

issue 1 / january 2006

BIKE PLAGUE

bikes. in LA.

Rants
Stupid adventure reports
Encounters with the law
How not to lock your bike
The perils of not rolling up
pantlegs
Ms. Spindle's problem page

\$1 where sold...

BIKEPLAGUE

The BikePLague crew this month...

Chris	Michelle
Lisa	Morgan
Matt	The Lars
Max	Trista b.

Cover photo: "Locking UP" by Nathan Snider (nsnider@gmail.com)

Yo! Wanna get involved? Got something to contribute? Want to distribute to local shops and stuff? Get in touch then, yo.

E-mail us at bikeplague@gmail.com



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons

Attribution-ShareAlike 2.5 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

Basically, this license means you can copy it freely under the same terms as long as you attribute it. Hell, copy it and sell it for \$1 to recoup your copying costs! BikePlague is constructed by boring semi-employed geeks using Scribus under Linux. Hell yeah!

Needless to say, Bikeplague in no way endorses the sorts of stupid adventures and stories contained within these pages.

Yo kids. Welcome to the first issue of bikePLague. The urban bike scene in LA has really picked up in the past year or so, and we're pretty stoked about that. We figured we'd like to put out some sort of zine to focus on what's up with bikes in LA, spread the word about upcoming rides and events, help out spreading some bike lore and generally have a good time and cause some chaos while we're at it. This first issue inevitably focuses on stuff that we've been involved with, but we want people from throughout LA to contribute stuff and make this some sort of a center for bike stuff in LA. So if you commute two miles a day by bike and know of a good eatery along the way, if you had a great time at a ride and want to write a review of it or if you want to get some issue off your chest, write it up and send it to us. We also encourage stories of falling off your bike and injuring yourself (along with photos). Hey, and someone design us a logo, OK?! The BikePlague zine is part of a larger project which we're calling BikeSwarm, through which we're going to put on events and suchlike. Watch this space.

Enjoy, and ride safe...

CONTENTS...

introduction...	2
news...	3
calendar...	4
readers' letters...	4
Cool Breeze century reportback...	5
East LA Bike Oven interview...	8
Guide to locking your bike!	10
Calendar (cont)...	11
The scorcher...	11
Compromised position...	12
The spirit of adventure...	14
Ladies...you are not alone and you don't have to take it!	15
An encounter with the law...	16
SFPD department bulletin...	17
Ask Ms. Spindle...	18
The last word...	19
Feel my legs flyer...	20

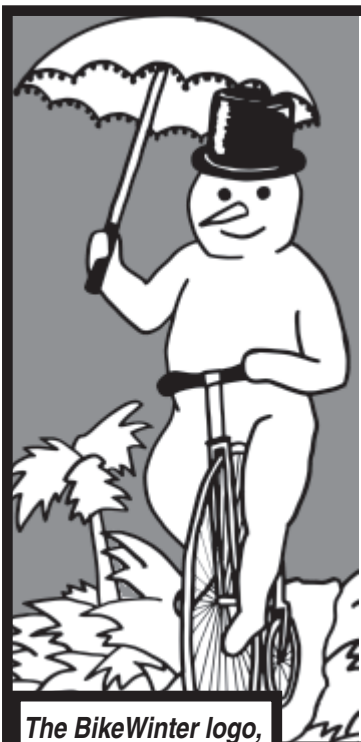
Cranksgiving, the annual alleycat put on by the messengers, was apparently awesome (I turned up an hour too late to do the race itself). Skid competitions etc afterwards polished off the evening nicely. **November Critical Mass** was dead small. I only made it 'cos it was thanksgiving holiday (it's too early for me otherwise). Conversely the holiday meant fewer people than usual. A fun ride from the usual Wilshire & Western meeting point the last friday of every month at

we're putting on, a stage race on some of the steepest hills in the world in our very own backyard (figuratively speaking, that is): Echo Park and Silverlake. Check out the snazzy flyer on the back page for details. You can also check out the calendar in this issue for some events. Also, if you would like to put on an event, get in touch with

NEWS . . .

6pm

into Hollywood and back. **December Midnight Ridazz** paradoxically involved more exposed flesh than any (except maybe the Stripper ride back in 2004) Ridazz I can recall, despite it being December. I guess that's what happens when they call it a pool party ride. I



The BikeWinter logo, would you believe?

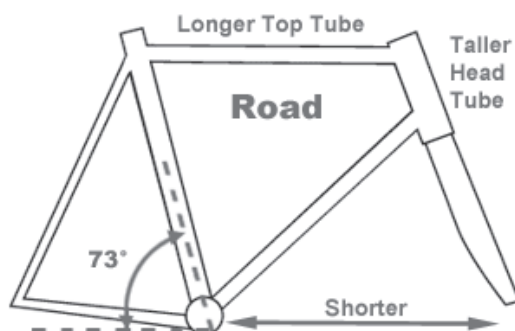
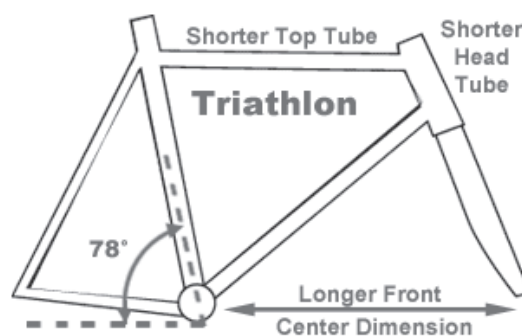
personally saw four (yes, four) people go over their handlebars on the ride. Careful, kids. A select few ridazz made it onto a party in a loft in downtown where we were quickly yelled at and thrown out (there was a pool on the roof, y'see). Infiltration of a second party of well dressed young peoples by scruffy bike kids

led to a similar ejection, this time by security. Tsk. **BikeWinter** is coming in January: for those of you who missed the glorious days of BikeSummer just gone, BikeWinter is ten days of bike stuff going on in LA. There are races, rides, and other fun stuff. Check out winter.bikeboom.com for the full scoop. The event that we're plugging the most is the one



Jack's bike was thieved. boo!

those guys. **Stolen bike:** Our buddy Jack had his bike stolen on December 16th from near Sunset & Normandie. It was a dead nice mountain bike: an XL Trek VRX 200, blue with black forks (see photo). It was an older model and is a huge size, making it very unique so please keep your eyes out and contact us or Jack if you see it (after you wrestle it back from the fucker riding it).



CALENDAR

What's goin' on?

We shamelessly lifted the contents of the www.bikeboom.com calendar to let y'all know what's up. Check it out for full details and up-to-date listings. And if you want your event included in this Calendar - submit it to www.bikeboom.com, not us!

January 1st - 7th: On Sunday 1st, there's a **Vintage Bike Ride** - it says anything pre-1985 is good, but all are welcome. 10:30am at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Our favorite crazy valley dwellers, **The Choppercabras**, have a ride on Wednesday the 4th. Meet in the back Parking lot of Nathan's Tattoos located at 7222 Topanga Canyon Canoga Park, CA, 91306 at 8:30pm. Slow pace for 5-10 miles. May even be tallbike jousting beforehand. You have been

January is looking pretty exciting.

warned. That night (and every Wednesday night) there's also the **East LA Bike Oven**. Check out our interview with Josef for more on that. The on Friday the 6th there's **Santa Monica Critical Mass**. You know the deal. Meet at entrance to Santa Monica Pier (Ocean Ave. @ Colorado Ave.) at 6:30pm. That evening at 9pm is the grand **BikeWinter Kick-off Party** at the A-house, 210 N. Rampart Blvd. 9pm, free BBQ, cheap beer, DJs, dancing, and live hip hop by Rebels to the Grain. Yeah! Then on Saturday 7th there's a free **CORBA mountain bike skills class** in Malibu State park at 8:45am.

