches, escalation, name calling or any law breaking no matter how minor, if at all possible. Legal observers tend to get special consideration in court.

FIVE SECOND RULE. Hold that camera steady. "Finishing" is when you wave the camera every which way. This can sometimes be helpful for detailed analysis but not for watching by actual people.

PRACTICE. Crazy things happen to you during violent situations. Cameras get turned off, the picture goes crazy, you start babbling useless information that destroys the audio or even destroys your credibility as a witness/legal observer. Practice in tense situations. Practice bijing with the camera. Role play. Or games that works well for us is playing a pin-the-tail game where you are trying to get a red felt tail of a victim's belt, then pin it on themselves and run. Your job is to keep up and get a clear picture of who "killed" the tail each time, even while running. WATCH YOUR FOOTAGE RIGHT AWAY. You learn the most from feedback, lessons that can save lives in the future.

IF AN INCIDENT OCCURS: Go into high-gear record mode. Where are you exactly and what time is it? (A laserly catch public clocks in film and street and store signs.

Who was there? Get the names of witnesses on film. Exchange names and numbers with whoever else was around who is witnessing (we've been doing that at SFCM before the start of the ride, too). While the incident is occurring, do not speak unless absolutely necessary. Get the widest possible view of the action. If it's a free-for-all, record the camera with two hands or against a pole on the main action and look from side to side for any other incidents of abuse. In the Market and Powell police riot, you see a wave of cops swinging batons past the cameraperson, but the cameraperson didn't notice.

TRY NOT TO ZOOM. Zooming is generally a bad idea because you can miss a lot while you're waiting to unzoom. Zooming on badge numbers often doesn't work. Try to get a buddy to call out badge numbers.

DERBIER. After an incident, write down EVERYTHING you can remember in painstaking detail. Ask everyone else to do the same. Offer to interview them on tape. Remember, get their name and number so they aren't lost. Sad to say in this society, people just wander away and drop all responsibilities. Someone's life and freedom may depend on their testimony. Be foreword, don't delay.

GET IT TO THE MEDIA. You can call the newswomen of the local networks and capture police abuse or other violent incidents, they may actually buy up a copy of your tape. You can demand that they not take it out of context but describe it as what it is. A bad public image can do wonders in reforming your local "police".

Video is fun, it's empowering, and it helps protect our rights to peaceful assembly it's worth it.

by Jason Meggs

In honor of National Kazoo Day (January 28, 1994)

Critical Mass celebrates in the glory of the kazoo in San Francisco:

1776—The Americans are declaring independence from England on the east coast. Spanish missionaries arrive on the San Francisco peninsula and establish Mission Dolores. While enslaving local natives and "enlightening" them with Inquisitorial missionaries, ranchers, and soldiers. By the time the Americans arrived in large numbers in the 1849—

1848—Sam Brannan learns of the gold strike at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento.

1966—Death of the Hippie March down Haight Street is followed by a rousing kazoo-a-thon in Dolores Park. Hunter S. Thompson's "Kazoo-circle."

1976—Japanese-Americans is met by kazooing crowds of civil libertarians.

1942—Evacuation of Japanese-Americans is met by kazooing crowds of civil libertarians.

1984—Kazoo-related accidents are up at San Francisco bathhouses.

1990—Death of the hippie M Arch down Haight Street is followed by a rousing kazoo-a-thon in Dolores Park. Hunter S. Thompson's "Kazoo-circle."

1929—Kazoo-circle.

1907—General Strike was over after three days.

1900—The symbol of Brannan's fortune, as gold miners preferred the symbol of Brannan's fortune, as gold miners preferred making a fortune selling stuff to the arriving miners. Kazoos were used to signal "danger, boss approaching"—kazoos out of control. Capitalism collapses.

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1900—The symbol of Brannan's fortune, as gold miners preferred making a fortune selling stuff to the arriving miners. Kazoos were used to signal "danger, boss approaching"—kazoos out of control. Capitalism collapses.
Transportation is one of the primary arenas in which wealth is transferred from the majority of the population to the wealthy few. Independent of the state of mind of the participants, it is the captains of finance or office workers, industrial titans or factory wage slaves — the product of wealth accumulation and the concentration in the hands of a few of a process that offers a framework to understand the deeper meaning of the recent "uprise" of bicyclists in San Francisco and around the world.

