

SIX YEARS OLD—  
SAN FRANCISCO CRITICAL MASS!

SIXRAG<sup>CM</sup>

# WHITHER BICYCLING?

## Tepid Reform or Utopian Revolt?

The number of people who ride their bicycles to work in San Francisco has at least quintupled since Critical Mass started six years ago. The indescribable authenticity of the Critical Mass experience has been transmitted primarily through direct word-of-mouth. The mass media has failed to get inside the Critical Mass phenomenon, portraying it largely as a quirky gathering of freaks that mysteriously reoccurs monthly, if it's noticed at all.

The social power of an unpredictable monthly seizure of San Francisco's streets is fueling initiatives in local transit politics (bridges, bike lanes, freeways and public transit). Through demonstrations, organizing, interventions, lobbying and letter writing, bicycle activists are making themselves felt.

Nevertheless, bicyclists are still dying on San Francisco's streets, thanks in part to the delays and inaction of city bureaucrats. Most recently, 23-year-old Rebecca Kresse was killed when a bus slammed into her at 24th and Valencia on September 2nd at 7 p.m. in broad daylight. This accident cannot be un-done. How many more fatalities will we suffer before there is a meaningful transformation of our streets to accommodate *everyone's* safety?

We know that thousands of potential cyclists would cautiously venture into San Francisco's streets, if they could see a recognized, safe place for them on the street. The Comprehensive Bike Plan is seriously inadequate. An uncharitable explanation of it would be that it is designed to funnel money to the city's sign making department and asphalt painting division. The scattered bike lanes being created do little to promote bicycling safety and much to provide double parking lanes for delivery vehicles and impatient motorists.

While we say "get on with it" to the city, what's really needed is something much bigger. A sincere endorsement of bicycling as at least a partial solution to gridlock and the collapse of public transit requires a systematic redesign of city streets to accommodate a designated, bike-only grid of thoroughfares. Painting lines on streets is not enough. Safe cycling requires separate bikeways, which—if we're clever enough—can also be opportunities for public art and horticulture (line them with murals, paintings, bulletin boards, graffiti zones, free speech walls, and publicly owned fruit trees: Lemon Tree Lane, Peach Path, Berry Bikeway, etc.).

Ironically the rise of transportation activism has coincided with a near collapse of San Francisco's public transit, acutely embarrassing the self-important Impresario-Mayor Brown. This limousine liberal has presided over one of the most rapacious and corrupt periods of San Francisco's famously corrupt history, with ugly and offensive development projects planned for every open corner of the City. Meanwhile, Brown thumbs his nose at citizens, giving his attention to rich developers and union labor while screwing unorganized workers, tenants and transit advocates. He has barely paid lip service to the demands of bicyclists and potential bicyclists, as his appointed commissions have rejected most of a meager compromise, leaving the much-touted Comprehensive Bicycle Plan in tatters. Urban ecology? Green city? Alternative transit or energy? This mayor says: Pave It! And because he supports doing it with Union Labor he thinks he's a "progressive"!

Mayor Brown envisions malls and freeways and chains in the 'hoods, leading inevitably (as his status quo ideology promises) to a certain material comfort that is supposed to be the reward for enthusiastic acquiescence to the rule of the Market. Obviously he enjoys that reward, zipping around in his

limo from haberdashery to opera, photo op to press conference. But most of us wonder how long we'll be able to stay in San Francisco. How long can we slip under the skyrocketing cost of housing? What will happen to us when the next "economic crisis" hits?

Brown's public silence on the class issues that divide San Francisco underlines his ongoing sell-out to private business interests, from landlords to biotech moguls, bankers and multimedia promoters. The transportation crisis is an unsolvable irritation which he'd really like to help us forget.

### THE BIG PICTURE

This last decade of the 20th century has been full of surprises. Who'd have thought it would begin with the collapse of the Soviet bloc? Who would have thought aggressive expansion of the market economy across the planet would encounter such weak and ineffective opposition? Who would have thought the alternative hopes and visions, so rich and exciting in the 1960s and '70s, would so completely capitulate to the incessant logic of buying and selling—i.e. modern capitalism?

Since the 1920s and the rise of the mass-produced automobile, the U.S. economy has been dependent on two foundations—the car and war. Periodic depressions, recessions and downturns have been superceded when war spurred economic growth. Between wars, the frenzied growth of urban and suburban America (built on cars and roads) has colonized more and more of society, placing all values and human experiences below the unquestioned logic of economic expansion. The rotten fruit of this social arrangement is all around us: pollution and ecological breakdown, gridlock and public transit collapse, overwork and profligate wealth amidst growing poverty and homelessness, alienation, boredom, rage, despair, and increasingly a social order built on rampant incarceration.

But, true to form, dismaying evidence of social decay and rising barbarism only obscures exciting developments that always rise alongside and underneath the ruling order. Since the early '90s an unprecedented social movement has erupted and spread spontaneously across the

world. Bicyclists have gathered in Critical Mass rides on most continents and in over 100 cities. Reclaim The Streets and direct actions against road building have erupted all over Europe, Australia and even occasionally in the U.S.

Humans are resourceful, especially in the face of adversity. The simple choice to ride a bicycle becomes an assertion of common sense and an act of radical refusal. By bicycling, we refuse to participate in our own degradation on an increasingly dysfunctional public transit system. By bicycling we refuse to pay the enormous costs of a murderous transit system built on private cars. When we bicycle, we refuse the perpetual marketing noise of corporate advertising piping into car radios, and we refuse to accept as "news" the shallow and intellectually retarded reporting that claims to be objective and true. When we bicycle we subvert our "responsibility" to behave as loyal members of this society, undercutting the auto economy, challenging the propaganda system, and directly re-creating meaningful encounters with one another.

Bicycling is generally a very individual experience, especially on streets filled with stressed-out motorists who don't think cyclists have a right to be on the road. But when we ride together in Critical Mass, we transform our personal choices into a shared, collective repudiation of the prevailing social madness. The organic connections we've made (and continue to make anew, month after month) are the root of a movement radically opposed to the way things are now. As we continue to share public space free from the absurd domination of transactions and the Economy, we are forging a new sense of shared identity, a new sense of our shared interests *against* those who profit from and perpetuate the status quo. Having discovered ourselves as a group with shared interests, we bicyclists must creatively seek connections to the other members of society with whom we share basic qualities—lack of political power, victimization by a social system that systematically pits us against one another, a desire to make deep changes that will make our lives better, and so on.

Bicyclists are mostly part of the largest group in society—the working class. All the cultural and political divisions between us serve the interests of the tiny group who make the decisions about how our lives will be: decisions about technologies, resources, transit systems, the global market itself (what will be produced, by whom, and to what end). Our personal choices about what to buy, which goods to consume, how to get around, etc. are important to be sure. But the crucial decisions that shape the environment and the social system in which we make our decisions, are made undemocratically and self-servingly by the wealthy few and their bought-and-paid-for political allies. It is to this deeper dynamic that we must address ourselves.

Our "leaders" are worried by the uncontrollable nature of Critical Mass. Grassroots initiatives that challenge land use, real estate development/speculation, public investments, transportation priorities, etc., are annoying obstacles for the rulers of today. Co-optation or demolition are their favorite strategies. Our task is to elude their clumsy attempts to control us. Our imagination, creativity, enthusiastic passions, and mobility give us more power than many of us know, and more chances to change life than we generally feel we have.

May our wheels keep spinning, both inside us and among us, not to mention between us and the ground!

—Chris Carlsson, September 25, 1998





# MASS IF YOU'RE CRITICAL!

The police department has been manipulated into carrying out a petulant, petty political campaign for the embarrassed Mayor, who can't forget how cyclists jeered and booed him out of Pee Wee Herman Plaza last July. The Mayor's much-touted skills at getting things done have remained absent in the face of daily gridlock and a crippled public transit system. It's easier to scapegoat bicyclists for the problems imposed on our city by too many cars than it is to begin the inevitable shift away from the auto/oil/asphalt domination of today.

Urban streets and neighborhoods are designed to maximize shopping opportunities, accessed by automobile. The roads are clogged with private cars. MUNI remains a horrible, inefficient joke and basic safety conditions for cycling have worsened since much-publicized plans for improved bike routes were announced. Public space is more constricted than ever. Where in the city can we gather without the incessant clamor of the market, surrounded by the toxic fumes of the automobile?

Wild, huge building projects are being planned and executed all over town, with malls popping up from the Mission to Mint Hill, and mysterious futures awaiting the Presidio, Treasure Island, Mission Bay and Hunters' Point. Mayor Brown's attack on bicyclists last summer may well have been a calculated move to fill the news with an easy scapegoat while his plans and business pals carry out the largest land grab in San Francisco's already greedy history.

Our monthly occupation of city streets is a firm rebuttal to the small-minded, petty harassment the Mayor and the police have plagued

us with in their vain attempt to "shut down" Critical Mass. And it is a haunting reminder to the powers-that-be that we can't be so easily fooled or ignored. Lining the pockets of speculators and developers at the expense of the quality of our lives is a short-term strategy guaranteed to fail.

When we ride to work we refuse the costs of their transportation nightmare, and open a tiny crack of personal autonomy. When we gather in Critical Mass, the assumptions and values of the dominant culture are challenged implicitly if not explicitly. Moreover, we're enjoying ourselves, making new friends, and seeing our beautiful city.

Join one of dozens of "mini-masses" as we weave around and across each other on the last Friday of the month. Groups of 50-200 riders can evade police and anti-bike traffic laws; in smaller, self-managed groups we can respond to traffic conditions with realism and protect our safety irrespective of lights or laws.

—The Psyche-Analyst(s)  
c/o 41 Sutter St. #1829, SF CA 94104

## Reflections of a Copwatcher

Looking back it's been a long—dare I say dark—year for San Francisco Critical Mass. Ever since the July 25, 1997 ride, when Mayor Brown made the mistake of chastising Critical Mass and promising a crackdown. The new police policy has been one of suppression, rather than a willingness to find a peaceful common ground. It's a policy set by Chief Lau, Brown's hand-picked man for the job. It's a shame Mayor Brown has discarded his roots in civil rights politics, preferring the political cronyism so obvious in every aspect of his regime. From the stadium election to MUNI to the SF Redevelopment Agency and a trail of broken campaign promises, nothing happens in San Francisco without his personal nod of approval.