January 8th - 14th: this is the main week for BikeWinter LA. Like I said, check out winter.bikeboom.com for full info. In brief though, on Sunday 8th there's an Anti-war Bikeride at 10am meeting at Highland Park station.

On (Continued on page 11...)

READERS' LETTERS

It appears that we've already disgruntled one reader, Bryan Farhy, before our first edition went to press! Bryan writes to complain about the dietary options presented on the **BikePlague / BikeSwarm** stage race (see the flyer on the back cover).

Well Bryan, we're sorry our choice of post-race feed doesn't appeal to you but we hope that you'll be able to make it just the same. Needless to say, your superior musculature due to a correct rabbit-based diet will mean that you will do extremely well relative to your vegan or vegetarian comrades on two wheels.

Incidentally, we wondered if you'd let us know your Lapin recipe? We're dying to try it out on our recently purchased TofBunny™.

From: Bryan Farhy <bryan@uncle.tv>
To: bikeswarm@gmail.com
Subject: Ride

"Vegan pancakes" Wow, I can't imagine how wonderful they must be!!!

This event; the hill climbs in obscure LA neighborhoods, the breakfast, etc. sounds really fun, and I'd love to do it, but then I read that and I can't help but think that this will just be a bunch of fucking boring semi-employed geeks and I'd rather be stuck in an elevator in Newark then spend a day on my bike with them.

Ps- know what I cooked tonight?- Lapin (that's rabbit) in a mustard sauce. It was wonderful.

--
Bryan Farhy
Partner+Executive Producer
UNCLE
1207 4th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401
310-260-7520 Office
310-260-7530 Fax
310-498-5584- Mobile
www.uncle.tv

NOTE: This message contains information which may be confidential and/or privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. If you are not the intended recipient, you may not use, copy, distribute, or disclose any information contained in the message. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify the sender by reply e-mail and delete this message. Thank you

One hundred miles on a roadie ride in deliberately obnoxious non-roadie gear. I'd be riding 40:15 on my orange Nishiki that I'd originally found at a bus stop some two years previously; Max would be using 44:18 on his yellow KHS; Alec rode his riser bars on pursuit frame 44:16.

unbelievably good.

That night we slept in a schoolyard a block away from the start of the ride. We found a gap between a couple of buildings next to a hedge

COOL BREEZE CENTURY... ...EXPEDITION STYLE

It'd been talked about for a while, but when we saw the flyer for the 2005 Cool Breeze Century, it was clear that now was the time: the fixed gear, cut-off shorts and messenger bag century.

The Cool Breeze century is a ride put on every year up in Ventura. As century rides go, it's really easy. Few hills, rest stops about every twenty miles and hundreds upon hundreds of other riders so it's hard to make a wrong turn. We decided that we'd ride up to Ventura from LA the day before, so we spent Friday afternoon pushing against a hearty headwind up PCH from Los Angeles, arriving in Ventura a few hours after dark. That was tougher than we thought, totalling around 70 miles but with messenger bags stuffed with sleeping bags, gatorade and pasta burritos, we were pretty uncomfortable by the time we arrived. Alec had the biggest bag, and the biggest gear in the headwind, so he decided to head home from Oxnard. He called his

sister for a ride while we ate at a taco bell. He said to keep going, but Max and I had a good hanging out groove going, and didn't really feel too eager to remount our wheeled steeds. After playing a monster drawing game, and hanging out at the taco bell for a solid three hours, Alec's sister Jenny showed and gave us some organic raisins, maybe it was just the ride, but they were

and laid down some cardboard on the ground for insulation. I don't think we got to sleep until about 1am after messing around and chatting, feeling moderately ridiculous. Max set his alarm clock for 6am and we got some sleep.

Waking up at 6am was tough. It was cold, we were still stiff from the ride up the previous day and it wasn't properly light yet. Yeuch. Nevertheless, we hauled ourselves out of our sleeping bags and got into our clothes. We made a concession to comfort by wearing spandex under our cut-off shorts and I ended up taking my U-lock out of my rear pocket about half way through the ride and put it in my bag. Selling out to the original idea? Maybe. I didn't really care at that point though. We snuck out of the schoolyard and up to the start point where I was overjoyed

to find that they had some coffee. I drank a load and we procrastinated at the start point. A couple of people made comments about our bags. We were both less enthusiastic about this ride than we had been when



we'd originally planned it - ass apocalypse seemed a grim inevitability by the end of the day and the weight of full messenger bags on our shoulders wasn't going to help comfort matters. We delayed further by chatting to a couple of girls sat on the table next to us, one of whom had an AIDS Life/Cycle Jersey on. I'd ridden AIDS Life/Cycle in 2004 and Max had just completed the 2005 ride. I'd done it on a five-speed road bike, Max had done it on his fixed gear.

Nevertheless, procrastination could only go on so long, so we hopped on our bikes and were off. The first fifteen miles headed west along the coast to Rincon Point, where the first checkpoint was. We covered the distance steadily but we weren't going terribly fast and people slowly overtook us. The checkpoint had piles of food, which we dutifully ate.

The next stage featured the only hill of the ride. Riding fixed, we overtook a lot of people: it's either ride, or fall over. Egos were boosted as we overtook roadies who noticed we were riding fixed. 'Yeah, fixed gear!', 'You guys are crazy'... and of course, they overtook us on the downhill.

The middle section of the ride was easy riding, but I became increasingly uncomfortable. My ass was killing me and I had an extremely stiff shoulder where my bag was pulling on me. Occasionally people would stop to ask us what we had in our bags. 'Sleeping bags'. Ask a stupid question, get a stupid answer! The going was steady. People occasionally recognized us from other rides. One guy asked, "Bicycle Kitchen?". He recognized me from another ride where I'd discussed the kitchen with him. I tried to follow him but was spinning out at 24mph on the flat, and let him go.

By the last rest stop at mile 80 we were desperately uncomfortable but in high spirits. Max would remark, "So then, I hear that the Lord is

coming in Glory and his name is Satan?", referring to the sticker on my chainstay that said the same. "Yup", I'd reply. We bantered with other riders, spotting cool people, one particularly good moustache. Probably the coolest were the couple with a trailer with a dog in it. At every rest stop they'd let the dog out. It seemed perfectly happy with the arrangement. I swear I ate more calories at that rest stop than I'd used that day. A group of women from Team in Training asked us if we were just riding fixed to impress the ladies, one of them made a comment about attractive young men. It seemed like a deadly situation. We got back on our bikes and headed to the finish line.

The last fifteen miles retraced the first, blasting back down PCH and parallel roads with a tailwind. The finish line was a welcome sight. Max had some achilles pain going, so I was five minutes ahead of him here (I'd been unsuccessfully trying to chase down a roadie who'd overtaken me on the last stretch), so I

dashed inside and claimed my patch and got a plate of food. We went and sat on the grass and stretched out a bit and discussed the next stage. I wanted to ride back (I had some big rides coming up in the

next two months); Max thought he'd spare himself further damage by taking Amtrak back to LA. In the end we decided to take leave of each other. Max lent me his LED light, so I wouldn't just have my short-lived nightrider, and I bid him farewell. By now it was 5pm and I had 70 miles to go to get to Santa Monica. I also desperately wanted to get past Trancas before sunset. There had been some nasty roadwork that Matt had warned me about after he'd ridden down to LA from San Francisco a few weeks previously. I sure as hell didn't want to be rear-ended by a truck on PCH. I had three hours.

