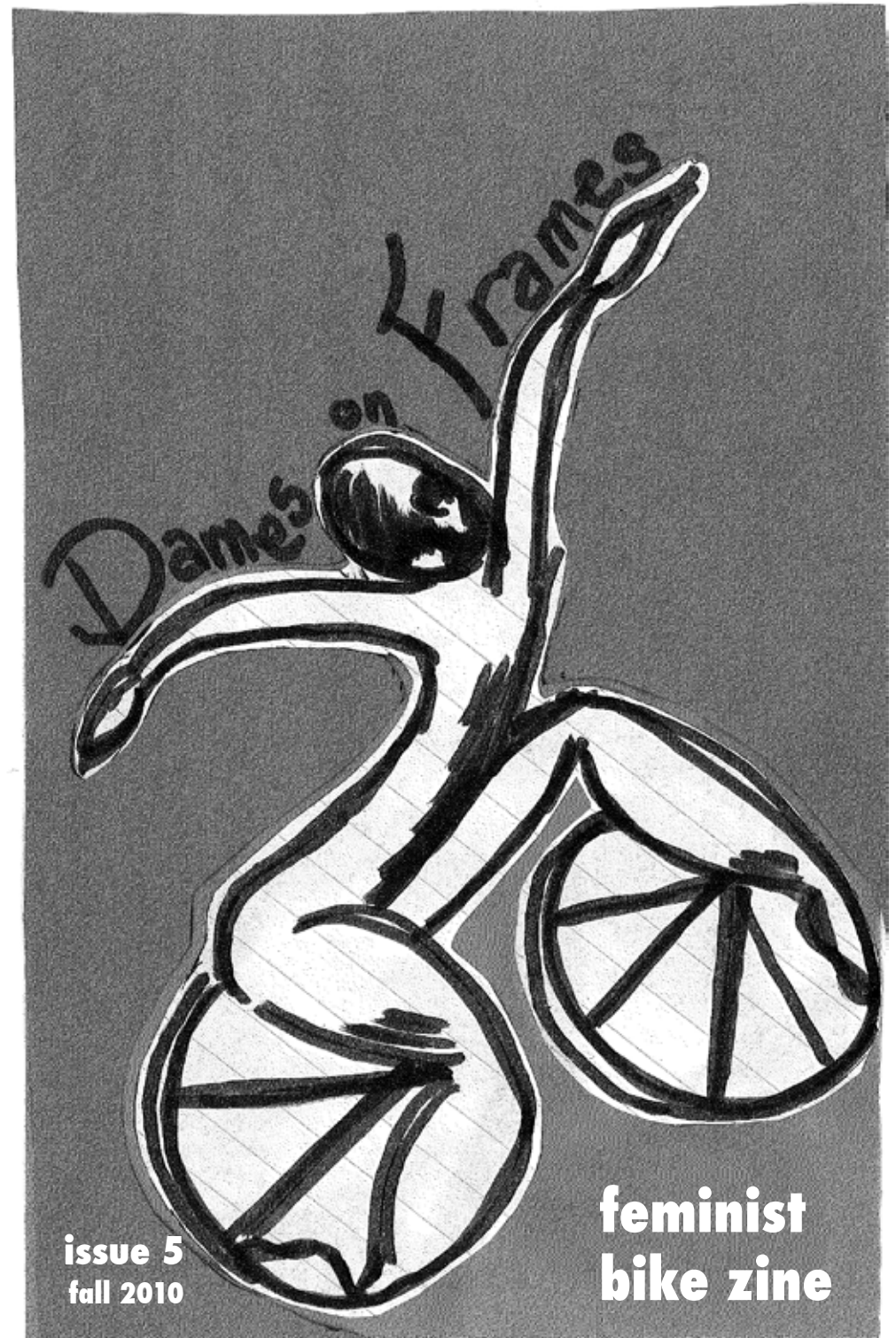


*Dames on Frames #5*



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issue 5  
fall 2010

**feminist  
bike zine**

Dames on Frames was started in 2007 by member of the Bicycle Feminism Experimental College Class (Exco /www.excotc.org) in the Twin Cities. For previous issues or to join our list serve, go to <http://groups.google.com/group/damesonframes>.