Caught in the middle are the men and women of the San Francisco Police Department. I have heard some of the most enlightened Critical Mass participants I know cursing the cops, calling them names, and venting their frustrations about the current policy. It's an easy trap to fall into, and I won't claim not to have fallen myself, but it's important to keep in mind that the policy is the source of frustration—not always individual officers themselves. Before they're cops, they're people, not robots, not automatons, despite whatever amount of training to obey orders they may have. They're people as reachable as those individuals in cars and the pedestrians on the street.

Yes, there have been blatant incidents of police misconduct and excessive use of force by individual officers during the past year. Police brutality in any form is unacceptable, and many of these cases are being dealt with by the Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC). Yes, there are a few rogue cops who abuse their authority, and they make it tough for those officers who don't. One officer said to a cyclist after a

Police Commission hearing in August, that he didn't want to be wasting his time dealing with cyclists in Critical Mass; he wanted to go home knowing he actually made a difference. It's dialogue like this that breaks down the generalizations and misconceptions pigeonholing people into pre-defined roles. The pitfalls of such generalizations are no different than those of *Chronicle* editorials that demonize all cyclists for the riding habits of a few.

Police commanders see that policy is carried out. They get promoted because they don't question their orders, they carry them out. I like to think they are as human and as reachable as anyone else, but I don't doubt their skin is a bit thicker, and the promotions and salary hikes help ease the sting of knowing they are being played as pawns in the Mayor's political game, and hurting a good movement and good people in the process.

It's a shame the past year's policy has taken this tack. With each month looms an unpredictable police presence. Occasionally mellow, more often overzealous in its law enforcement, the department pops up with citations for every minuscule infraction on the lawbooks, right down to no reflectors on pedals (tough for people using SPD's), the kind of thing that never happens other days of the month. It's a shame citizens cannot rely on the police to protect their rights at times, and worse, that this anti-bike policy would strip their rights from them instead. "To protect and serve" is the motto, not to protect and serve special interests.

The current system is out of balance when individual citizens take it upon themselves to watch the police instead of rely on them. At a minimum, it indicates the failure of the OCC and SFPD's internal affairs to reign in those few

rogue cops who tarnish the department's reputation and put the public's safety at risk. Simple measures like removing police from active duty pending investigation, adequate OCC staffing, and the ability to make interim recommendations on policy and personnel matters would help restore balance to the system. Such measures would also vastly improve the effectiveness of the OCC, and help to restore integrity to SFPD's internal affairs division.

Because of this imbalance critical massers have endured for the past year, many individuals have taken it upon themselves to police the police. No potential peaceful tool has been overlooked in this effort. There have been people with camcorders documenting the police's every move throughout each event. Some videographers review and critique each other's footage in between rides to improve their copwatching techniques. A loose cell phone network has also helped to ensure adequate video coverage of the event. A Critical Mass Ticket Hotline (415-289-6503) by massers for massers provides tips on contesting citations, and to assist with legal referrals in more serious cases. Cassette recorders are used to dictate the names and badge numbers of any officers who might violate someone's rights, or endanger the safety of cyclists during the event. The Critical Mass email list (sf-critical-mass@cyclery.org) has been used to share accounts and seek eyewitnesses of incidents of the police misconduct and abusive policy that have affected the past year's rides. A growing number of attorneys have volunteered to offer advice and help with legal cases. I've seen posters and flyers depicting the more egregious incidents of police misconduct, which the press has failed to report on. Individual participants have become more aware of their rights, and have stepped forward as witnesses to speak out in various incidents or to file complaints. To be effective: strategize, refine, adapt, strategize, refine, adapt.

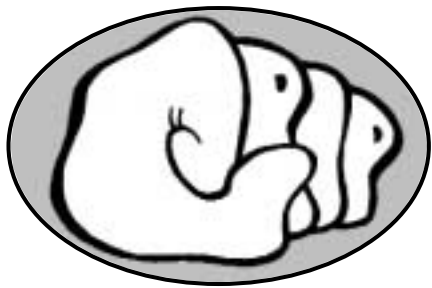
As much as police would like to monitor the mass to no end, every month groups of 20, 50, 100, even 200 cyclists are escaping their watchful eye, wheeling freely about the city smiling, waving and laughing without incident. I have found minimasses to be much more free, social, and able to interact with traffic and reach out to others. From the fascination of young wide-eyed kids in cars watching hundreds of cyclists enjoy a ride in the city, to the store owners who come out to cheer us on, the response from people is almost always positive. While the attendance is down, the spirit and resolve of those cyclists who still return every month to ride in Critical Mass is inspiring. Not everyone enjoys a cop-free ride each month. Most have risked heavily-targeted selective enforcement, citations, roadblocks, speeding police on motorcycles, and worse.

Yet, all has not been an "us vs. them" mentality, nor should it be. Critical Mass reaches out and inspires through sheer numbers, fun, and personal contact. Reaching the police is a part of this. At times, the show of support for fellow cyclists who have been singled out has been moving. A few more reactive individuals have resorted to swearing at the police, which usually seems to make them feel justified in their actions, or worse, give more citations to other cyclists. Others have addressed cops as human beings instead of programmed robots, pointing out the ridiculous political agenda they have been put up to, the waste of their time and training that this harassment represents, and pointing out the Civil Rights they should uphold instead. Still more who prefer to remain silent sometimes hold up signs with messages to "stop the harassment" instead. During these instances a few officers agree, some smile and fidget uncomfortably, others look away. Often a commanding officer will arrive, instructing patrol officers to issue citations, form roadblocks, or don riot gear. Addressing them as humans may seem pointless, until that chance encounter where you find yourself talking to a cop off-duty or on a break, and you hear that he or she is just as unhappy about the current policy as you are. And every time I have or hear of one of these encounters, my belief that Critical Mass is making a difference becomes a bit stronger.

The SFPD's pawn play is a human weakness not limited to the law enforcement, but it's visible in every job where power and money play a part. From corporate CEOs who trade jobs like baseball cards, to politicians who trade political favors against the public's best interest, to those who trade our environment for a profit, anyone can be tempted to sell out. Never forget when you sell your integrity, it's not so easy to get it back. And never lose sight of the human side. Peace.

—Mark Motyka

*GRIP* is a collective of activists who encourage direct action and follow it up with solid demands—all with the goal of making San Francisco more vibrant. The name can be appropriated by any group of people who want to push for a saner way life. *GRIP* started because we were tired of waiting until there are more fatalities and injuries to cyclists before the City budges from its car-first stance. It's ironic that those of us who are taking steps to positively contribute to our society are treated like second class citizens.



*GRIP* events fall on the "Transportation Tenth Tuesday" of the month. There's only one Tuesday a month that is a tenth number (13th, 14th...). We meet at U.N. Plaza at 5:30 p.m. (a mini mass leaves JHP at 5:10 p.m. to meet up with other ralliers). The demonstration marches from there and is over within an hour. We encourage fun filled, wacky events with snacks to munch on before dinner, costumes, signs and banners.

*GRIP* is a versatile acronym that can be used in various campaigns. Already *Great Roads Inspire Pedalers* is focused on getting bike lanes and *Gear Roads to Include Pedestrians* is focused on traffic calming. But we'd like to join up with some Public transit activists and more *Pedalers* and *Pedestrian* activists. If you're interested in helping out or want to network through us to find people interested in your cause, you can call us at (415) 289-2165, mail us at 923 Folsom Street, #300, San Francisco 94107 or e-mail us at



*GRIP delivers a reality check and a transit Viagra to Willie Brown, August 18, 1998*

## Bicycles, War, and the Power of Critical Mass

If you look at almost all the books ever written about why the U.S. lost the war in Vietnam, you will find little mention of the bicycle as the piece of military hardware that allowed the Vietnamese to decisively win the war. You will not even find it mentioned in the index of any military encyclopedia.

Those familiar with bicycling as a means of transportation probably have some vague notion about why this is the case. The U.S. didn't learn from Vietnam. The fact that we had to go to war against Iraq can be cited as evidence. Moreover, I wholeheartedly agree with Hegel's statement, "But what experience and history teach is that peoples and governments have never yet learned from history."

As early as 1954, during the siege of Dien Bien Phu, the bicycle's superiority as a logistics tool flashed brightly for the French as artillery bombarded their positions. This artillery was delivered on bicycle (*The Bicycle in Wartime*, henceforth *BW*, Jim Fitzpatrick p. 167). After bombing known Vietnamese supply routes, the surrounded French were puzzled as the re-supplied Viet Minh began their attacks with renewed fervor. Despite the bombing, the routes were still bikeable. The amount of tonnage delivered between March 12, 1954, the start of the siege, to the end, 3 months later is calculated to be 8,300 tons! (*BW*, p. 169)

On May 7, 1954, the French surrendered, and were soon replaced by advisers from the United States. Like the French, the U.S. used carpet bombing to destroy supply routes. Like the French, U.S. soldiers were mystified by the re-supplied Viet Cong. In both instances, it was the bicycle that was a vital supply line for the Vietnamese' defense of their

homeland.

Guerilla bicyclist during the Vietnam War explain:

"We had one day to make preparations. First our bicycles had to be turned into *xe tho* [pack bikes], with the cross-bar capable of carrying 200 kilos or more. We had to strengthen all the parts... We camouflaged everything with leaves and moved at night."—Ding Van Ty (*BW*, p. 169).

"It was better than being in a jeep because with the silence of bike travel we always had plenty of warning of approaching planes and could pull into undergrowth." (*BW*, p. 178)

"He was occasionally warned to follow the next bicycle 'very precisely' because the road had been mined by the guerillas with spiked or explosive traps." (*Ibid.*)

The guerilla bicyclist led a hardy and difficult life, but such feats of endurance and tolerance of hardship went unnoticed in the U.S. papers. War technology, from helicopters to new flak armor, and the new science of war management, blinded reporters to the more subtle but important details—the will of the people to fight on home turf and their use of bicycles. U.S. media coverage in 1967: The bicycle's use by guerillas (*New York Times*, Jan 7 1967), and its use by doctors to carry the Viet Cong wounded, (*NYT*, Jul 15 1967). The U.S. lost in part because they underestimated the power of the bicycle in providing supplies (armament, food, and medicines) to the Vietnamese.

The US hasn't learned a thing about the power of the bicycle. This failure to learn is seen in our transportation and foreign policies. Most Americans still prefer the auto as a mode of transport. In the

Bay Area alone, 150 more cars join the traffic mess daily. (Twenty more years of that means 1.1 million more cars and much worse traffic, see *The Examiner*, Sept. 11 1998.) Also, the U.S.'s involvement in the Middle East, especially in the Gulf War, shows that our foreign policy is for the purpose of protecting fossil fuels. Locally, we see the failure of the powers that be to support more mass transit and a bike lane network (esp. on the Bay Bridge)—despite the problems of the automobile in terms of cost and time wasted.