The first hour was mentally tough. Ass



apocalypse had firmly set in and the best I could do was to simply not shift around on my saddle too much. The ride from Ventura through Oxnard is bleak and boring. There were grey clouds ahead and I was worried it might rain. I'd stuffed my bag with snacks at the last rest stop, but I was also a little concerned that I didn't have enough food on me to get me through to Santa Monica without collapsing in a rubbery, sugar-starved heap.

I disciplined myself. Five minutes break every hour. I stopped at the entrance to the Port Hueneme military base and pissed against the wall, and chowed down a couple of fig rolls. I swear doing that doesn't take ten minutes usually, but I look at the computer on my bike and I see that that's how long I've been off my bike. Back on the bike, spinning away.

I cheer up after I pass the headland at Port Hueneme. The scenery shifts from grim agriculture to wilder ocean vistas, cliffs and a golden yellow light from the sun that is getting lower in the sky. I stop again at Sycamore Cove to eat a couple more fig rolls and half a bagel, then jump back on the bike again. I fret about the minutes of daylight left but eventually hit the roadworks at Trancas just as the sun is setting. I stop on the side of the road and wait for a clear spot, then take the whole lane as I ride the length of affected area. It's a little concerning - the whole road is reduced to one lane with no shoulder - but taking the lane and keeping an eye on the car behind me ease my concerns.

I hit the rolling hills after Zuma beach just after it got properly dark. I had a rear light and two front lights, so I was pretty well prepared. If anything, I began to feel stronger now that the sun had gone. I approached each hill with a positive attitude, and didn't delay in pounding up each one in turn. The top of the Pepperdine hill was a relief to arrive at. I stopped off at the baseball park

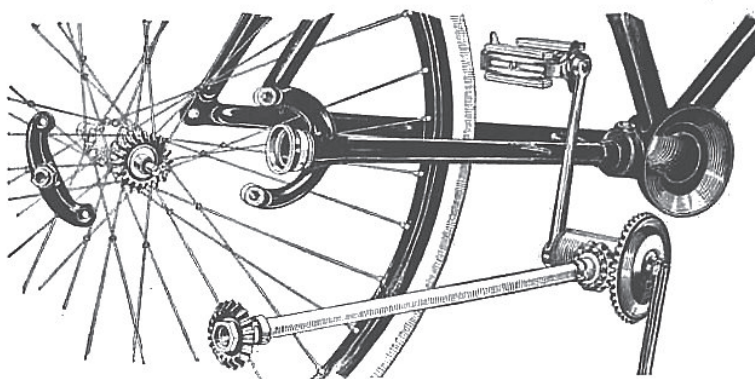
restrooms to get water. There was a temporary outdoor cinema set up and a lot of Malibu residents milling around. I wondered what they thought of me. I got back on my bike and scooted down the hill to find a callbox where I called my friend Tom to see if he was into meeting me for food when I got back to LA. "Sure", he said. We agreed on meeting in an hour at a Thai restaurant on Wilshire. Only when I put the phone down did I realize how hard it'd be for me to blast down PCH and then up into eastern Santa Monica in an hour!

Nevertheless, I put in the effort and held a steady, fast pace down PCH. Never have I feared for my life more. Saturday night, 8pm, on PCH, is NOT the place for a lone cyclist. People were still coming up from the beaches so there was plenty of opportunity for getting doored (surfboarded!), motorists heading to LA were impatient and aggressive and even with two front lights I felt effectively invisible.

Finally I crossed Sunset Blvd and made the final mile-long treacherous length along PCH to the bike path. Hitting the bike path was an enormous relief. From there I took a left up Channel Road and the nearly impossibly steep Entrada Drive to 7th street. After that, it was a cool breeze through Santa Monica to meet Tom.

I took the bus home after dinner.

Columbia Bevel-Gear Chainless Bicycle



Easiest running, cleanest, safest, most durable. Complete protection of running gear from rain, mud and dust. The best hill-climber and a delightful coaster.

COLUMBIA AND HARTFORD CHAIN WHEELS

The new specially cut sprockets and hardened pin chain show better results under test than any other chain wheel mechanism.

New Models: Chainless, \$75; Chain, \$50, \$35, \$26, \$25.

Catalogue free of any Columbia dealer or by mail for 2-cent stamp.

POPE MANUFACTURING CO., HARTFORD, CONN.

EAST LA BIKE OVEN

We'd heard about a guy out in Highland Park who was just starting to open up his garage on wednesday nights to one and all to come hang out, drink box wine and fix their bikes. We sent an envoy on the hard ride down Sunset, Cesar Chavez and Figueroa to check out the situation.

BP: Who are you?

JB: My names' Josef Bray-Ali. My Mom's from Hungary and my Dad's from India. I grew up in LA on the Westside in Venice.

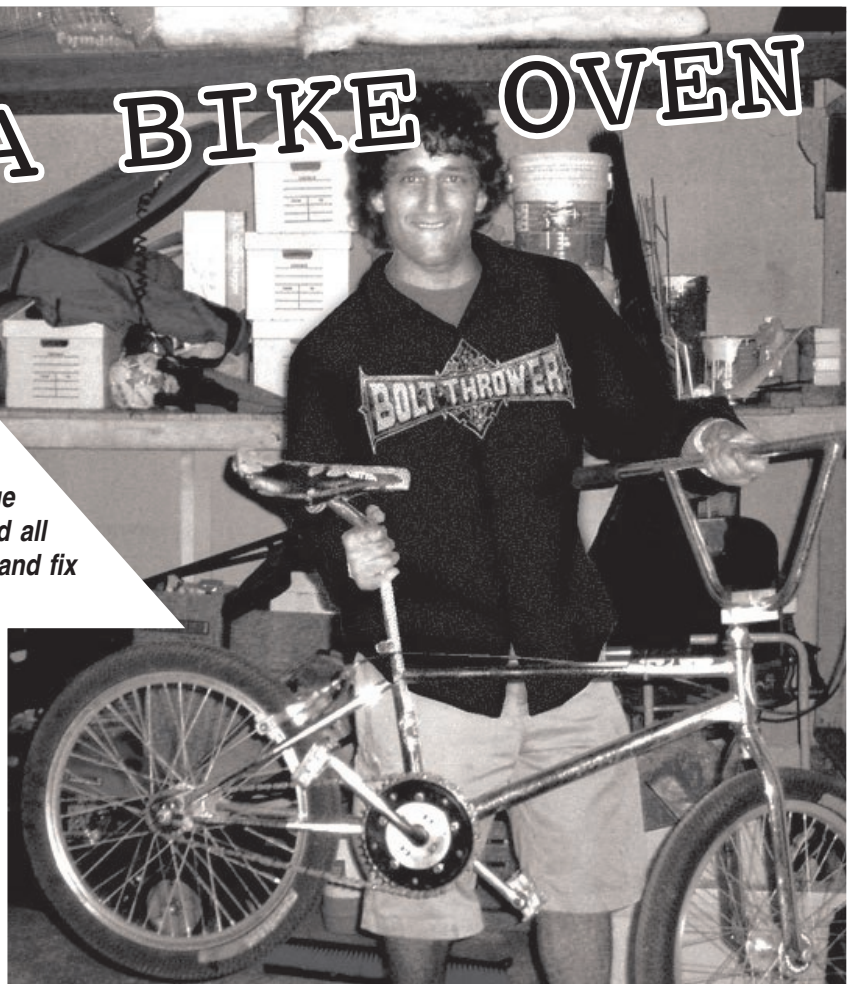
There's like a full-on surf scene there. Since I can't make it to the beach in the mornings anymore, I started biking - this BMX over here. What happened was that I went to the TRON ride for Midnight Ridaz and I tried to go on the fast ride that they had that night and i got fucking smoked, man. I had like 15 people roll past me and say, 'get a real bike, dude'. Once we got to Flower I was huffing, dying, pedalling as fast as I could. Someone was like, "You're working the hardest out here, bro. Keep it up!". They told me we were going to Commerce and I was like, 'fuck it!', right? So I realized at that point that I wasn't the only person in LA riding my bike at 2am in the morning - like, I wasn't alone. So I started going to every event every friday, driving my car wherever I needed to go, stay at my parent's house on the other side of the city to go to critical mass. And I got fired up. There's a scene of people that, you know, it became a big middle finger to all the stuff that keeps me indoors like the internet. Fucking TV. I just don't care about it any more. You can give a lot back to the internet but at the end of the day it sucks a lot out of you and you're not learning about what there is to do in life. So anyway, after cruising around for three or four months doing this whole bike thing, and really fucking loving it, I get this problem where if I don't get enough physical exercise I get headaches,