To submit an article for a future issue,  
email: [damesonframes@googlegroups.com](mailto:damesonframes@googlegroups.com)

Thanks to this issue's editors:



Calla Martin



Laila Davis



Emily Wergin

already found my destination. A week later, in Boston, I emailed my application to Pedal People. A week after that, while in Hartford, CT, I received a call asking if I could come back for an interview. I biked back to Northampton and completed an interview (which included pulling a trailer for part of a route) on a 45 degree day of pouring rain. Marie, the Pedal Person who I rode with for this interview, explained that this was about as bad a day for the work as you could get. Pulling a full trailer uphill with so much rainwater streaming from my helmet into my eyes that I could hardly see, I found myself smiling and laughing. Even in the cold, wet weather, it was ridiculously fun to haul a giant pile of recycling and trash with my bicycle!

While the collective completed interviews and waited for its monthly meeting to make final hiring decisions, I again continued on my tour. On the day I reach DC (where I'd decided I'd end my travels), I received the official call that both I, and my friend Kesa, had been hired! A week later, I loaded my bike on a bus and returned to Northampton to begin my Pedal People apprenticeship.

I now work outside a few days a week and the season and weather impact how it feels tremendously. My mouse-clicking finger rests while the rest of my body is engaged biking and lifting. My adrenaline pushes me as I crawl up the bike path pulling full trailers to the recycling/trash transfer-station.

Sometimes, while I struggle with a particularly heavy load, a walker cheers, or a passing cyclist complements my load, or a child greets me by saying, "hello, Garbage Girl," and I love this crazy job and the bicycle-loving community that its in even more.

wanted to settle, or until I grew weary of the journey, or until X-mas, whatever came first.

My bicycle, combined with my general openness to going wherever the journey wanted to take me, set the stage for an almost magical journey - where I encountered incredible coincidences and bits of good fortune at each turn.

This magic converged in Northampton, Massachusetts. A number of people had suggested I check out this town. In Burlington, Vermont, I'd met a cycling couple in their 80s who invited me to stay at their house in Northampton. At Yestermorrow (the design-build school in VT), a fellow work-trader suggested I look up Lisa, who runs a farm in Northampton and is also part of a bicycle-collective in town. On the day I arrived, I called Kesa (a former Minneapolis roommate who had moved to somewhere in Massachusetts - the town-name itself I'd since forgotten, having previously known little of Massachusetts). It turned out, she was living just blocks away from my bicycling-grandparent hosts!

Kesa (also a biker) and I tracked down Pedal People (that bicycle-powered hauling service that I'd heard about in Vermont) at the house that founders Ruthy and Alex co-own with another couple. The house had already jumped out at me as I biked into town on Northampton's main bike path. Bicycle wheels inset in the fence along the bike path created windows into the yard. A resting area, complete with a cob bench, a bike pump, and a phone, invited path users to stop. A hand-painted sign advertised public hours each Sunday in the library in the house's living room.

We chatted with Alex about what its like to haul 300lbs of trash, compost and recycling (the primary work this collective performs is residential and small business waste pick-ups), how the collective got started, and learned that the Pedal People was hiring for two spots!

I continued traveling by bicycle after Northampton but I'd

## Current Trends in Gender and Cycling

by Claire Stoscheck



The theme of gender and bicycling has come up in a variety of mainstream news sources recently, making long term researchers on this theme pleased to see some much deserved exposure. However, these recent commentaries have been largely superficial, with a disappointingly shallow analysis. Two blog entries by Treehugger and the New York Times City Room Blog, primarily discuss why it would be aesthetically pleasing (for men) to have more women on bicycles—and therefore, women, get on a bike! As the Treehugger article states, “Girls and women riding definitely make the morning commute more interesting. High heels, multi-culti fashion, and that sensation that is so well embodied in urban styles of Copenhagen and Paris - city streets just basically look better with lots of women of all shapes, sizes, ages, and colors riding.” While claiming to be promoting biking for women, this statement is so clearly sexist. Is all women cyclists are good for is to make the morning commute “more interesting” for men? The Scientific American article, “Shifting Gears,” goes a bit more in-depth than the other articles. It even brings up gender roles, and recognizes that “good infrastructure alone won't improve women's cycling rates.” However, for being a “scientific” article, it leaves much to be desired. These articles do a disservice to the hundreds of activists world-wide who are working to make cycling more accessible to women (as well as trans and femmes), because it narrows the issue down to fashion, when the real issues are far more complex and profound.