In the book *Asphalt Nation*, Jane Holtz Kay shows how the automobile has destroyed the life and culture of cities, and has forced many drivers to spend 10- to 40-hour weeks inside a steel box. A similar case is made by James Howard Kunstler in the book *The Geography of Nowhere*.

The last Friday of every month, at Justin Herman Plaza, people choose to show up with bicycles. In the past, some non-bicyclists even showed up and skated, ran, or walked along. The choice all these people make suggests a different way of seeing things. It's an alternative space in society whose dimensions haven't yet been fully realized by the mainstream.

Critical Mass is able to learn from its mistakes. There is no such thing as a Critical Mass expert, so the opinions of anybody in the mass always have the potential to influence it. A good example of this was after the police attacks on bicyclists and distorted media coverage of the July 1997 ride. Many participants of Critical Mass worried about a repeat on the part of the police, so a flyer campaign started to urge all cyclists to obey

traffic laws, to smile at car drivers, and to have a good time. All three things happened in August, and not a single ticket was issued to a bicyclist.

Second, the critics of Critical Mass misunderstand, misrepresent, and underestimate the event. For example, Critical Mass has never been about leaders, yet during the summer of 1997 the press continued to make references to the organizers of the event, and in a glaring piece of misunderstanding met with a "leader." The *Chronicle* on the 26th of July 1997 wrote:

"At a news conference late last night, frustrated police brass said the city made a bargain in good faith with bike riders, who did not honor it."

Only a handful of bikers met with the mayor, and of course had no authority to speak on all cyclists' behalf.

Moreover, since July of 1997 until this very day, the police—being used as a mere political tool—have been trying to shut Critical Mass down. They try to shut it down by writing bogus tickets, citing a single red-light running bicyclist and letting several cars go through a red-light, and worse, physically tackling innocent cyclists who were crossing through a green light. Although there are signs of a smaller police presence as of the August 1998 ride, their failure to shut us down shows that they have underestimated us.

So where does that leave us? The bicycle won in Vietnam; the next great victory of the bicycle will be here in the United States. This victory will be made possible by hard-working activists of many causes, including those in Critical Mass, because Mass has already reclaimed space that is inclusionary.

—James Barcelona

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(We used Quark XPress on Windows, and had it printed at Howard Quinn in SF)

This is a one-shot publication, sort of a follow-up to last year's 5th Birthday 'zine. We may do it again next September if energy and resources are present. You can send us reports, photos, xeroatic ephemera, etc., for our extensive Critical Mass archives here, and for possible inclusion in the next annual *CM Rag*.. If you are interested in getting copies, send an appropriate donation

MADE OUT TO "CASH" TO CM 6 B-day c/o 1095 Market St. #210, SF 94103



# DON'T SHARE THE ROAD: Open The Streets for Bikes

For too long, cyclists have taken the feel-good stand that we "can all get along." "Share The Road," says the bumper sticker. But today, it becomes clearer and clearer that sharing the road with cars, trucks, and buses is like sharing your bank account with a billionaire. We can't share what we're not even given, so it's up to us to stand up and demand what we don't have that's ours by right. It's up to the motor-industrial complex to start sharing, because if it doesn't share, it's risking its own life.

It's possible to be non-judgmental toward motorists, but to still take a stand: whenever there is a choice between a fossil-fuel vehicle and another mode of transport, the vehicle is the morally inferior choice. Cyclists and peds are not morally superior as people, but cycling and walking are the superior behaviors.

- Cars are inherently dangerous; they maim and kill as often as guns.

- They drive their occupants temporarily insane.

- They isolate individuals, creating passive radio listeners where there used to be active participants in a public streetscape (a la Critical Mass).

- They kill the global atmosphere, the hydrosphere, and wildlife, while giving us record numbers of "spare the air" days.

- They wring wealth out of the local economy.

- They contribute to the homogenizing of cities and towns.

- Their demand for oil has led to wars from the Middle East to Indonesia, and disruption of indigenous cultures from Alaska to Ogoniland.

- The oil and car industries have contributed to the decline of democracy and the rise of corporate oligarchy in almost every country.

Meanwhile, the alternatives are safe and simple. Sundays, JFK Drive in Golden Gate Park is not "closed"... it's wide open! Closing streets to cars opens them to life —biking, walking, gardening, playing, and wildlife. The evidence from street closures in Europe is that when one street is opened (by eliminating vehicle traffic), more people walk or bike, local neighborhoods are strengthened, congestion and parking become non-issues, and buses pass more easily.

But taking streets from cars takes political courage, something lacking in our city where politicians prefer "the bus stops forever" to "the buck stops here." The time is now; it is not an issue on which we can continue to wait. In the seven years since the Gulf War, cars' collective fuel economy has plunged, oil prices have dropped, evidence for global warming has steadily mounted, and San Francisco car ownership—which dropped from 1990 to 1994—has gone back to rising annually. Regional congestion increased over 20% last year. The regional planning agency ABAG says the Bay Area will receive a million new residents over the next 20 years. They also pro-

ject each new resident will bring a car. Is this the world we want to live in? If not, we must act now. Every MUNI rider who goes over to driving, every cyclist who gets scared off the streets, is another motorist. The converse is also true: every motorist who gets discouraged by traffic and tries cycling, walking, or mass transit is another constituent of the better world, another voice adding to the movement.

How about a few blocks being designed around something other than cars? Start with walkers and wheelchair users. Make sure you have emergency access and egress; a 12-foot more-or-less straight paved bike path will suffice. Make places for kids to play, places to garden, places to hang out. Provide a place for wildlife, a place for water to sink unpolluted into the aquifer, a place where everyone can see the lie in the complaint, "San Francisco has no seasons." Isn't this more the kind of city where you want to live?

We have to stop appeasing the motor-industrial complex with more roads, more parking, and obeisance to every concern. We need to start responding to the needs of cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders, and if for some reason there's still a bit of room on urban streets for cars, sure, let them travel too. But cars can no longer be the center of our transportation strategy. It's time to give the roads back to the public.

-Steven Bodzin

COMING IN NOVEMBER

## WHO OWNS THE ROAD?

The Story of San Francisco's Critical Mass

Ted White (*Return of the Scorcher*) returns to the theme of bikes and politics with a deep look at SF's Critical Mass in the context of larger questions about public space and urban streets. Wild footage and deep philosophy enrich this fascinating one-hour documentary. VHS. Send \$40 (checks payable to "Ted White") to Ted White c/o 1095 Market Street, Suite 210, SF CA 94103.

## Bicycle Transitions

Since the 1980s there has been an increasing popularity in the use of bicycles. Previously America has gone through different phases in bicycling with the high-wheeler style bikes (large front wheel with fixed pedals), then transitioning to the "safety bike" (chain driven to allow for similar size wheels thus lower riding height), and again to the racing style bikes with the dropped curved handlebars and the aerodynamic position.

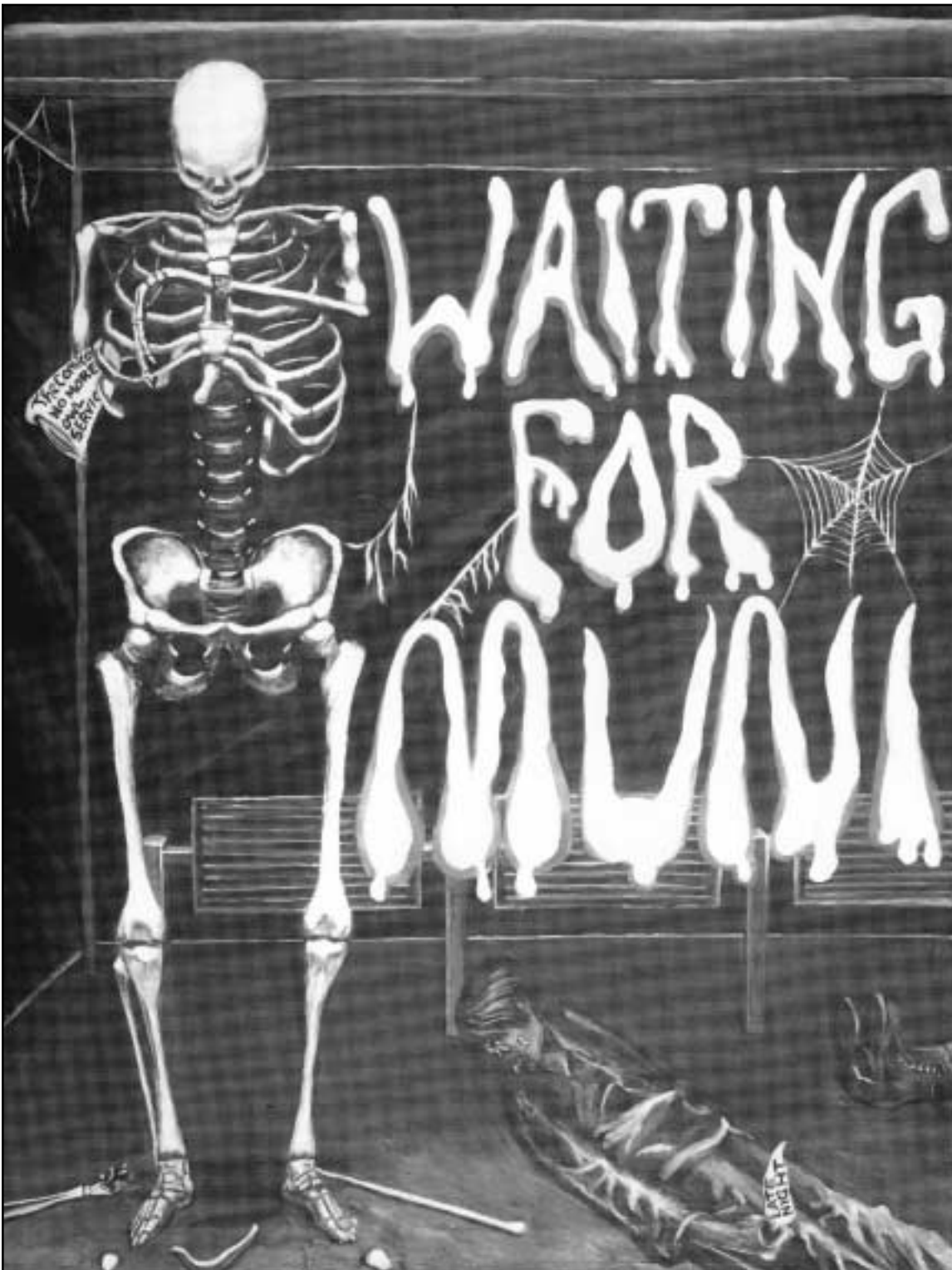
As a matter of fact, in the early 1900s, during the advent of the automobile, bicycle lobbyists helped to institute the infrastructure development of paving the roads to make them smoother to ride. It is ironic that this allowed the rubber industry to advance the technology of tires to reach ever-increasing speeds of autos and, in effect, forced the downturn of bicycles as a transport medium. Also, early in this century, bicycles played a tremendous part in the emancipation of women in permitting them the availability of a freedom of movement theretofore unrealized.