get ancy, can't think at work so I get on my bike and ride it all the time and to actually have a place to go and have other people there doing this shit - well, I think that's really fucking cool, right? And after going to the Bicycle Kitchen and seeing what they do, I went out and bought this really ridiculously expensive Scott bike. That's the bike I ride right now. Just got a loan for it!

BP: So, "Bike Oven". Kinda "Bicycle Kitchen" related, right?

JB: Yeah, I thought I'd steal some of their fire, but not ruin their name. This place totally sucks - look there, there's a hole in the ceiling where all this shit was leaking through a couple of months ago. So that [going to the Bicycle Kitchen] was a big deal. I thought, I'd like to do something like an East LA or Highland Park version vibing off what they had. But I don't really have any on the ground organizational skills, and I don't really give a fuck about helping people with their bikes I just wanted a place where people can come and get drunk and work on their bikes and be one of those things which after three or four years is just gone, and people would just say, "Yeah, I was there, it was this total vibe...".

BP: So in 2010 when all the bike kids have moved down from Portland to LA, people can talk about it?



JB: Yeah, be like, "tools - you weren't there when the bike oven was there and that shit was totally blowing up". A really shitty space, I'm paying nothing for rent, just do stuff to the walls where it just doesn't matter. So I didn't want to fuck with the Kitchen, who are totally organised and everything. [other people arrive] Hey! Come on in, pull up a seat - you want some box wine? We've got merlot, and there's cookies down there...

BP: What vintage of wine have you got?

JB: This is a 2006.

BP: Nice.

JB: A good year.

BP: What about tea and cookies?

JB: Well, these are cheap cookies from the shop down the road. ANYWAY, I set this place up as a place for people east of downtown, so you don't need to ride over a mountain or through downtown to get here. There's a ton of stuff i want to do in this neighbourhood - theres a bunch of kids who just hang out on the corner and drink 40's, right? but they don't do shit with themselves. they're like tagging their neighbour's fences every saturday night. what a pointless waste of your life. they have so much talent and potential. so i had them all come in here a week ago and we fixed all their low-rider bikes up and every time i roll now, i tell these kids where i'm going. before they were just like, "where you goin', foo?", and i'm like, "I'm going to this insane echo park ride. what you guys up to?" - "y'know man, just kickin' it, holding it down". But you know, holding it down is bullshit. I saw these kids and I thought that if they had some middle class white guy told them to roll with him that it would be alright, that everything would be ok. most people on these rides look have an education - they just look like they're homeless! I just dress like I'm homeless. People at work think I'm some sort of hippy.

BP: So you're trying to get these kids to join the bike scene?

JB: Yeah. They sell drugs on the side. It's not

organised, like the mafia or anything, but they'll just throw your life away, you know? So I fixed their flat tires. I'm not going to totally change their lives but at least they'll be able to change a flat tire. There's this one kid - there's a whole story for each kid - but there's this one kid who's kinda chubby. He comes out one day with this dead ringer for a colt 45 and goes round the neighbourhood shooting at shit. So of course someone calls the cops on him. He got arrested and they took his little pellet gun and the cops sort of made up this thing about how he'd been reported holding up cars and asking for the drivers money. So anyway, it turns out that this kid works in a tire shop just down the road and two weeks ago this kid just changes three kids' tires in, no shit, like five minutes flat. He totally has skills. Gets the whole thing of the rim, fixes the tube and back on the rim in two minutes. He does that stuff all day, it's how he makes his money. So that kid came as a total surprise. They were bummed last week 'cos I was at this BikeWinter meeting so I



couldn't be about. They're probably not here this week because I wasn't around last week until, like, 10pm, and that's the LA curfew for kids below 18 without a note from parents or employer. And these kids, half of them are on probation. They're all rebelling - like, "yeah, this kids said I was a punk, so I socked him in the face", then the cops come and pick them up. That's your rebellion? That's it? yeah, you're really giving it to the MAN there! And once you're in the system, past 18, and you have a record, that's it! you're done. this state is fucked up.

So we'll see where it goes. And by the way, this place has wireless internet!

BP: Awesome. Thanks for the interview!

LOCKING YOUR BIKE

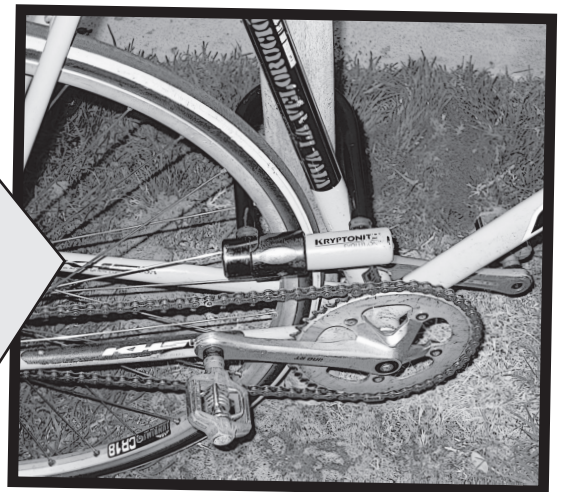
The bikePLAque guide to...

We took to the streets to photograph how NOT to do it. Listen up.



The stupidest way. Anyone could release the quick release and run off with all but your front wheel, dumbass.

Better. But your front wheel is still stealable! An added bonus if the bike next to yours is locked up as in the first option: they just combine your front wheel with your neighbour's all-but-front-wheel and ride off. duh!



Well, a little better - but people could still run off with your wheels.



Finally! (Although a thicker cable would be nice)



CALENDAR

What's goin' on?