This tendency to leave the issue of gender and cycling in the realm of fashion and equate the women and bicycling movement with the cycling and fashion movement is growing. Some advocates of female cycling believe that if we made bikes fashionable and chic enough, all women would ride them (the whole “Cycle Chic” movement is a great example). This first of all suggests that fashion is the number one consideration of women when it comes to making their transportation choices, and that cost, efficiency, speed, flexibility, health and convenience have less to do with it, which, according to qualitative and quantitative research, is clearly not the case. It reduces most women into being self-centered and focused on aesthetics, which, if ever proven to be the case, is due to a patriarchal and consumerist society which obligates them to do so in order to be considered “feminine.” Second of all, it never delves into the real complexity of this issue--- the history and

actuality of gender roles, the stereotypes of what is acceptably “feminine” and “masculine” (and cycling fits squarely in the masculine), the fact that many women never even learn to ride a bike as a child because their parents don’t think it’s worth the time to teach them, and the fact that women have double responsibilities because in a patriarchal society it is assumed that women be in charge of reproductive work as well as productive work.

This is a call to the cycling world to think twice before speaking about women and cycling—that it is important to look at the issue with a more detailed and in-depth analysis and not leave it at the superficial level of fashion. This requires a feminist lens, which recognizes systems of oppression and their affects on people in their everyday lives. Organizations who are dedicated to spreading cycling culture need to dedicate more time and resources to both quantitative and qualitative studies so that activists can better address the issues, culture by culture (as the issue is very culture-specific). Writing articles or dispersing beautiful photographs showing how “chic” and fashionable riding a bike is for women is simply not adding to the conversation, as it remains in the paradigm of patriarchy which limits women to the confines of fashion, aesthetics and appearance. This debate must have more depth, and really explore the root causes of why women are not cycling as much as men in almost all places in the world. Once we clearly define the root causes we can do the important work of changing the situation so as to bring women into the empowering world of cycling.

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Claire Stoscheck is a community organizer and a long-term bike feminist currently living in Ithaca, NY. She would be very happy if you wrote her with ideas/comments on this essay—please write her at [cstoscheck@gmail.com](mailto:cstoscheck@gmail.com). Sometime before 2011 Claire will be publishing an essay on Gender and Cycling along with two other co-authors for I-CE (Interface for Cycling Expertise)-- so stay tuned for that piece. Thanks to <http://letsgorideabike.wordpress.com/> for links to gender & bicycling articles.



## Biking for Work

by Emily Wergin

Last summer, as I searched for a new job, I realized that I didn’t want more full-time office work.

- I wanted to spend large expanses of time working outside where the season and the weather matter.
- I wanted to move more of my body than the finger clicking a mouse.
- I wanted work that would tap the exhilaration I felt when navigating the city on my bicycle - fully alive, adrenaline pumping, connected to the city and people surrounding me.

What sort of work would satiate my hunger for more physical engagement with my surroundings: How would I find it? Who would hire me - a smallish woman with only school and office work on my resume?

I knew intuitively that I wasn’t going to find this job - whatever it was - emailing cover letters and resumes from the depressing comfort of my laptop.

To find it, I decided to try using the tool that had opened my eyes to a different way of experiencing life: my bicycle.

I planned a rough sketch of a journey that I hoped would help me uncover just what would come next. I sought more than just a job. This adventure would help me discover a new way of existing within a place, a community, and my own body.

I chose a starting point and date (Burlington, VT / Sept 7, 2009), a general direction of travel (south - away from the oncoming winter), and a few points I intended to hit along the way (a design-build school in Vermont, a few organic farms, some friends & family). Beyond that, I’d make things up as I went - biking to explore the places and people suggested by those I met along the way. I’d travel until I found a place I

to wish her a happy happy 30th birthday, and then return to for the after party. Alicia, who won the race, is ecstatic! The top three rookies (women who've never raced) are ecstatic! One of them raced a time trial bike! And the winner of the out-of-town competition – FROM SEATTLE!

SO, if you are in Minneapolis next fall, check it out! This is a super fun race run by a pair of awesome women.