A lot of folks are still shocked by the heavy-handed rhetoric of Mayor Brown this past summer, regarding the so-called "Stay Off Our Streets" protest. That's precisely why it was the police and the mayor who sponsored the violence and illegal behavior that caused the now-infamous "Stonewall" of Powell and Market, as well as during the illegal arrests at the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cope. If six hardy souls hadn't ridden across the Bay Bridge during an evening commute, the BART strike and people's attempts to cop...
Of Oil Wars and Leaked Memos

Not long ago, many San Franciscans participated in anti-Gulf War demonstrations, often on bicycle. Well, as we ride along in our typical Critical Mass, we are still connected to wars elsewhere. The connections between our symbolic and active protest against the consumer end of the auto-industry and the hot wars in Mexico and Nigeria are considerably less immediately visible than the Gulf War, but in many ways, the concealed strategies are more interesting. The Zapataistas are fighting for a new model of social power, based on bottom-up democratic communities and extensive discussion and consultation before decisions are taken. Their struggle, centered in the Mexican state of Chiapas among M'ayans uprooted by centuries of colonization and militarization, is adjacent to Mexico's large oil reserves, a fact well-known to all who live and work in this part of the country. Meanwhile, in neighboring Tabasco state, over 20 oil facilities were besieged for weeks by angry peasants and oil workers in mid-December, protesting fraudulent elections, a corrupt government, and widespread pollution. Not surprisingly, Chase Manhattan Bank sponsored a report to a group of large investors in mid-January, in which it was openly suggested that the Mexican government had to eliminate the Zapataistas to regain the confidence of investors, and that the ruling party, decades-long dictators in a one-party state, should seriously consider the ramifications of allowing real elections to erode their power. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin's former firm, Goldman Sachs, has also chimed in with conservative advice for the Mexican government. The walls of San Francisco's Financial District surely obscure banal everyday acts just as horrific as these calls for mass murder emanating from Wall Street.

A Greenpeace letter quoting from a restricted memo authored by the Chairman of Internal Security, Rivers State Nigeria: "Shell (Oil Co.) operations are still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence."

Shell has been drilling for oil in the Niger Delta for 36 years. The Ogoni people have been protesting to protect the Earth and their lives. Their non-violent protests have resulted in 1,800 deaths, Greenpeace reports—because money is at stake. Over 80% of Nigeria's revenue comes from oil, and Shell is the big money generator.

Traffic calming/bike priority streets: Two pilot projects started to slow down and restrict cars to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety in residential neighborhoods (e.g. Page Street, Bernal Heights, Sunset, maybe a kids' route to a school).

Some solution for: Market Street, Fell/Oak between Scott & Baker

This is a modest list, put together carefully to reflect high priorities that should be easily implemented. If the summit fails to lead to immediate implementation of these items, we can safely say that city officials care more about encouraging car driving than even the most rudimentary elements of bicycle safety! To support this campaign, become a member of the SFBC. Call 431-2453 and leave your name and address. We're pushing for bike lanes on Valencia and on a section of Cesar Chavez through a different, more grassroots process that will yield bike lanes plus an organized and educated citizenry.

San Francisco Car Co-op

Being organized right now in San Francisco
(415) 487-1978

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HUMAN-POWERED SUMMIT

The upcoming HUMAN-POWERED SUMMIT is designed to implement certain parts of the bike plan which have been considered too controversial to implement because they require removal of traffic lanes. City policy as stated in the bike plan says these streets should have bike lanes, and the General Plan states that congestion is an acceptable price to pay to achieve other goals of the Plan, such as bike safety. Yet, this policy is being ignored in favor of a non-policy pretending to be policy: facilitate cars!

THE SUMMIT'S GOAL IS TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING IMPROVEMENTS:

Bike lanes on: Fifth Street, Polk Street, 7th Avenue in the Richmond, Howard Street

Bike stencils: that remind drivers that we have a right to the lane on every street in the bike network (map p. 14 old yellow pages, p. 12 new)

Downtown Bike Station: Located right on Market in the heart of the financial district, this place would provide low-cost or free bike parking, repair, showers, and lockers for bicycle commuters.

Local e-mailing lists about bicycling issues

People can join the mailing lists, or view the archives.

SFBC: http://www.cycling.org/mailing/lists/sfbcke/
SFOM: http://www.cycling.org/mailing/lists/om-critical-mass/
ALL LISTS: http://www.cycling.org/mailing/lists/index.html

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SFCM: http://www.cycling.org/mailing.lists/sf-critical-mass/
SFBC: http://www.cycling.org/mailing.lists/sfbike/
ALL LISTS: http://www.cycling.org/mailing.lists/index.html

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101 years ago, in July 1896, 5,000 San Franciscan bicyclists rode in a large mass up Market Street. At that time they were demanding... good roads and asphalt! We’ve come a long way, but in crucial ways, we’ve come TOO FAR!

Bicycling in Critical Mass in 1997 represents dozens of things to different people. Ask someone what it means, and you’ll get as many different answers as people you ask... It is a new wrinkle in San Francisco’s long tradition of dissent, humor, passion, and social opposition.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?