(Continued from page 4...) Tuesday 10th there's a **Ride to a Veggie Restaurant**

at 7pm meeting at the A-house, 210 N. Rampart Blvd. On Thursday 12th there's a ride around **Downtown art galleries** meeting at 5pm at Venice and Hope (I think). On Friday it's the ever-popular **Midnight Ridazz!** 9:30pm at Sunset and Echo Park, kids. Be there. Saturday 14th is a big one: there's our own event the **Feel My Legs I'm a Racer** stage race on the hills of Echo Park and Silverlake. It'll be a lot of fun, all welcome, and food afterwards. Again, meet at the A-house, 210 N. Rampart Blvd. Later in the afternoon there's the **DIV Fest** at The Smell, 247 S. Main St in Downtown. Plenty of bike stuff for you punks including bike commuting and maintenance workshops. Finally at 7pm on Saturday there's a **BikeWinter art show**. More info is yet to be revealed on this one.



January 15th - 21st: Sunday the 15th brings **BikeWinter** to a close in style with Urban Bike Assault's **Cannonball Run scavenger hunt race**. I've never seen the movie but I bet it's rad. UBA recommend you see the movie and dress up as your favorite team. Teams of two. Meet 532 S. Olive St. Los Angeles at 3pm. If you don't have a friend, turn up and chances are you'll find someone there. AND there will be a BBQ afterwards!!! The rest of the week is quiet except for **Northeast LA Critical Mass** at 6:30pm on Friday the 20th. Meet at Avenue 57 Gold Line Station 151 N. Ave. 57 in Highland Park.

January 22th - 28th: in fact, the rest of the month is a little quiet except for the triumvirate of critical masses (massii?) on Friday the 27th. At 6pm, **Los Angeles Critical Mass** meets at Wilshire and Western; at the same time **Pasadena Critical Mass** meets at Wild Oats - 603 S. Lake (at California). I guess if you're a really, really fast rider you could then make it down to **Long Beach Critical Mass** at 7pm at the Downtown Bike Station.

THE SCORCHER

In the 1890's, before automobiles ruled the roads, bicyclists were referred to as "Scorchers" because of their blazing speed.

I am the scorcher!
Please observe
The curve
That appertains to my spine!
With head ducked low
I go
Over man and beast, and woe
Unto the thing
That fails to scamper when I ting-a-ling!
Let people jaw
And go to law
To try to check my gait,

If that's their game!
I hate
To kill folks
But I will do it, just the same.
I guess
Unless
They clear the tracks for me;
Because, you see,
I am the Scorchers, full of zeal,
And just the thing I look like on the wheel.

(author unknown)

“shit.”

i had just gotten done with the tri-team's noon swim workout when i realized that i didn't bring a change of clothes with me to campus. i had class in 30 minutes, which meant i had just enough time to ride back to my place, change, and get to class.

keep my balance, hanging onto my waistband for dear life.

little miss, “can't-even-change-in-the-locker-room-like-a-normal-person-because-she's-so-victorian-about-her-own-nakedness” is now about to have her pants pulled down in the middle of an intersection and she's not wearing her swimsuit anymore.

COMPROMISED POSITION

Michelle recounts a cautionary tale regarding failing to roll up your right pant leg whilst riding a bicycle...

i quickly slip out of my swimsuit in a locker-room stall – i'm cool with my body, but super private – and throw on our new team warmups. we'd had them all of a week, and they felt nice on. except for the fact that i wasn't wearing anything underneath anymore; they're so baggy that i felt a little weird.

*“this is ok,
just pull down your jacket top,” i think to myself,
“it'll be fine; don't freak.”*

wrong. i feel the tension ease against my clenched fist. then i hear the rip.

anyway. i throw on my cleats, hurry out to my fyxie, fold up my pant leg, unlock, and roll out. i'm heading away from the gym, on mcclintock, towards where it crosses jefferson. it's one of the busiest intersections near campus. the “red hand” starts to flash in the crosswalk and i realizethat if i wanna make this light, i better speed up. i do, and it looks like i'm gonna make it, except for one thing: my pant leg is starting to roll down.

unable to withstand the pulling at both ends, my right pant leg rips in 2 places – the inner and outer seam – and there go my pants. suddenly my right pant leg is flowing in the wind behind me, ass bare, for everyone to see, RIGHT as i enter the intersection.

*i.
am mortified.*

the moment lasts forever.

“shit. whatever. i'll fix it when i get across.”

walkers stop walking.

shoulda just fucking fixed it.

drivers stop driving.

suddenly i feel a tug at my right foot: my pant-leg is caught.

i'm not exactly the kind of person that people look at and go, “she could stop traffic,” but i did it.

i'm careening towards the intersection... my gears are turning... my pant-leg...

pants flapping, arms flailing... ass just OUT there. i can't even believe this is happening.

*... is...
... catch-ing...
... wrap-ping...
... pull-ing...*

i barely make it across the intersection because, of course, by now i've managed to slow myself down. i half hobble, half-roll myself off to the side of the road and into the gutter. this is just great.

i got going too fast, and now i can't stop the turning. THIS is what i get for being in a hurry.

so i'm standing over my bike, only my left leg unclipped, trying to hold my ripped pants together. people are still staring at me, and cars are now honking at each other, trying to get the others to move. i can't believe i'm not crying. i try, but my right leg won't come unclipped and i can't exactly bend over to try and untangle my pant leg because, you know... my ass'll hang out (i can't even believe i'm writing this. i'm so embarrassed.). i

with every stroke, my pants are being pulled down, down, down... i'm not even in the intersection yet, but there's no stopping me and there's nowhere to pull over. i'm struggling to maintain my balance as my right foot is being bound to my pedal – so much for clipping out – and i'm bracing myself against my bike, trying to

can't back pedal because i can't get my back tire off the ground because i can't lift my bike because i'm still standing OVER the damn thing! ugh! i am so PISSED right now!

i manage to get myself lying on the ground: head up on the curb, wheels in the bike lane. still holding my pants together with my left hand. with my rear wheel free to turn, i try to pedal backwards, but my right leg and pedal are scraping against the ground and with every move, my pants are being tugged away from my left hand. i'm lying in the gutter, still straddling my bike, ass still facing the intersection, and i have NO idea how the hell i'm gonna get out of this.

after 7 or 8 minutes of this, and listening to passers-by whisper, "did that just happen?" a pastor from the united university church stops to help me. at least, i thought he was gonna help me. instead he decides to say, "i th-thought i would j-j-just s-st-sto-sto-aw-aw-awp and tell you th-that," – jesus christ padre, say it – "i could see you from across the street and well, let me just say, that you're in a rather compromised position. if you know what i mean...because...well...seeing as you've chosen not to wear any undergarments today."

great: fucking church man thinks i'm some whore rolling around USC at noon, showing off her whatever because that's just how she is. god this sucks. so embarrassed.

oh look: there goes tyler from my art class... "yeah hi, tyler... no, no, i'm fine... yeah, see you tonight...no seriously: GO. yes, i'm ok. thanks, GO..." god i hate my life.

i start to pull patches off of my bag – thank god for safety pins! – and use them to put the pieces of pant leg back together. i only have 6, though, and i have a rip that goes all the way up my inseam and then one that goes from the outer, bottom-of-the-pant-leg zipper to the waistband. 6 is NOT gonna do it. still, the pins help me secure the back side so that i can start to lean a bit and use my hand to cover another part of my exposed anatomy, and actually get to back pedaling. after about 10 minutes on the ground, i get my right foot free and unclip. whew.

but i'm still on the ground w/ my bike and in pants that don't have an ass anymore. fucking cheap-ass USC warmups. i'm beyond embarrassed now. now i'm just

pissed and wondering what the hell i'm gonna do about this shit.

i manage to drag myself away from my bike and up onto the curb. i tuck my long jacket up under me and put my head in my hands. i'm not going anywhere.