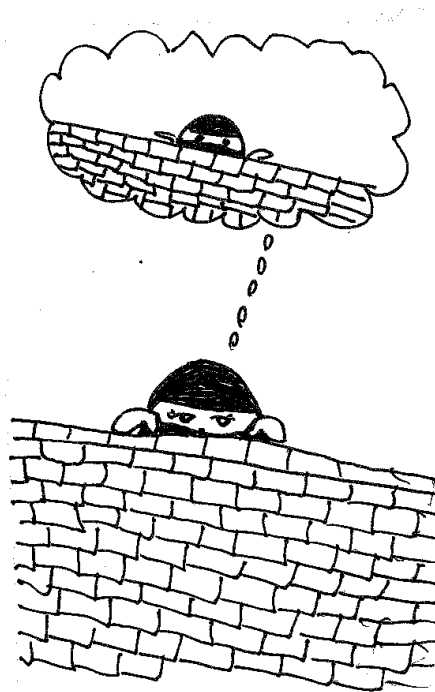
And, I close with a quote:

“After one sweaty Saturday spent racing, I can say that it’s this type of organized chaos that makes Minneapolis a beautiful place to be.”

-- REBEKAH RENTZEL, TC DAILY PLANET, September 20, 2010

Well said, Rebekah! Well said!

<http://www.babesinbikeland.com/>



### **Feminist Bike Action: taking kids - lots of kids - to the library.**

Who: biker\_lee and five children - one is her son.

Where: Minneapolis, MN

What: a bike trip to the East Lake Library

When: early summer 2010

Why: bikes and books are awesome!

One Sunday afternoon, not too long ago... This urban mama invited a whole lotta kids to ride to the library with her and her son....

Five kids – one urban mama – five bicycles – one bicycle trailer.

One of the 11 year old girls hangs her huge U-lock from her handle bars... A recipe for crashing? I try to convince her to toss it into the back of the trailer. The 8 year old boys are racing around the block – ready to hit the road and incapable of waiting quietly... The three year old is telling me all about her little handbag. Everyone wants to tell me something – I won that race, my handbag is pink, my U-lock will be fine hanging on my handle bars....

Ok everyone – let’s get our bike train moving!

We bump down the curb and begin to ride along 44th Ave S, a road with a great surface and very little traffic. The boys decide they want to ride on the sidewalk. Ok – I say. They race each other and skid to a stop at each corner, waiting for the OKAY to cross. They try to make long long skid marks! I ask them to watch out for pedestrians – they do.

We hit an intersection with a road that has a bit more traffic. We all assemble into a tight group, waiting for a good sized gap before heading across the street. Everyone’s watching. I’m asking them – do you think it’s safe now? Nah – let’s wait for a bigger gap. Okay, I say.... Eventually, we get a good sized gap and head across. I want everyone involved in the safety of the group.

About 15 minutes later, we pull up to the library bike parking rack. I have bike locks and cables – all the bikes are locked up – helmets are thrown into the bike trailer – everyone bolts for the library door. Everyone is soooo happy – giggling, laughing, excited to be on our little adventure.

Everyone goes inside – First stop? Drinking fountain! Then, each child picks out a bunch of books. We hang out at the library, reading for a while. I even manage to find a few books for myself!

We check out. Everything goes into the bike trailer, except for the backpack of one of the 8 year old boys... he is convinced that riding with a backpack stuffed full of a dozen books is just fine and will be easy. As we ride back, I notice him shifting it frequently. I ask if he might wanna toss it into the trailer. No no – he stubbornly replies... This is EASY to carry, he claims (shift shift – squirmy shoulders – squirm squirm). Ok, I say.

About 2 hours after leaving home, we're back. The two boys toss their bikes into the front yard and off they run run run!!! The girls go off to do a little more bike riding. The 3 year old runs to her mommy to show her the awesome books she got to check out. Everyone just seems relaxed, happy, and excited. What a great way to spend a couple of hours! Plus, my friend got to have a couple of hours with no children (three of the children on this trip are her children).

I love that we were each in control of our own motion. We each saw things that we pointed out to each other. We each SHARED the responsibility of safety (calling out hazards, stopping when needed, etc...). We each contributed to the experience, and we all had a great time.

Wanna do it? Please say YES!

The challenge? Watching them. NO JOKE. These riders are swervy, unpredictable, and can seem downright scary. If you're not used to riding with kids, you'll have a death grip on your handlebar. You'll feel ready to blow an aneurism at any time! Your heart will leap up into your throat time and time again. You'll want to scream watch-out every single time they approach a parked car. Magically, at the last minute, the child misses the parked car or the pot hole (usually). But once you get used to it, it's really quite easy. You choose your route so that the kids can just ride and so that mistakes don't carry heavy prices.