The new mountain bike form has helped create another phase in the human passion for self-propelled transport. We are in the midst of another bike boom. With fatter tires and an upright position (as compared to the racing style bikes of the 1960s and 70s), they provide many people a more comfortable ride. Hence the mountain bike is one of the fastest growing forms of recreation as well as an increasingly popular form of transport on the roads in metropolitan areas.

In San Francisco, the efforts of grassroots advocacy have brought about some changes in city departments to create a safer environment for bikes as transportation. In part changes have also been brought about by people's realization of our dependence on fossil fuel and its pollution of the air we breathe. The SF city government has developed a master bike plan with officially mapped and signed bike routes, and it's continuing to propose street improvements to facilitate them. The implementation of such a plan is bound to be somewhat problematic with the auto dependent mindset of society, but we all can acknowledge that this change may be for the improvement of many people's everyday lives.

Education of the motoring public to share the road is a necessary step in this scheme. Devising demarcated bike lanes on streets' surfaces, as well as installing bike route street signs, may aid in this regard. Most drivers do not now adjust for the possibility of bicycles in their surroundings. Poor attitudes and inattentiveness to driving responsibilities are at times major causes of accidents and mishaps. Cycle riders do not have the luxury of being encased in a massive insulating metal structure, as do motor vehicle drivers. This power and weight ratio is a concern, as well as the matter of compatibility of speed of travel, which must be addressed through the education and mutual respect of all road users. This is all part of a necessary dialogue our society must begin.

—looking jim



BETH VERDEKAL

San Francisco Call / Oct. 6, 1896

## CYCLERS RIDE IN GAY ATTIRE

A Big Night Parade in Favor of Good Pavements

Gayly Decorated Floats, Some of Which Bore Suggestive Mottoes  
RED FIRE AND PYROTECHNICS

Amid red fire, bombs, rockets and music, the cyclers of San Francisco had their display last evening in favor of good roads. There was a good number of those who love to ride on pneumatic tires, and the Parade was witnessed by thousands, who lined the streets through which the procession passed.

The cyclers were enthusiastic, and on many points along the line they were loudly cheered, and in response to the cheers came the cry of the various clubs, which often drowned the sounds of the music in the band wagon. As an earnest display of a desire for good roads the parade, in which there were more than a thousand participants was a success.

By the time darkness spread over the City the hall of the Olympic Club on Post Street was a scene of great

(George Miehling) extending the hand of fellowship to the modern cyclist (Allen Jones).

The Pathfinders had in line an imitation prairie schooner such as was used to cross the plains in early days, and labeled the "John C. Fremont Pathfinder of '46." The purpose of this was to find a good path for cyclers in the City.

The Olympics carried a transparency bearing the words, "A clean sweep at the polls means a clean sweep for our wheels." Charles H. Northrop made up as a Rip Van Winkle, and independent cyclist, attired in a paper suit, carried a banner with this strange device, "Journalism up to date."

The Golden Gate Club had a float on double quad representing a Golden Gate, festooned with flowers and hung with many lanterns. The Yosemite and Eintracht Clubs were all attired as red devils, with fierce painted faces.

The Imperial Club turned out an immense elephant mounted on a double quad and on this was a placard with the words: "Don't Tease the Animals—S.P.C.A." F. Murphy, also of the Imperials, represented Uncle Sam riding a bicycle with many McKinley emblems. The Ramblers had a triplet written by three pretty children, Eva, Maude and Walter Varney. This club also had out a gayly decorated sextuplet made up of three tandems fastened side-by-side.

"His Whiskers" was out on a bike, and there were bets of even money that it was Judge Campbell. It was left for

extended on both sides of Golden Gate Ave. as far as Webster Street, nor was it any thinner along Fulton Street, the line of return march. On Van Ness Ave., between Golden Gate Ave. and Hayes Street, there was an immense throng, which kept the policemen busy confining it within the proper limits, which were all too small.

The various bicycle clubhouses were decorated with Japanese lanterns, flags and bunting, and some private dwellings on Golden Gate Ave. were similarly illuminated in sympathy with the wheelmen and their movement. The clubs contributed liberally of red fire and rockets and Roman candles to brighten the wheelmen's way, and, as it were, to express their enthusiasm over the grand display.

It was a long, expectant wait that the spectators had out in the limited district of good roads where the two avenues cross, but when the first rocket burst high above them in the night a chorus of approving exclamations made it plain that everybody was happy and pleased with a rest in the cool evening air. And then in a very short time, it seemed, another murmur and a stir followed. "Here they come!" was upon every one's lips.

They came, the fantastic glittering phalanx of wheelmen in carnival array with music and red fire. They came, and they passed like colors and forms in the kaleidoscope, leaving an impression of something beautiful and altogether odd. Out on the smooth pavement the bicyclists could preserve good lines, and for that reason the pageant was more to be admired on Golden Gate Ave. than when

the wheelmen struggled painfully uphill and downgrade along the rough pavement on Market Street. The last of the procession had barely gone out of sight when its head turned from Fulton Street into the grand, broad Ave., there to be reviewed by the judges.

There was considerable confusion at the judge's stand, caused by the paraders themselves breaking ranks immediately after passing and then blocking the way. With the aid of several policemen Dr. Rottanzi succeeded and opened a passage and the procession again moved through in poor order with nearly every cyclist afoot and elbowing for room. It was generally conceded that the most tastefully decorated and most artistic wheel was the tandem of Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Ludlow (No. 31), a really beautiful affect in colors, flowers and rich Oriental lanterns. Ms. Alice Guthrie (No. 1), a pretty

little tot in white under a floral canopy, was noticed favorably.

Miss Minnie Huff (No. 15), as a page from the Huguenots, did considerable attention for her original graceful decoration. Miss Lotta Crenshaw (No. 55) as the "Examiner" in white satin and silver appeared conspicuous for her beautiful costume. Miss Lottie Britton (No. 16) was unique as Amelia Bloomer on a child's velocipede. No. 35 Little Red Riding Hood, in the person of Miss Laurine DeVaney, won applause and probably a prize. The yacht-rider (No. 11) was Joseph Clunan. C. F. Harrison (No. 70) as the "Tough Girl" received a favorable notice. The "Golden Gate" tandem (No. 82), George Hale and Al Lewis, was one of the most picturesque ideas well carried out, and the Chinese laundry (No. 67) presented by N. Cohn, was taken as an odd conceit. The two Mohnig children (No. 64) on a tandem made a very good showing. The Olympics may expect to hear from their double tandem float with the little daughter of William Kennedy enthroned on it.



Bay City Wheelman, c. 1890, prior to embarking on a Century Ride, looking west on 21st Street in the Mission.

activity. There was a rushing to and fro of those members of the organization who belonged to the cycling section, getting ready for the event. There was the dressing of wheels, the fixing of lanterns of various hues, flags and colored bunting, flowers and ribbons to make silent steeds gandy and attractive. And every now and then there came from the inner rooms participants in riding attire, some plain, some gorgeous, some comic and many grotesque. Some of the young men appeared as the new woman and as the bloomer girl, while others, who seemed to carry out the character to life, appeared as clowns.

While this rush and excitement was going on in the big building there was an unusual commotion on Post Street, from Taylor down to Grant Ave. there was a gathering of people on the walks anxious to see the start, and collections of cyclers on the cross streets, singly, in pairs and by clubs, riding to the various points assigned them by the marshal of the night. Then came the band wagons and the floats and the fireworks wagons. Then in a short time there was a lighting up of lanterns and the burning of red and white fire, which illuminated the scene and presented to the onlookers a gay and festive picture that resembled some grand carnival. The gayly trimmed bicycles and the vari-colored uniforms of the riders were brought out in full effect by these strong lights.

Sharply at half past 8 o'clock Marshal Edwin Moberg gave the order to fall in and follow the bandwagon, and to the air of Sousa's "Liberty march" the procession moved on. After the mounted police came the Alpha (ladies) Cycling Club, the Olympics Cyclers, visitors on wheels from San Rafael, San Jose, Oakland, Alameda and Berkeley, the Reliance Athletic Club, Acme Club, Camera Club Cyclers, Waverlys, Pathfinders, Liberty Club, Golden Gate Cyclists, Yellow Fellow Club, Yosemite and Eintracht Club, Imperial Club, Union Iron Works Wheelers, Ramblers, Columbias, Bay City Wheelmen, Barker Cyclers, and many independent wheelmen.

There were a number of attractive features in line, the most prominent of which was a large float prepared by the Olympics. It was a representation of a Roman gladiator

the judges to decide. J. R. Rogers of the Imperials rode a bike to which he had hitched two bull pups that dragged him along at a lively rate. The last float in line was that of the San Francisco Road Club, representing the Pony Express, a pretty arrangement. There were several children in Continental costumes, two pages in full silver suits, Indians, colored and Chinese cyclers, monkeys on wheels and many riders in fantastic garb. There was in line a number of cyclers fitted up as boats with full sail. One of these was marked "C. P. Huntington." Another was labeled "Opposition ferry." Still another, in imitation of a flatcar, had a steamer on which was painted "This train carries bicycles free." Still another design on wheels on which there was a coffin bore these words, "Killed by riding a wheel over the Market Street pavement."

The mounted police had a great deal of difficulty on Market Street in keeping the crowd back far enough to enable the paraders to proceed. As soon as the officers drove back one section of people and rode on the crowd pressed forward and in that way interfered with the paraders. On the line of march a number of the wheels broke down and had to be withdrawn, but none of the riders were injured. At several points along the line there were displays of red fire and from several points fireworks were set off.