"...let me just say, that you're in a rather compromised position... because... well... seeing as you've chosen not to wear any undergarments today."

after almost 30 minutes, a man in fancy workout clothes and big sunglasses – someone i totally expect to walk past me and laugh in my

face – leans over and says, "do you want some pants? i have some pants in my car. i'm parked right around the corner, can you wait?" umm, yeah, i can wait. did it look like i was getting ready to go somewhere? i'm pretty embarrassed, but this guy is bringing me pants, so i now i just start to sorta smile and laugh to myself. i dig my chin into my chest, this sheepish grin spreads across my face, and i just start laughing. my eyes start to water a bit as his car pulls up. he exits the driver's side, pulls a pair of really expensive warmups out of his trunk, and hands them to me. he opens the passenger door for me while i use the pants to literally cover my ass. i get in and pull the switch. the pants fit great, and i never felt more relieved in my life.

unsure about what to do now, i offer him all the money i have in my wallet – and promise much more – as payment for the pants (i didn't think that he was seriously gonna want them back; i am underwearless, afterall). "oh, no: i want them back. you can leave them in my office. do you know where the fine arts school is?"

do i KNOW where the fine arts school is... ? oh god. this just gets better and better.

"...put them in my box. l.g. williams." i didn't even want to think about how that would look: "hi, i have professor williams' pants. can you put them in his box? why yes i AM the hoochie who had her crotch all open to the world the other day! sweet of you to recognize me..."

he scribbled his information on a receipt that he pulled from his wallet, and after thanking him about a dozen times, he drove off.

i take a deep breath and decide to just go home; there's no way i'm going to class. but first, i better to roll up my pantleg. no way i was going to class. but first, i had to roll up my pantleg.

Being late december, many of our number had gone home to places far away from Los Angeles, and we hadn't planned anything in particular for the night's ride. Being a diehard local, i rolled up to the Santa Monica pier, knowing a few

Los Angeles. A good number of angelenos go through via La Cienega safe in their auto machines. I've met few though that have gone over this highway of a street by human power. Jim, who facilitated the night's adventure, considered this crazy, as he knew the shortcuts, and regularly mountain biked in the hills.

THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

WESTSIDE MIDNITE RIDAZZ REPORTBACK:
Those crazy 310 types get up to all sorts of craziness,
literally risking life and limb on their last ride...

other diehards would join me.

I had recently installed ground effect lights my tall bike, not the "Down Low Glow" mind you, just some cheap cold cathodes from the computer store and a big battery duck taped on the bike. I certainly recommend this addition to bikes, mutant or otherwise, the reaction to and visibility of my already crazy velocipede had reached a new height. As i cruised up Main St. passing traffic, I hear "Hey sexy!" and look over to see Sarah and Aleka, friends from Food Not Bombs, the world just got smaller. Through the din of traffic and through the great distance from car window to tall bike heights, they asked me where I was headed, I said "Bike Gang!" and bid them farewell as they turned left.

Just at the next light, i put a foot down, then hopped back on my steed to hear a great ripping sound. My work jeans were not flexible enough for task of tall bike mounting, and had split along their inseam. It was cold for southern california i december, the christmas heat wave had yet to set in. I couldn't think of a way to acquire new pants this late in the evening and still make the meeting in time, and it wasn't cold enough to turn back, so i soldiered on. I was the first to the pier, and set about trying to stem the tide of damage that marched down my inseam every time i mounted the bike. I was carrying a first aid kit, so i first tried the adhesive tape; little use. I then settled on and ace bandage to hold thing some what together.

During this operation, a couple other folks had shown, and once i was done we got to talking. After a lot of hanging out, there were seven of us, we decided to roll, and decide what to do on the way. Those in our number inclined to drinking suggested a liquor store as the first stop.

Outside this establishment we discussed a plan of action. Many ideas were tossed around. Riding through LAX, the tunnel near Dusquesne on the Ballona bike path, the steam tunnels under UCLA, riding the beach on the wet sand. Then the most appealing idea; the Baldwin Hills, A great hole in the mental geography of even most seasoned explorers of

bountiful

dirt roads in the west half, amongst the oil wells, and even some single-track in Kenneth Hahn state park. We definitely had a plan for adventure.

By this point two of our number had left us for other things, we cruised through venice, down Mildred Ave. A little cut through halfway between an Alley and a proper street. A fellow bicyclist who was not nearly as psyched about this lovely friday evening, yelled at those in the back of our group for talking up the whole road. Apparently "There ARE cars here!" but they certainly hadn't shown for us. We were going to cut through the parking lot of a Ralph's anyway, so I suggested stopping. Alex had expressed his hunger earlier, but stymied it with oat soda, I wanted to buy some duck tape; the ace bandage had merely slid down, following the expanding schism which each mount. Our angry bicyclist was inside the Ralph's, and had an amusing likeness to a certain Reverend Phil, of portland infamy. The aforementioned Rev had slept on my couch after another epic tall bike adventure worthy of recounting at a later date.

I purchased my duck tape, only to find once outside that Greg already had some. Alex had procured hot wings, and i found myself in the unusual position of being the only vegetarian. Some kids from Oakland, on leave from a ship in harbor nearby, were amazed to see a bike gang in SoCal, and asked if we were critical mass leftovers. They were further surprised to hear of the myriad bicycle happenings that had sprung up recently, but were to set sail soon, and couldn't make it to any.

With pants somewhat fixed, and chicken bits consumed, we resumed our trek to the hills looming in the distance. After a jaunt through neighborhoods and bike path, probably twice the distance we had just covered but with fewer interruptions, we arrived at West LA College. Up on to the sidewalk, around a gate and we were climbing a road closed to cars, Stocker St. I believe. We ducked through a hole in the fence, nice and big, as far as holes in fences go, but

somewhat cumbersome to push a tall bike through. A trail through the bushes led us to another hole in yet another fence, still ample for the pedestrian but took some serious effort to birth a tall bike. we were now on a dirt road faced with a climb to the top. After some hanging out we decided to ride it. Jim was the only one suitably equipped with a mountain bike. My own tall bike negated any benefit of gears and knobby tires with it's high center of gravity, and the others among us were two road bikes and a fixed gear. Those of us handicapped by our bikes had no lack of can-do attitude however, and the road machines took off up the slope. Myself, having the craziest bike, I took a few paces up the opposing hill to mount my machine, and gather momentum. A good fifty yards up i was divorced from the pedals, and dropped down to straddle the bike, grateful i had built a tall bike without a top bar. I walked then ran up the hill, and caught my companions at a flat. We attacked the next incline, and I succeeded in riding all the way up to the ridge.

We were now in the midst of many an oil well, strange plumbing and funny little shacks were everywhere. It reminded me of the Beverly Hillbillies, and i was inspired to do a hillbilly ride in january. Riding further along with Jim, but the other three weren't behind us. Jim stopped, I circled, minimizing further damage to my garments with starting again. We went back a ways, and saw blinkies, then Greg taking a picture of one of the great teetering oil pumps abundant on top of the hill. I look up to see Alex and the fellow on the yellow fixie whose name escapes me. They are riding the oil pump, at least twenty feet tall, like a giant hobby horse. Not only was the height great, but the ladder which gave them access ended at the pivot point, with its great freight train power to rend a man in twain without slowing down. The thought of this didn't really hit them till they were back on terra firma, and so shrugged it off.