#### Rules:

- Group stays together.
- Every rider listens to Lee (the urban mama).
- Every rider has a buddy. The two 8 year old boys were paired, and the two 11 year old girls were paired. If one has a problem, the other calls it out.

with the group in front of me. No big deal – stamp – done.

Head for the Greenway – down to the midtown Freewheel stop, where I am instructed to put on a long skirt and race to one of the bridges and back. I put a purple one on over my helmet... one arm through ... run... cyclocross mount... ride to the u-turn, u-turn, dismount, skirt off --- hey – is that how you wear a skirt? a dude asks me... My response? I dunno - I don't wear skirts. Laughter all around – stamp – done.

The Powderhorn stop was a bit of a trip. We were instructed to ride down a hill, where we had to listen to a story about how women were discouraged from riding bikes etc... Oh yes, we were such fragile creatures back then. We were then given the option of riding or walking up the hill, which was sizeable even from a geared bike's perspective. Knowing Cash Money would not accept anything but a successful ride up that grassy and steep hill, I ride a wide circle so I can get my momentum up.... and go for it. It was tough to crest that hill, but Cash Money is light and eager for the effort... Then, we make our way to the final stop before racing to Angry Catfish, which was the final stop and the scene of a most excellent after party.

After that final stop, I hit it. We're in the numbered streets, which are easy for me to navigate... we're in my neighborhood. I dig deep – finding the 54x17 perfect as I am riding east down 42nd St with a tailwind at my back. I arrive at the Angry Catfish SECOND! WOW! (After a second of SHOOT!!!!!!) I'm ecstatic because I did mess up in northeast and I did just have a most excellent time racing the fantastically spry Cash Money and I'm in the TOP FIVE! Mmmmmm – what an excellent night.

I hang out and watch the terrific spring for 3rd, which ended up a tie between two awesomely fast women... I saw the next half dozen race in. But, within minutes, I start to get cold. So, I head home to change into dry clothes, head to my friend's house

at campus, I jumped a curb and went behind one of the dorms, cyclocrossing it along a little path in the grass to hit the U of MN ped bridge. I then weaved my way around campus buildings and some post-football fans to emerge on W River Road between Jana and Amy C., and I passed Amy C. at the intersection.

At the top of the stairs, I was instructed to head down the stairs and assured the bike would be guarded... So I lay Cash Money down and started down the stairs, only to feel the pressure of Jana, who's one serious and fast racer, push me a bit as she ran past me on the stairs. Right, I thought to myself, time to crank up my pace and my attitude. Suddenly, she stops ... and runs back up the stairs. Amy C and I look at each other confused, but then we continue down the stairs, at the bottom of which we are asked for a ridiculous story about ourselves and our bicycles. I yell out something about this one time, when my bike and I got pregnant and we had a kid together... Done – stamp. Race up the stairs. Shit but this is fun....

A couple of stops later, I made my mistake. I know myself, and I know I need to look at my map at every single stop, to memorize the next few turns and to cement my routing into my brain firmly. At Gluek Park, I failed to do this, and the result was a wrong turn when I should have continued forward. GGGGGG-GAAARHGHHGHGHGHG!!!! In the end, I went about one mile out of my way... five blocks before I realized my mistake, and about six or seven to fix it and get back on track. I get to the Trash Bags (Minneapolis messenger bag maker), and Jana is ahead of me. GGGGGGGAAARHGHHGHGHGHGHG!!!! Ok, I'm totally still having fun, but I'm also ticked off with myself. I mash on the 54x17.

When I get to the ped bridge over by the Walker, I emerge on the wrong side of Hennepin... Quick to fix... Off towards Caf-fetta, where I am greeted with the instruction to "follow that guy"... Ok – but he's kind of slow. And we encounter an intersection that I feel is totally "goable" – so I go... and end up

- Call out hazards (like potholes and open doors).
- Call out car-back (for car approaching from behind) and car-up (for car approaching from ahead).
- Stop at all stop signs.
- Remember to breathe. If your kids have decent bike handling skills and are good at listening when it really matters, then riding as a group is fun!
- Keep instructions to a minimum. Less is more. When it really matters, yell loudly. Keep your cool.
- When you arrive, tell each child about the GOOD STUFF! I really liked how you called out those potholes over on 42nd. I really liked how you called out that car for the entire group. You did a great job staying with the group.
- EVERY rider contributes to the group's safety!
- If all goes reasonably well, you'll get to do this again!
- The neighborhood kids often ask me to take them places – the park down the street, the library, out for ice cream... Indeed, we just made another trip to the library... more books, more giggles, more joy.