Along the line of march on Golden Gate Ave., from Market Street as far out as Van Ness Ave., the sidewalks were crowded with spectators and every house was alight, with windows open so that those inside could see the interesting spectacle. The steps leading to every door were tiers of people. Beyond Van Ness Ave. the crowds

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# THINK GLOBALLY,

"...we're not blocking traffic,  
we're just making it a little stranger."

**Adelaide, Australia:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Victoria Square at 6:00pm. Ann Arbor, MI: Last Friday of the month. Meet at North Main Park at 5:15pm.

**Anchorage, AK:** No details, but we've heard of regular summer masses in '98.

**Austin, TX:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at University of Texas, West Mall (23rd & Guadalupe) at 5:30pm. Contact: Jupiter O'Halloran.

**Bergen, Norway:** First Thursday of the month. Meet at Torgallmenningen at 4:00pm.

**Berkeley, CA:** Second Friday of the month. Meet at Berkeley BART Station at 5:30pm.

**Berlin, Germany:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Brandenburg Gates at 4:00pm.

**Birmingham, England**

**Boston, MA:** Next rides are: 9/30, 10/14, 10/31 and resumes in April 1999. Steady rain cancels the ride. Meet at Copley Square near Trinity Church at 5:45pm.

**Brisbane, Australia:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at King George Square at 5:00pm.

**Brighton, England**

**Bristol, England**

**Cambridge, England**

**Chicago, IL:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Daley Plaza. No time given.

**Columbus, OH:** Next ride is on 21 November 1998. Meet at Wexner Center and Arps Hall at 4:30pm.

**Copenhagen, Denmark:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Blågårdspads at 5:00pm.

**Dublin, Ireland:** Last Thursday of the month. Meet at Central Bank Square at Dame Street at 5:00pm.

**Eugene, OR:** Last Friday of the month. Place and time TBA.

**Flagstaff, AZ:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at San Francisco & Beaver Streets at 5:00pm.

**Gainesville, FL:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Plaza of the Americas at 5:00 pm on the University of Florida campus.

**Geneva, Switzerland:** Pont des Bergues (île Rousseau) Sounds and Food at the end. Every last Friday of the month, 6 pm

**Haifa, Israel:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at auditorium parking lot, Merkaz HaKarmel, 1:00 pm

**Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada**

**Jerusalem, Israel:** Last Friday of the month, "Mashbir" Square, 1:00 pm

**London, England:** Last Friday of every month at the Southern end of Waterloo Bridge, in front of the South Bank Centre, 5:45 pm

**Los Angeles, CA:** Last Friday of the month.

Los Feliz Area: 5:30 at Mulholland Fountain, Los Feliz & Riverside.

West Hollywood: 4:30 at West Hollywood Park on Robertson between Santa Monica and Melrose.

Valley: Heads over Sepulveda Pass at 4:45pm from Ventura Blvd.

All groups converge at 5:30pm at Westwood and Le Conte at UCLA. Critical mass departs at 6:00 pm.

**Melbourne, Australia:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at State Library at 5:30pm.

**New Orleans, LA:** Last working day of the month. Meet at Waldenburg Park at 5:00pm.

**New York, NY:** First Thursday of the month. Meet at Cooper Square (Astor Place and

Lafayette Streets) at 7:00pm near the Cube Sculpture.

**Ottawa, Ontario, Canada**

**Perth, Australia:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Forrest Place at 5:30pm.



**Philadelphia, PA:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Dilworth Plaza (15th & Market) at 5:30pm.

**Rehorot, Israel:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at City Hall, 1:00 pm.

**Reno, NV:** First Friday of the month. Meet at Brick Park next to

## Other Critical Mass Cities?

These are the cities that have had Critical Mass rides at one point, but we in our publishing haste could not find any current information on them. If you're massing in one of these cities or anywhere else in the world, **drop us a line!** GRIP@POBox.com And we love photos sent to 1095 Market St., Ste. 210, SF CA 94103.

- Aalborg, Denmark
- Aarhus, Denmark
- Albuquerque, NM
- Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Ann Arbor, MI
- Annapolis, MD
- Arcata, CA
- Athens, GA
- Atlanta, GA
- Barcelona, Spain
- Bergen, Norway
- Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Bloomington, Indiana
- Boise, ID
- Bonn, Germany
- Boulder, CO
- Burlington, VT
- Chapel Hill, NC
- Christchurch, New Zealand
- Cleveland, OH
- Columbia, MO
- Denver, CO
- Dublin, Ireland
- Edinburgh, Scotland
- Esbjerg, Denmark
- Hobart, Tasmania, Australia
- Lyon, France
- Madison, WI
- Minneapolis, MN
- Missoula, MT
- Montreal, Quebec
- Newcastle, Australia
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Poznan, Poland
- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Sacramento, CA
- San Luis Obispo, CA
- Silicon Valley, CA
- Svendborg, Denmark
- Toledo, OH
- Tucson, Arizona
- Vancouver, BC
- Waterloo, Ontario, Canada



Tel Aviv, Israel

Java Jungle on 1st Street at 5:15pm.

**Sao Paulo, Brazil**

**Santa Cruz, CA:** First Friday of the month. Meet at Pacific & Water (Town Clock) at 5:00pm.

**Santa Rosa, CA:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Julliard Park across from Luther Burbank Gardens at 5:00 pm (4:00 pm in winter).





# BICYCLE LOCALLY

**Seattle, WA:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Westlake Park at 5:30pm.

**Stoke-on-Trent, England**

**Sydney, Australia:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park at 5:30pm.

**Tel Aviv, Israel:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Rabin Square at 1:00pm.

**Toronto, Canada:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at Yonge & Temperance Street at 5:30pm.

**Tucson, AZ:** First Thursday of the month. Meet at the University of Arizona Mall at 4:30pm.

**Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

**Walnut Creek, CA:** First Friday of the month. Meet at Civic Center near the BART Station at 5:30pm.

**Washington, DC:** Last Friday of the month. Meet at DuPont Circle at 6pm. There is a monthly theme and a monthly pub.

**Zurich, Switzerland:** Last Friday of the month. Treffpunkt ist in der Umgebung des Bürkliplatzes. 5:30pm.

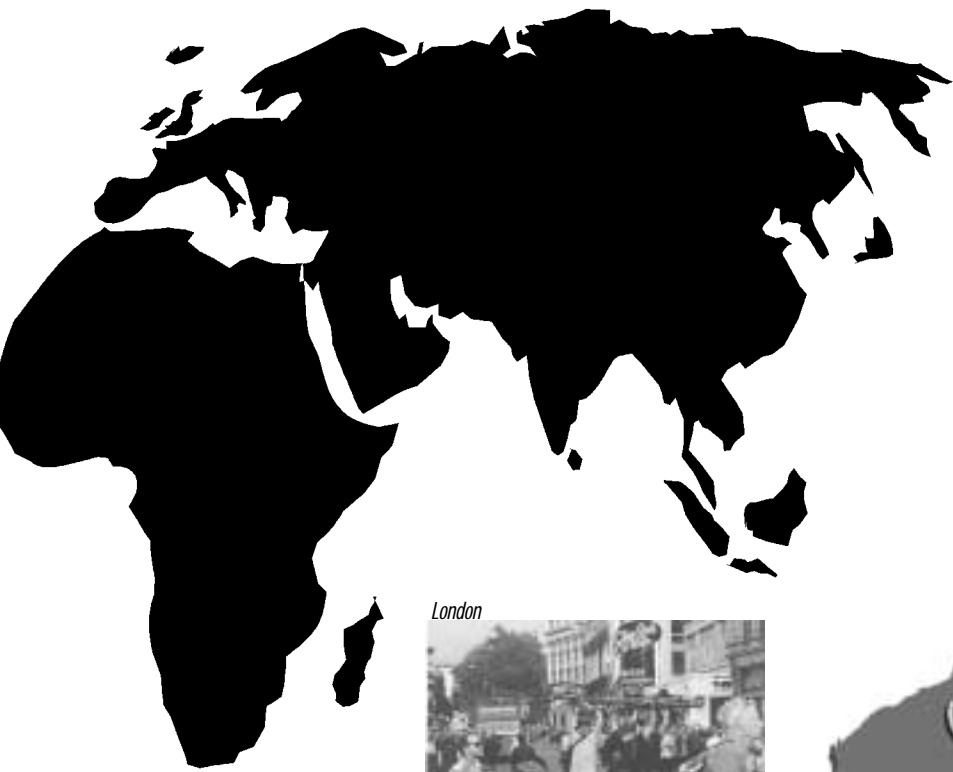
## Central London, August '98

Glorious sunshine for a few days before this month's ride, and the promise of a TV crew being there ensured that numbers were high at the start of the ride outside the NFT. With Des building his mobile winged contraption, and the Brox pounding the music out we left, traditional route, round the roundabout, up over the bridge, spread out, slow down,



enjoy. The two person film crew were being pedalled along on the back of a Brox three seater, by Nigel (London Recumbents), and seemed to be enjoying the cyclist's eye view of the whole thing. The mass was amazingly well behaved, no aggravation at all, much to the annoyance of the film crew, I suspect. Then we turned down Haymarket, where a tourist bus (one of the open topped filthy diesel ones) decided not to let us get past and drove slowly through the mass before getting himself stuck against the barriers down the middle of the road. Hint for irate drivers - if you're going to push through the mass, make sure you can make your vehicle go where you intend it to go, otherwise you'll be laughed at. A LOT. A brief visit to Trafalgar Square, and then down Whitehall. The inevitable happened, and we all had to stop outside Downing St. Can't think why, but everyone had a good shout "Tony Blair, give us clean air" and the rest. Eventually some ped. police turned up and started moving people out of the way so that the buses could get through, and we all got bored and moved off to Parliament Square.

Email [A.D.Smith@umds.ac.uk](mailto:A.D.Smith@umds.ac.uk)



## 29th of Mai '98: Critical Mass GENEVA

### First Critical Mass

The first Critical Mass in Geneva, 150 people to start with, and about another hundred joining along!! we had a big sound system on wheels with us that blasted good sounds as we cruised all over the inner city, circling at huge intersections, everyone smiling and laughing. very good vibe indeed!! we also did a "syrup" stop, and laid down on the main bridge of town (on both side of it!), others started to dance... we ended up in a beautiful site on the grass by the lake where we set up the full sound system. 5 DJ's plaid until half past midnight as we cooked a beautiful meal (all free, of course) and as some others were eating "human pyramids". All good!!!