There were work-lights on a few hundred yards away, so knowing we may have just attracted attention with our antics, we continued on to the scenic lookout ahead. The view from this point is amazing, an overlook of the whole city, from the ocean to downtown. I'm not sure about one o'clock in the morning, but anyone can legitimately come up to this point, all our sneaking through holes in the fence, was just to avoid a boring climb up Hetzler Rd. Some day the whole area is supposed to be a giant park. There has been talk of building a land bridge across La Cienega, but so far nothing has happened, as we were just about to leave though we saw a solitary Picnic table, They have been spending money on this place!

-max

LADIES:
You are Not Alone
and You Don't Have
to Take IT!

I hate when I'm riding my bike around this stinky smog-cloud of a town, enjoying yet another sunny and warm day, and I am accosted, harassed, and/or otherwise messed with by some skeezy guy.

What is it with the smooching sounds, the whistles, and the pathetic and poorly planned pick-up attempts? I do not understand this attention. It's unwarranted and unwanted.

I suppose we can all agree girls on bikes are inherently HOT, but I find it most annoying when I'm riding, and feeling happy because of the fresh air and exercise, and especially empowered moving around this city in such an extraordinary way, and then to be knocked out of my pleasant and fantastical mood by some hey baby...ppsst...ppsst...smooch...honk honk....ay mommy... bullshit.

*So what's the answer? Where's the retort? Ladies, you can take the high road and ignore it, or respond with your most beloved expression of anger and disgust. I usually choose the finger, the "As if!", or F**K Off." Not too witty I'm afraid (purely gut response).*

I never hear the women I know as riders in L.A. talk about this. How do YOU deal with it? Ladies you are not alone out there. Be creative. And don't take shit from anyone!

Trista40@hotmail.com

(written in response the www.thefge.com and their reference to "striking back")

Westside? Where? When?

These guys roll from the dragon sculpture under Santa Monica Pier the third Friday of every month at 9:30pm. Be there!

Last month I had court for a ticket violating CVC21202; not riding far enough to the right side. The specific situation was interesting in that there were cars parked in the right lane, but there remained a small amount of space before the middle lane (On King west of Western). There were four of us and we had moved to go around the cars and were riding in the middle lane when two motorcycle cops drove by and yelled for us to get over. I vocally refused, they

and my testimony included info about how often I ride and I work in public health and safety is of great concern to me, etc. The fact that there were parked cars (I knew the time and it is a designated parking area) and that I was the only one ticketed and it was not for riding three abreast, was pointed out. Also discussed car doors opening. It went back and forth between the cop and I a couple times

AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE LAW

Matt reports back on a recent court appearance...

pulled us over, immediate ticket for me (and no one else) presumably

cause I was the one who 'talked back'. They were the usual condescending assholes and told me 'You don't

practice law' when I pressed my case

about knowing bicycle laws and they harassed me about my patches/buttons calling me an 'anarchist that does not know how to follow laws'. Also the racist, 'You ever been in this neighborhood? You don't want to be in this neighborhood....'

I prepared well for my day court and was excited to present my side. If you are familiar with court; the cop goes first and draws a diagram on the chalk board of the situation. FROM THE START HE LIED THROUGH HIS TEETH. Says there were no parked cars and we were riding 3 abreast in the middle lane for no reason. 'We kindly asked them to move and they refused. Then we pulled over to educate them and I was forced to give him a ticket and I hate giving tickets. The defendant insisted on making a scene.'

Even beyond this I thought that the case was going well, the judge was somewhat reasonable

with the judge asking us both questions. My tactic was to use the law to my advantage because it is worded in such a way that it can be interpreted differently: I am regular cyclist, I am very concerned with safety and the law, and this is how I interpreted the law (and the wording 'as far to the right as safe') in this case.



Judge: 'I admire and appreciate that you ride a bike, but I am going to find you guilty because I think there was enough space for you to ride in the right lane with the cars and still avoid car doors opening.'

Since I was the last case we (cop, judge, myself) continued to discuss it afterwards and when the cop said, 'Here is a copy of the law so you know.' I told him that I had it, and due to its subjective nature, would still ride in the same place on that road because that is where my interpretation of safe is. 'And I'll ticket you again.' Judge: 'Well I hope I don't see you again because I would have to find you guilty again'.

Probably best I am not a lawyer, I am like 0 for 4 representing myself. It was fun though. Just remember: 1) Cops ticket you when you question their authority or insult their (low) intelligence 2) They will always lie in court and the judge will always believe them 3) Cops and judges are pigs and are not on cyclists' side. Never trust them or believe them.



98-73

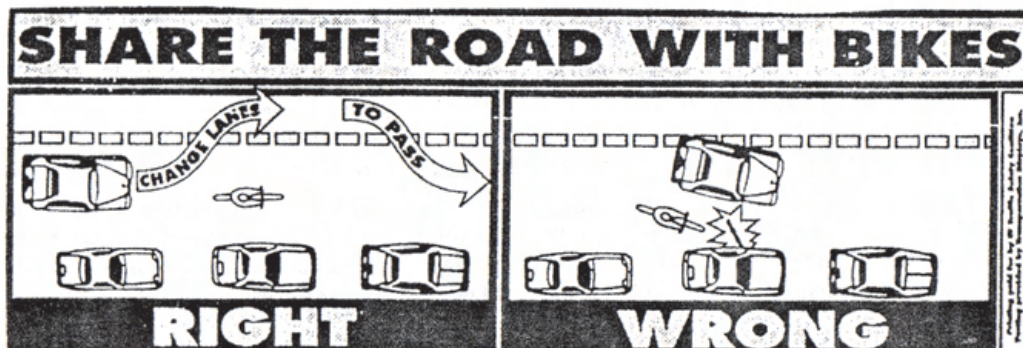
2/28/98

BICYCLE RIDING IN LANES OF TRAFFIC

Members of the uniform patrol force shall review CVC Section 21202, as reproduced below:


(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 that 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 roadway or intersection.
- (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, subject to the provisions of Section 21656. For the purpose 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.
- (4) When approaching a place where a right turn is authorized.
- (5) Any person operating a bicycle upon a roadway of a highway, which highway carries traffic in one direction only and has two or more marked traffic lanes, may ride as near the left-hand curb or edge of that roadway as practicable.



Clarification: When a bicyclist is to the right in a lane, but maintaining a safe distance from parked vehicles, in order to avoid car doors suddenly opened by motorists, this may narrow the lane to the point where it can no longer be shared safely by both the bike and the vehicle. In this instance, the bicycle owns the lane and a vehicle must change lanes in order to pass. A bicycle is not impeding the flow of traffic under these conditions.

When passing a bicyclist, motorists should change lanes as per the diagram on the front of this bulletin.


FRED H. LAU
Chief of Police

ASK MS. SPINDLE

Ms. Spindle welcomes your letters on any subject, including, but not limited to: bikes, knitting, the separation of church and state, love, mid-century modern furniture, gardening, stain removal, and Los Angeles landmarks. Letters may be sent to: spindle@stealthissweater.com.