#### **Advice:**

- Ride BEHIND your riders – that way, you can watch what they are doing.
- Take the lane – get your children to ride on the right-ish side of the lane... You ride in the middle of the lane. You want to be the left-most rider.
- Explain what it means to hold a line – this means no sudden line changes. Essentially, you're trying to teach them to be predictable.
- Expect mistakes. Expect an occasional crash (kids kind of crash a lot). So choose a route that minimizes traffic. It might add a bit of distance, but it's worth it. Nervous? Consider teaming up with another adult – maybe one that has experience riding with kids. Practice close to home.
- Do it a lot! Start small! Ride someplace that is only three-four blocks away... Once you have done a few rides, it starts to seem a whole lot easier!
- Remember to breathe! Try to trust the children to handle their bikes.

## Mujeres en Bici. De lo que tenemos que aguantar en Quito.



En ConstruBicis, arreglando la bika. AGO.2010

Por Heleana Zambonino

Una de las críticas machistas más fuertes que recibimos las mujeres día a día es la de ser Carishinas. Si no lavas los platos: Carishina. Si no tiendes la cama: Carishina, si no te dedicas a hacer el almuerzo para la familia: Carishina. Y ni se diga si andas en bici... Carishinota. Esas cosas son de hombres. ¿Pero que significa esta palabra kichwa? Cari significa hombre y shina es una palabra que expresa que estas actuando como tal. El lenguaje es una herramienta, en este caso una herramienta de discriminación, represión, irrespeto y desconsideración.

He sido generalmente criticada por mujeres adultas a las que fácilmente podría tildar de machistas y misóginas, sin embargo mi intención no es insultar sino más bien demostrar un punto. Entonces, para estas mujeres adultas están restringidas algunas actividades que son del ámbito eminentemente masculino. Entonces, no puedo fumar tabacos, no puedo tomar una cerveza con mis amigos y amigas, no puedo salir en las

## Babes in Bikeland IV – a race report by Lee Penn

Who: 228 women racers, a whole ton of men volunteering at the stops, at the start, at the finish, and an amazing suite of sponsors (check out <http://www.babesinbikeland.com/> to see the enormous list of sponsors!). And let us not forget the fabulous organizers: Chelsea and Kayla.

What: Babes in Bikeland IV

Where: Minneapolis, MN

When: 18 Sept 2010

Why: Because this is a race for women who simply love to ride bikes to women who love to kick ass on bikes and all the women in between....

228 Racers gathered behind the Soap Factory in Minneapolis, MN, Saturday evening, the 18th of September 2010. A few dozen were vying for position at the front, to make a great escape from the mass start... and I was one of them. I had ants in my pants, and I was going for the win. I moved three times before I found a position I was happy with – next to one of the eventual tied-for-third place finishers, Amy C and my friend Nicole W. (who was struck by the evil lung virus of fall 2010 and ready to race anyway).

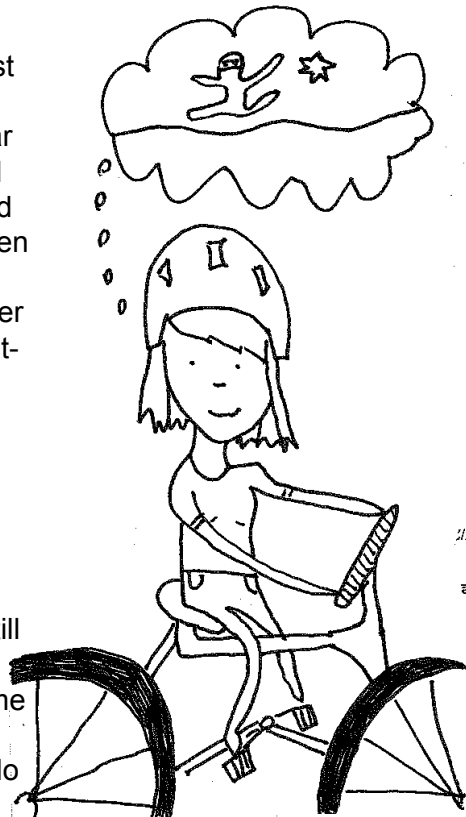
My planned route had me cruising down 2nd to race through campus to the E River Road to the first stop: the stairs at the intersection of E River Road and Franklin Avenue. It was an uphill start, and I was racing Cash Money, one of Eric Noren's personal Peacock Groove bicycles, which was geared fairly high (54x17). So, I opted for a run up the hill followed by a cyclo-cross mount. Still, the uphill start was tough with that gearing, and two women pulled in front of me. Amy C. and Jana S. both had gears, so they had an advantage at the start. Upon arriving