**5th of June '98, second Critical Mass** This time about 160-200 people turned up defying an oppressive sky. Coming to the Mass, as soon as we entered the sound system on 2 policemen we had seen waiting for us came to us, is to shut it down with the excuse that it is unlawful to play music on public space. (although the policeman said it was alright to drive a GTI with sound system...which it did. The ride went very smooth and people dancing on balconies to the good sounds. The ride as we reached the chosen destination, the sky fell on our heads and all hid under trees as the sound system was set up in a music in came to an end while rock melons and a tasty salad were distributed. DJ's and MC's played their tunes...

**On the Web:** You can find lots of CM things on the world wide web. Here's just a few addresses to try.

### Global link center:

[www.ccsi.com/~bluejay/cm/](http://www.ccsi.com/~bluejay/cm/)

**SAN FRANCISCO:** [www.sirius.com/~chromo/screed](http://www.sirius.com/~chromo/screed)

[www.sflandmark.com/cm/wwwheel/index.html](http://www.sflandmark.com/cm/wwwheel/index.html)

**SEATTLE** [www.oz.net/~nic/cm.html](http://www.oz.net/~nic/cm.html)

**NEW YORK** [www.panix.com/~times/](http://www.panix.com/~times/)

**AUSTRALIA** <http://home.hyperlink.net.au/~damon/cm/australia>

**ISRAEL** [bike.org.il/cm/](http://bike.org.il/cm/)

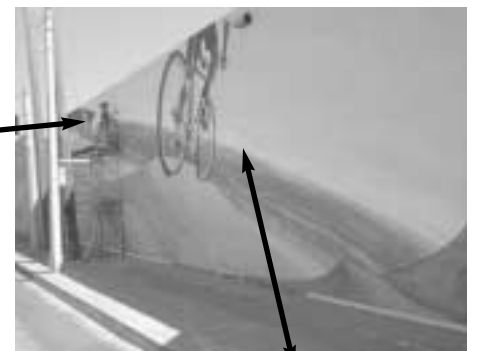
**LONDON** [www.critmass.org.uk](http://www.critmass.org.uk)

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

[www.gallaudet.edu/~kjcole/Bike/CriticalMass.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/~kjcole/Bike/CriticalMass.html)

**PORTLAND OR** <http://131.252.52.112/Aaron/Critical/Critical.html>

Artist Mona Caron designed the Duboce Bikeway Mural in San Francisco with the community's ideas and help. The 400 foot long cityscape mural lines the Duboce Bikeway, the first meager city block closed to automotive traffic. The mural, an inspiration to San Francisco bicyclists and intimately linked to the wave of bike activism sweeping the city, can be found at Duboce Street between Market and Church. Below is a sketch of the mural that doesn't include all its fine details.



# 5 Reasons to Abolish Car Alarms

Car alarms usurp the public soundscape in the name of private security. The loss of public space to private property rights has already gone too far—you can't even put a poster on a telephone pole anymore, much less give out free bagels to the hungry. Part of the same package is car alarms.

**They are rude and undemocratic.** They interrupt people, usually without cause. And by interrupting conversations, they cut down on the free flow of ideas, which is a basic need of democracy. 'Down with intelligence!' Mussolini's Italian Black-shirts chanted. 'Long live death!' And they idolized cars.

**They don't work.** When people hear car alarms, do they leap to apprehend the suspect while alerting the authorities to a crime in progress? More likely, they cover their ears until the sound is gone, and cheer when the thief, tow truck, or vandal manages to defeat the alarm—or get away with the car. Meanwhile, the car owners are usually out of

earshot, or maybe if they do hear it, they have little way to know whose alarm is ringing.

**They are unnecessary.** Silent alarms with bright lights would be far more effective at deterring car theft, alerting car owners to the threat of theft, and maintaining peace in the neighborhood, not to mention a good public image for the car. A silent alarm

could tell the potential thief that the owner and police have been alerted. The owner's pager or cell phone can give a distinctive alarm code. It's hardly science fiction.

**They can't be regulated.** Bans are usually too draconian a solution, like for drugs. But because they are machines, there is little effective social sanction against car alarms. In some rare instances, the police

show up to disarm the alarm, but that usually takes hours of continuous racket. Other times, neighbors take the initiative to vandalize the offending car. Either way, the response is not proportionate to the crime. There is no way to annoy the owner of the car as much as he or she is annoying the dozens of nearby noise victims.

And finally, **they exist to protect cars.** Cars are a selfish, anti-urban technology that cause their occupants to become temporarily demented and isolated from society. Car drivers are responsible for

random killings of animals. Anything that makes car ownership more difficult is good. Car alarms give car owners a false sense of security while actually increasing the environmental impact of the car.

—Steven Bodzin



## respectfully critical

On Fri, Aug 28, 1998 12:31 PM, Bill Stender wrote to the sfcmlist:

I love the mass. and i love the anarchy. i love the diversity of opinion. so i'll add my opinion to the mix... i hate the times when a rider will take an extra lane JUST to block a car. If the mass is big enough it will naturally expand to the lanes it needs. Often times the group is fitting comfortably in lane 1 and then a rider will pull over into lane 2 just to block any cars from passing.

I think this changes the Mass from a show of solidarity and making our presence known to one of deliberate harassment of automobile drivers. I bet the cyclists who do this only do it when they're in the safety of a mass and on their day to day commuting they act normally.

I've invariably ridden up to these guys and the response is sometimes 'OK cool, i'll let them through' but more often the response is "fuck the cars".

"fuck the cars" is also "fuck the person in the car". I'm very anti-car and do everything i can to avoid using a car. i own a car but last year i filled the tank only two times. but then this weekend i'm going with a group to swim in a mountain stream, we're using a few cars to get there. Next weekend i'm going to burning man and i'm gonna ride in a car. My groceries come from the store and a truck brought them there—that goes for everything else i consume and much of the work i produce for income gets taken away by petroleum based delivery systems.

How can ANYONE in this Bay Area in clear conscious take a zealous attitude against the use of the car if they end up using them at times in "any way"?

It's just too black and white to say "fuck cars". I know the vast majority of the riders in the mass are respectful of their fellow citizens and don't see mass as a chance to fuck with other people. I dig that, i LIKE demonstrating that bikes are here to stay, that bikes are an alternative to cars. this can reduce the use of cars and help us gain more amenities for cycling. but making it a war against drivers of cars is bound to fail because it just won't ever have enough committed troops.

i think the taking of an unnecessary lane is thoughtless and ultimately destructive to the potential of CM. what do others think?

-bill

## The Little Bicycle and the Big Bad Industrial Capitalist Ogre

Once upon a time, there was a Little Bicycle. The Little Bicycle liked to ride with its friends and feel the cool breeze tickle its spokes.

One day, a Big Bad Industrial Capitalist Ogre came and put up a sign. "No bicycles! Not even little ones!"

All the bicycles were scared. But not the Little Bicycle. The Little Bicycle went right up to the Big Bad Industrial Capitalist Ogre and said, "Excuse me Mr. Ogre but WE WERE FUCKING RIDING HERE MOTHERFUCKER AND YOU CAN'T FUCKING STOP US." All the bicycles nodded in agreement.

But the Big Bad Industrial Capitalist Ogre just took a stretch limo and ran over the Little Bicycle, smashing it into a million billion gajillion Little Pieces.

Things looked bad, but the Little Bicycle Pieces were cool under pressure. The Little Pieces said, in a very little voice, "Oh yeah?" And the Big Bad Industrial Capitalist Ogre said, "swish krrrrunk," which is the sound of a wrecking ball knocking Little Bicycle Pieces through reinforced concrete.

That looked bad, too, but the Crushed Little Bicycle Pieces just said, "Oh, YEAH?" And the Big Bad Industrial Capitalist Ogre said, "dig dig dig KAABOOOOOM," which is the sound of Crushed Little Bicycle Pieces being buried and blown up with an underground nuclear bomb.

But the Nuked Crushed Little Bicycle Pieces just dug their fried selves out of the ground and said, "OH, YEAH?"

And the Big Bad Industrial Capitalist Ogre said, "Yeah," and went away. All the bicycles were happy, the Nuked Crushed Little Bicycle Pieces most of all.

The End.

## Tourist Dies in Pacific Heights Accident

A tourist from New York was struck and killed by random gunfire at the corner of Pacific and Lyon Streets around 6:30 pm yesterday. The victim, Caz Oolty, 30, was not wearing a bulletproof vest.

According to his companion, Innis Intbystander, also of New York, Oolty was "just walking along" when routine gunfire began. "We don't have gunfire like this in New York," he said, sounding shaken. "There, you can just walk along on the sidewalk. Before today, I didn't even know what Kevlar was."

Gunfire usually appears on Lyon about every 15 minutes, and on Pacific every 20 minutes. According to Stew Snowstorm, director of the

Department of Gunracks and Ordnance, the round that struck Oolty was apparently from the Pacific Street direction.

Diff Snotyear, of the SF Streetscape Coalition, reacted angrily to the news. "We just want people to be able to use the streets the way they want," she said. "But the gun users are a powerful interest group, and the streets, with their perfect lines of sight and targets hanging at every intersection, have been designed by gun users, for guns. Most shooters don't want to hit people, but with the number of rounds being fired, it's inevitable."

Last year, 44 San Franciscans were killed by gunfire on city streets. The most dangerous locations were areas with excessive numbers of people willing to take their chances by walking on the street, especially the area around Powell and Market. According to Steve Hemingand-hawing of the Metropolitan Target Commission, "Most casualties were not wearing the recommended Kevlar full body armor. We regret their error."



# REPORT FROM THE HEARTLAND

Chicago is, well..., in the Midwest. The conservative heartland. The city that works. (as in "Get a job, buddy.") The city of big feet on the ground. The disagreements here are usually more about how to divide up the proceeds of corruption than conflicting ideals. A politician with vision surfaces about as frequently as a Humpback whale in Lake Michigan.

This is a flat, gridded city of wide streets and boulevards, designed to accommodate cars. (Daniel Burnham, the notable Chicago city planner, was a friend of Henry Ford.) This is a city so enamored of the private automobile that it allowed its otherwise "open, free and clear" lakefront to be separated from the rest of the city by a 10-lane asphalt barrier.

So, it is within this context that the Daley Plaza Chicago Critical Mass rides were begun last September, under the shadow of the Picasso sculpture and a cloud of skepticism, my friends reminding me of the Chicago Police Department's traditional zeal in maintaining public order, from Haymarket to the '68 DNC.