Dear Ms. Spindle,

HELP! I went to a holiday luncheon. It was catered by El Cholo on Western Ave. I asked the guy slopping out the rice and beans if the rice and beans were suitable for vegetarian consumption. He said, oh yes and added a tamale my plate, too. I ate some of the food, but it wasn't very tasty. The beans and rice were disgusting and the tamale tasted like it had been made of pure sugar. I finished my salad and went on to dessert. Later, I found out from a vegan friend that El Cholo makes their beans with LARD. This information made me inadvertently gag, but the offending chow stayed within my digestive tract. I feel soiled in the most disgusting way possible and powerless to do anything about it. I could call El Cholo to see if perhaps they have changed their recipe in the six months since my vegan friend inquired about their cooking, but I am afraid of the answer. I thought that lard was pretty much removed from the mainstream restaurant world because it causes clogged arteries and alienates Jewish, Muslim and vegetarian customers. Am I wrong? And how do I absolve myself of this culinary transgression?

Soiled Rotten
Midtown L. A.

Dear Soiled,

You poor dear! While I don't quite understand the lard-as-ingredient issue myself, it continues to be a popular additive. A close friend of mine claims that lard makes pie crusts the perfect combination of tender and flakey. While he usually says he makes the crusts "special" when I visit, substituting less offensive ingredients, I simply don't believe that he would sacrifice perfection for someone else's dietary perimeters. So I make an excuse and skip dessert. Tomorrow is another day and you can begin your

vegetarian lifestyle anew. No use crying over accidentally ingested lard. And, next time you attend a catered lunch, bring plenty of Luna bars.

Dear Ms. Spindle,

I am 22 years old and pretty damn hot, if I say so myself. The girls go wild over me, no shit. So far, I've biked home after Critical Mass with 6 different individuals. Our adventures have varied, but most of them have ended the same way. Use your imagination! Here's the problem:

I'm beginning to hate myself.

What do I do?

Yours,
Manslut
Silver Lake

Dear MS,

It is public information that there is plenty of Grade A meat pedaling around LA, but there's always a price for gluttony. If you really do hate yourself for slutting your way through the cycling community, then stop shitting where you eat.

Dear Ms. Spindle,
Is Dr. Gene Scott dead?
Saved, Highland Park

Dear Saved,
Yes.

Dear Ms. Spindle,

Are there any rules about how long a business may display a "Grand Opening" banner? Some of the establishments I ride by have had these colorful signs up for over a year. I am concerned that they are taking advantage of consumers new to the neighborhood who incorrectly assume that they are supporting a new business when in fact they are simply supporting scammers posing as a new business. Not only am I curious whether or not there are laws about this, I am also wondering if you know how long a legitimate Grand Opening might last. Obviously, I think a year or more is stretching the party out a little bit too long, but what if the sign was only up for a weekend? A week? A month?

Buzzkill,
Koreatown

Dear Buzzkill,

As far as I know, there are no consumer protection laws concerned with this issue. I agree that the long-term Grand Opening is a stinky business tactic. I find the signs themselves, aging ungracefully, covered in soot and pigeon shit, to be anything but "grand." One in particular, on Jefferson Blvd, announces the arrival of a squalid little mini-mart. I ride by daily, wondering when the festivities might end. It's been two years. Perhaps you can petition the governor to hold a special election with a ballot initiative legislating the time span and details of a Grand Opening. In my estimation, a Grand Opening should last throughout a long weekend and include complimentary tea sandwiches, "half-off" prices, and mariachi bands.



An offending 'Grand Opening' sign, yesterday.

The last word...

Go!

Next issue?

If we get a load of great feedback or find ourselves with too much free time again, we may get another one together around the beginning of february...

Incidentally, we're too idealistic to run ads, so send us cash. Yay.

BIKESWARM / BIKEPLAGUE PRESENTS:
A 10 Hill Stage Race in Echo Park/Silver Lake:

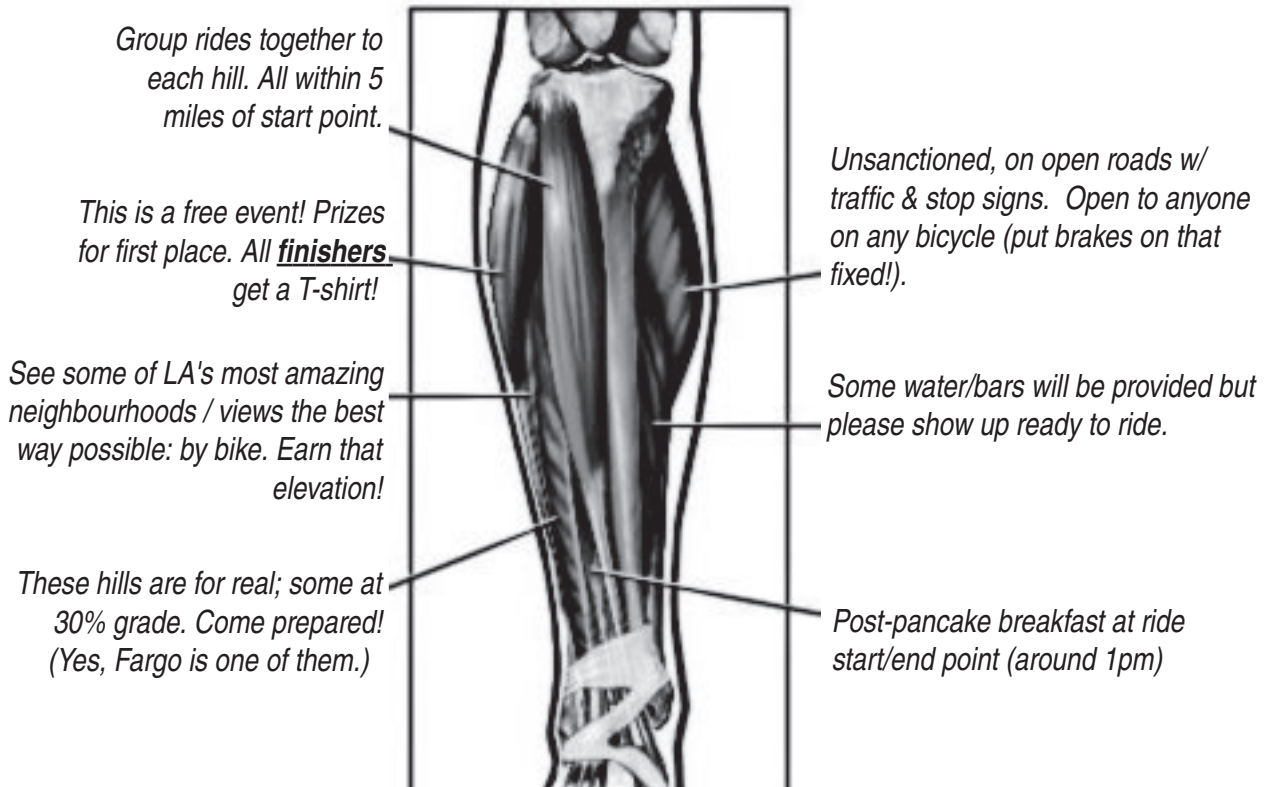
Feel my legs, I'm a racer!

*The steepest, hardest, most brutal hills
Los Angeles (the world?) has to offer.
Just riding up any one of these is a feat.*

Ten in a day = ridiculous.

Come race up them!

8:00am Saturday, Jan 14th, 2006
@ 210 N. Rampart Blvd (btwn Beverly & Temple) 90026



Details: After signing in everyone will roll together to hill number one where the insanity will commence. Riders will be given a couple of chances to get up each hill before we roll to the next hill / stage. Please, no auto traffic spectators along the route - spectators encouraged on bikes! Total distance under 10 miles. Winner chosen by point system; each hill has equal importance.