You can read about the first ride in last year's issue of this paper. What I want to do here is give my impressions of how CM has developed in Chicago, and what it has meant for me personally. I have been heavily involved since the beginning so I believe I can also speak for many of the others who participate.

First, a brief run-down on the rides. They start at Daley Plaza in the middle of the Loop the last Friday of the month at 5:30. The number of riders in summer has been between 200 and 300, and, in winter, between 30 and 70. Besides the regular rides, in December we had a special ride to the opening of "Autogeddon," a CM-curated gallery multimedia art exhibit with a pro-bike, anti-car theme. Also, in February about 70 cyclists rode to protest the annual Chicago Car Show at McCormick Place. Then, in March, we had a mini-mass to the Lakefront Bike Path to the site of the death of a cyclist struck by a car. At this event we distributed flyers calling for safer biking conditions and hung a 10-foot "Cars Kill" banner on the pedestrian bridge over Lake Shore Drive.

There have been a few CM spin-off activities. Back in the spring some of us worked on a "BlueWays" proposal for a network of car-free bike routes. We had several meetings and produced a map, which we distributed along with a write-up of our ideas at a public hearing on city bike lanes. I have it on good authority that this proposal was actually included in the report submitted to the city by the its bike plan consultant. Some of us also began work on creating an ad campaign to improve the image of bike commuters in the public's mind. There was some effort put into a "Car-free Milwaukee Ave." campaign. (a major bike commute street). Flyers were posted along the route designating the street a "Safe Commute Zone" with a "No Cars" symbol, and a rally was held during the August ride. Although these are all worthy objectives, we had some trouble maintaining focus on any particular issue long enough to actually accomplish anything. I think we have learned a lesson: Critical Mass does not attract people who have the patience to do all the boring and tedious work necessary to deal with the bureaucratic powers that be. This is fine with me. I have come to the conclusion that as far as issues go, the role of Critical Mass, at least in Chicago, is to draw public attention to biking problems, introduce novel (and sometimes "crazy") concepts into the public dialogue, and have fun doing it. Who knows? We may hit on an idea so good that the bureaucrats will pick it up, claim it as their own, get funding, and implement it. That's ok with me, too.

Media coverage? As far as I know, there has been only one article about CM in a mainstream print publication (Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine — it was highly favorable. The writer quoted a paragraph from one of our flyers we handed out to cagers). There have been several articles and letters in "alternative" publications. In March, three massers appeared on WLS talk radio taking phone-ins. (I have a tape of this for anyone interested). Although we sometimes send out press releases to the electronic and print media, results have been less than spectacular. (Hey, it's a big city. The TV "news show" directors have plenty of murder and child abuse stories). Once Channel 5 sent a helicopter, which hovered over Daley Plaza for a while and left: our 200 bikers must not have seemed worthy of their attention. We have concluded that, unfortunately, it would take either mass arrests or some violent incident to get their interest. As far as I'm concerned, let them chase their trash TV stories: who needs them? On the positive side, we now have a videographer who has edited kickass tapes of the last three rides. These are also available. Call or e-mail me.

A lot of discussion takes place on our listserv (about 40 members). We plan events, exchange information, and sometimes engage in heated debate over whether we should do "holdups" at intersections, how to deal with the cops, and whether or not CM should get involved in issues. But, since the majority of riders are not on the list, I believe it has little effect on what actually happens on the rides.

In the summer we usually end up at someone's house who has a large enough yard to accommodate us all. One of

our regular riders is a DJ and several times he has played CDs. Another rider works at Goose Island (a local micro-brewery) and he usually brings a keg or two. After the July ride, one of the riders entertained with his band. In winter the rides invariably lead to a bar, where we co-opt the establishment's VCR system and show tapes of previous rides, drinking and cheering ourselves. We also use these opportunities to spread the word about CM to other bar patrons.

We have had four arrests during the year. In two cases the CM-related charges were dismissed. In one case the rider plea-bargained and paid a \$50 fine. In the last case, the rider refused to plea bargain, got a lawyer, held out for a trial, and won because the arresting officer didn't show. Masser donations covered most of the legal fees. After the last arrest, about 30 riders held a 4-hour vigil outside the District Station where the arrestees were being detained. Someone produced some pastel chalk, which was used to artistically express our unhappiness about the arrests on the sidewalk in front of the station.

Police reaction has varied ride to ride. Our blip is apparently not big enough on the city's radar screen yet; the Mayor has not publicly acknowledged the existence of Critical Mass and the police do not seem to have any coherent plan for dealing with it. As a result, officers who encounter a ride react according to their mood. Sometimes they escort us; in the June ride they blocked the Mass with their cars, jumped out and arrested two riders.

Since this incident, someone calls the Community Relations Dept. of the 18th District (the most troublesome) and reminds them we will be riding. This seems to have helped: the police feel they are in "control." We have had no police harassment since, even during the August ride when we violated city ordinance by riding on and shutting down all northbound lanes of Lake Shore Drive for 15 minutes.

Since the Chicago rides are still small compared to San Francisco, we still ride as one Mass. During the entire year there has been only one ride where more than one map was distributed at the Plaza. In this case, we had a "bike bell referendum," and the more confrontational won (Lake Shore Drive). Even then, both maps originated from the same group, which has been active in all the Mass activities. Despite our continued efforts to promote the "xerocratic" aspect of the rides, all the planning is still done by this group, which is descended from the friendships begun at the first Daley ride.

For me, the development of these friendships is the most gratifying outgrowth of Critical Mass in Chicago. Almost immediately after the first ride a network of dedicated, energetic, like-minded bikers sprung up: very few of us knew each other before that ride. Over the past year my wife and son and I have come to know many of them very well and I count myself fortunate to be a part of this circle. We party together, plan CM routes, go trail riding together, participate in "Urban Assaults," and ride as mini-masses (or "bike posses" we call them here in Chicago) to various events in the city. I have seen several CM romances pop up. Hardly a day goes by that I don't meet a biker on the street that I know through Critical Mass. CM solidarity has given us all, I believe, a sense of pride as urban bikers. I think we all recognize that such ad-hoc, unsanctioned associations are rare in our highly individualistic and fragmented society. I for one value it highly.

-Jim Redd

Chicago Critical Mass:  
[www.tezcat.com/~jredd/cmchi.html](http://www.tezcat.com/~jredd/cmchi.html)  
[www.metrodigital.com](http://www.metrodigital.com)  
Hotline: 773-918-5158  
e-mail [Jim.Redd@infores.com](mailto:Jim.Redd@infores.com)

## My pilgrimage to Mecca

My San Francisco Critical Mass taught me some very important things. Firstly we are very lucky to be still riding in one mass and going through red lights as our style would be... the last car through an intersection on a red and all. In San Francisco the police have clamped down hard. They have at least a dozen cars at the foot of Market where the Mass begins. In addition to the SFPD there were CHP officers on motorcycles. All of them looked like they were ready for action. To start with there were three route maps circulating and as it got closer to the time to leave there was a vote on the route. I do not remember the first nor did I know where it was going. The second was to ride across the peninsula to the beach, actually the ruins of the Sutro Bathhouse. The second was scrawled on the back of a photocopy of an article condemning bicyclists as anarchists and ruthless and all the terrible things people think of us. The route was to her house and also featured her phone number and E-mail address. Since it was just a short detour off the route to the ocean that is where the mass went.

As the Mass starts up Market the fact that the riders must now stop for the lights it creates Mini-Masses that then split off and go into random directions. This causes less localized auto-conflict and more over all chaos. At one point the Mini-Mass that I was riding with had thinned due to riders taking off with other Mini-Masses. Each of the Mini-Masses kept in touch with each other with their modern, newfangled, wireless phones. As the early evening wore on all of the Mini-Masses headed out to the

**BOY! OH BOY! What a Thrill I Had Smashing Capitalism By Spurning Cars and Riding a BICYCLE!**

says **EDDIE CANTOR**

"TIME TO SMILE"  
Tune in on  
**EDDIE CANTOR**  
Every Wednesday Night  
— 9:00 P.M. E. S. T.  
NBC Red Network



The Cantor Family in front of their home. Left to right: Natalia, Ida (Mrs. Cantor), Edna, Janet, Marilyn, Eddie, and Marilyn, on their Schwinn-Basil bikes.

beach to party and have fun. My friend Jim and I made it as far as Golden Gate Park. My sister and her boyfriend forgot their sunglasses at her house and I told her I would try to get them. I also had to be on the road to Sacramento early the next day.

Though I like to name Masses in San Francisco they have taken to numbering them This was #72! I was also handed a very small flyer that had the headline '15 more Critical Masses until Willie Brown's (the Mayor) term is up.' This small flyer also had some great suggestions: Change direction every three blocks and look for narrow streets. These suggestions are just as good for Chicago as they are for San Francisco. The Mayor is a major adversary to bicyclists and those who utilize Mass Transportation. On the day of the Mass their MUNI system went down for three hours. The whole system! San Francisco is a very tricky city to ride in. When you combine the autos with the regular busses with trolleys and cable cars and their associated tracks in the ground you have to be on your toes. Many of the openings in the street are as much as three inches across. Very scary. Oh yea don't forget the silent electric busses.

-Lifted from Daniel's site,  
[www.metrodigital.com](http://www.metrodigital.com)

## BIKE THE BRIDGE!



September 10, 1998, SF-Oakland Bay Bridge

## Love Your City...

"And then to the rarest treasure, Golden Gate Park on a car-free Sunday morning, the air wet and clean, the meadows green with the promise of spring.

Not a single automobile: The silence is deafening, you can actually hear the branches dripping moisture, squirrels scrambling through the underbrush - and the birds! Hundreds of redbreasted robins bobbing across the lawns, now that there are no cars to frighten them.

On Stanyan, the families are renting bikes and heading into the winding trails. Slowly it dawns on them that they can use the main drive and the roads. For once the world does not belong to the automobile. The bicycle is king again and the rider may go where fancy dictates without looking nervously over his shoulder. You are even allowed, for a few unrealistic minutes, to reflect on how pleasant life would be if the car were banned from San Francisco."

Herb Caen

*San Francisco Chronicle*, 1/28/73

## ..Ditch Your Car



Time to be  
Gettin'  
Organized!

## San Francisco Bicycle Messenger Association

The San Francisco Bike Messenger Association was first started as a humorous, yet in-your-face, answer to the AMCS; if the owners could have a club, so could we.

**WHO WE ARE:** We are you, if you are a current or former employee of the SF messenger industry. This includes walker, bicycle, moped, motorcycle, and drive messengers, as well as order-takers and dispatchers.

**WHAT WE WANT:** We want what is well overdue: appropriate compensation for our efforts. This includes a livable wage, health insurance, sick pay, vacation pay, pension plan, equipment compensation, etc. You know, normal workers' rights.

**HOW WE WILL GET IT:** We will get by becoming one unified force, and standing up to the entire industry with our demands. In the past we have proved that we can stick together to help each other out by holding countless benefits, hosting the best Cycle Messenger World Championships of all time coming together to pay tribute to fallen comrades, holding toy drives for needykids, the annual Russian River Ride; even things as simple as creatng our own underground social scene each and every day of the week. Now that we have a working agreement with the most powerful union in the Bay Area, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, we have the experienced backing to stand up to the industry and achieve our goals.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Dues are \$5 a month. You can pay this to our Treasurer when you get a membership card. Joel Metz is filling in for Lance Shroeder. Ask around, or seem him at one of our general meetings. Announcements for these are posted at messenger hangouts. Attend these and other SFBMA events. Keep the faith. This has been a long time coming and might take another year.

SFBMA, P.O. Box 640251, San Francisco, CA 94164-0251, offices at 255 9th Street, on the web at [www.messengers.org/sfbma](http://www.messengers.org/sfbma), or email [Magpie@echo.com](mailto:Magpie@echo.com)

### Moralism vs. Utopianism— of Helmets and Bike Lanes

As I was riding to the memorial for the woman killed at 24th and Valencia, I got a dose of bicyclist moralism. (*I have been riding my bike, mostly as a commuter, in SF for the past 19 years, and I've only worn a helmet a half dozen times at most. So far I've avoided any serious accidents.*) I turned to some unknown cyclists with me in the left turn lane from Market to Valencia, and asked if they were heading to the memorial, and a helmeted-woman immediately informed me in that tell-tale 'tsk, tsk' tone of voice, that the accident victim "hadn't been wearing a helmet." I took offense at this blaming of the victim, and said as much, leading to an alienating and inconclusive exchange regarding the individual responsibility to wear a helmet.

Most bicycle accidents cause injury that a helmet cannot help, but still many cyclists share the mass media bias that says "if you're not wearing a helmet, you have given up your rights to complain about an accident or the injuries you may have received." I find this absurd and offensive.

It's not a moral imperative to buy a commodity that offers meager protection in order to be critical of a ridiculously hostile road structure. You don't deserve to die, or



Look Ma—  
No Helmet!  
No Bike Lane!

even suffer injury, just because you refuse the "common-sense Consumer Duty" to buy and wear a helmet. Road engineering today *guarantees* serious accidents between bikes and cars, and of course, cars and cars. You may survive a slightly higher percentage of these predictable and designed "accidents" wearing a helmet, but you are reproducing an insidious logic when you criticize bare-headed cyclists. It is terribly false to place the onus for traffic safety on the individual vehicle driver, whether car or bike. The system is designed in such a way that it is entirely predictable that many thousands of people will die in the "normal" course of events on America's roadways. Cyclists who ride without helmets do not thereby deserve the fate handed out by the unforgiving streets of America.

This is one example of a moralistic acquiescence to the status quo that blocks some bicyclists from seeing the radical implications of bicycling. Another example presents itself in the ongoing tussle between advocates and opponents of bike lanes. Bicyclists against bike lanes believe that the best way to improve conditions for bicycling is by bicyclists becoming able to ride as an equal among cars on regular streets. Rather than changing roads and rights-of-way, they hold individual cyclists responsible, insisting they learn to behave as cars, moving as fast as autos through normal city traffic. For a large majority of real and potential bicyclists, this is physically impossible and socially undesirable.

Bike lane opponents seem to think that everyone should be like them. Often these folks claim inspiration from the theory of "Effective Cycling" (John Forrester). They embrace cycling with a near-religious fervor and feel passionate about its "natural" superiority as a mode of transit in terms of energy and thermodynamics. Ten thousand hours of experience qualifies you to claim the status of "effective cyclist," a status for which rather few of today's urban cyclists would qualify.

I prefer the label "Republican Efficiency Freaks" (REFs) for this crowd, who curiously seem to think that the only cyclists who are a worthy political constituency are those who conform to their standards of law-abiding behavior and thermodynamic efficiency. Arguing against bike lanes out of some strange paranoia, they claim that bike lanes will ghetto-ize cyclists into those areas only. Additionally they have argued that with a system of separate bike lanes we will see MORE bike-car accidents because of the confusion that exists at all intersections of bikeways and car streets.

We will never be banished from city streets! There are too many of us already, and after a new bikeway system, our numbers will quintuple again. Bike-car accidents are already awful. We need a big public education program about new patterns and priorities, accommodating bicycles, wheelchairs and pedestrians, improving public transportation performance, and so on. A network of bike ways is what will encourage many more people to start riding. The most common reason people have for not cycling is their legitimate fear of being killed on the streets by cars.

The attempt to make individuals responsible for a socially-imposed madness is not just foisted on us by our obvious opponents. Unfortunately, those of us in the "bicycling community" spend all too much time fending off the same kinds of blame-the-victim mentalities from within our ranks. But this kind of petty moralism and political self-defeat cripples our utopian imaginations. Oppose political arguments that situate the crucial decisions of our predicament at the point of shopping for a helmet, or in our ability and willingness to act like a car when we're riding our bikes. We want to change life. Bicycling is an affirmative act toward that end.

—Chris Carlsson

## Critically High Cool...

Going where?  
now see us...  
away the troops...  
the mono-strocity...  
dared the little weenies...  
and they called...  
said cough up...  
neighborhoods need...  
change...  
facilitate our dreams...  
we have the power...

-- looking jim

## CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE

### SECTION 21202:

Yes, dear, you do have rights!

Division 11, §21201

Article 4. Operation of Bicycles

21200. Every person riding a bicycle upon a highway has ALL THE RIGHTS and is subject to all the provisions applicable to the driver of a vehicle...

Operation on Roadway

21202. (a) Any person operating a bicycle upon a roadway at a speed less than the normal speed of traffic moving in the same direction at such time shall ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except under any of the following situations:

(1) When overtaking and passing another bicycle or vehicle proceeding in the same direction.

(2) When preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway.

(3) When REASONABLY NECESSARY to avoid conditions (including, but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards, or substandard width lanes) that make it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge... For purposes of this section, A "SUBSTANDARD WIDTH LANE" IS A LANE THAT IS TOO NARROW FOR A BICYCLE AND A VEHICLE TO TRAVEL SAFELY SIDE BY SIDE WITHIN THE LANE.



# What's wrong with this picture ...?



Are our streets safe?

Do parents let their kids ride to school?

Does the SFPD respect cyclists?

**MASS  
IF YOU'RE  
CRITICAL**

## Fun Car Facts

**STRANGLE THE CITY** U.S. cities devote one-third to two-thirds of their arable land to roads, street parking, and parking lots (Worldwatch Institute). Nearly 50% of the justice system is tied up in automobile related claims. This is money and energy that could be used to fight real crime, like domestic violence and child abuse, yet is sucked into the government protection of private property.

**DRIVE TO WORK, WORK TO DRIVE** The average household spends about 19% of its income on transportation (APTA). U.S. drivers pay \$34 per hundred miles compared to \$14 for transit riders (Worldwatch Institute). Building away from existing city centers starves vital cities, furthers auto dependence and enforces poverty.

**USE YOUR IMAGINATION** Free yourself from auto-dependence. Imagine your life without parking tickets, insurance payments, accidents, DUIs, and with several thousand dollars more discretionary income a year.

## "The Secret Is Out": See the Real Story Behind the SF Critical Mass Police Riot July 25, 1997!

Get the video, "The Secret Is Out," and see for yourself how Mayor Willie Brown misled his citizens and ordered zero tolerance on Critical Mass, calling in the hats-and-bats to make a hundred bogus arrests and incite fear in a feeble attempt to crush Mass and distract the public from his other failures. Lots of cyclists' camcorder videos, interviews with witnesses and victims. Video evidence of police abuse -- shot by the cops themselves. Plus all sorts of bonus things, 2 hours in all. Send a contribution to the Bicycle Civil Liberties Union, P.O. Box 15071, Berkeley, CA 94701-6071. Get the real story and revel in the inaccuracies of the mass media's coverage!



# DINOSAURS RULE OUR WORLD

Bicyclists Demand **CHANGES!**  
THEY'RE OUT OF CONTROL ...

We must stop them before **MORE** people start bicycling!

\$\$\$\$\$  
\$



The Parking & Traffic Commission deliberating on how and why to increase parking and traffic.

September 25, 1998  
SAN FRANCISCO CRITICAL MASS  
6th Anniversary Special Edition!!

# SIXRAG

## BIKE MANIFESTO

**A**SPECTRE IS HAUNTING San Francisco: car-free streets and clean air. O eco-horror! O end of stunted technologies! To nip the nefarious bike revolution in the bud, the entire local ruling class has mobilized its best minds, such as Wendy Linka and Michael Yaki. "Gas guzzlers unite," these shills of the carwazie scream. "Down with bikes!" they shrill. But deep within the bowels and byways of Bikedad By the Bay, lawyers and accountants—led by God-like bike messengers—have fearlessly taken to the streets en masse. Sadly, there have been martyrs; and murderers, too.

A confession: We used to drive our carbon monoxide generator two blocks to the ice cream store! No more. Now we pedal merrily the careless miles to Rainbow Grocery to buy gluten and cili-um husk. But in the days of yore—when we yelped with delight as each mad biker was crushed to gore

we—O shame, where is thy sting?—we ran a biker or three off the road .... Now as we slouch towards City Hall on our Schwinn—helmeted and paranoid as a fox in front of the hounds—we are frightfully aware of the insane intent of the enraged minds steering machines of many tons bearing down on our fragile aluminum butterfly with bikercide in mind. O it is a terrible thing to have once been one of the oppressors and now to be one of the oppressed! O it is a wonderful thing to visualize Mission Street, Van Ness Avenue, Market, Fulton, Gough—and all points in between—as green parks with little bike paths and bubbling brooks meandering through exhaust-less verdancy as underground conveyors deliver barrels of slush margaritas to central kitchens. Rise up, bik-erads! We finally understand the error of the old way. We self-criticize for operating as unthinking corporate extensions of Exxon and General Motors. We embrace the future and declare: Death to all cars, they are but paper tigers in the tank! Long live bikeal-ism!!

—Peter Byrne



BETH VERDEKAL