I had a volunteering gig at the library that summer. I usually rode the bus three miles to the library, but I had gotten this crazy idea in my head that I could be using my bicycle in a completely different way- for transportation. Could I do it? Was I ready for this? After some anxiety I strapped on my helmet, crossed my fingers, and headed out. This is not a very exciting story, because I made it to the library and back safely, without incident. The exciting part is that I had an epiphany as I was riding home down 31st St., watching the sun set and breathing the beautiful summer air: I could go anywhere I wanted, by myself, and I would be fine. It would be fun!

After my epiphany my baby steps took on a more confident stride. I started riding more that summer (2008) and realized that I was getting a hot pair of legs and a nice tan, as well as some independence. I commuted into work for the first time in June 2009, and I biked through my first winter this year (2009). This summer my goal is to try more bike camping and mini tours, and I've already been on two overnight trips outside the Cities. These days, whether it is an alleycat race or commuting or winter riding, if I'm on a bike I'm a happier more confident person.

Every once in awhile when I don't feel confident in a group of riders or I'm nervous about going someplace I've never been before The Fear still sneaks up on me. The difference is that I don't let it keep me from doing what I want. I just remind myself, "If a child can do this- I can ride a bike!"



noches en la bici a hacer deporte, no puedo estar fuera de mi casa más allá de las 10 de la noche porque enseguida me he puesto un signo en la frente que me tilda como prostituta. Y ni pensar en vivir mi sexualidad abiertamente. Yo soy mujer y no nací para disfrutar del sexo.

Esta, es mi realidad. Día a día tengo que afrontar miradas de hombres y mujeres que piensan que soy una mala persona simplemente porque he decidido hacer caso omiso de su cultura machista, chauvinista, represiva pues considero que como mujer adulta tengo el derecho de escoger lo que quiero hacer en mi vida. Puedo vivir así, confrontando día a día, naturalizando formas de violencia. Aguantándome tipos que se me pegan en el bus. O las miradas lascivas de aquellos que deciden observar insistentemente mis posaderas mientras voy en la bici, o tal vez alguna frase asquerosa inventada para llamar la atención.

No sé qué piensan los hombres.

No sé porque me silban cuando voy en la calle o porqué voy que aguantarme comentarios lujuriosos, libidinosos y fuera de lugar de extraños cuando camino por la calle. No sé. Pero esa es mi realidad como mujer en Quito.

Como mujer que camina, utiliza el bus, la bicicleta porque claro es mucho más fácil encerrarse en el cubículo móvil y hacer caso omiso a todos y todas las demás, creando el universo paralelo donde todo está perfecto sin preocuparse por el resto de personas o el ambiente.

Quiero que cambie todo esto y el primer ejercicio es decirlo. Porque no me gusta ver mujeres



En Guadalajara con Mariana de BiciEllas. Septiembre 2009

desnudas en los periódicos amarillistas, porque no puedo salir en falda en Quito por la cantidad de acoso sexual que hay que soportar. Porque los serranos y serranas curuchupas o moralistas normalizan la represión hacia las mujeres. Y por eso yo escojo la bicicleta como mi caballo para la lucha.

Porque cuando era pequeña mi mamá no me dejaba andar en bici. No me dejaba salir a la calle y simplemente me resistí a ser una más del montón de mujeres cuyos poderes mágicos femeninos están ocultos bajo una túnica negra gigantesca mal llamada moral.

Ahora quiero invitar a todas las mujeres a resistirse, a no sucumbir. A pintarse los labios de rojo y salir a la calle sin miedo a ser criticadas. A vivir libres. A ser ellas mismas sin miedo a lo que digan los y las demás.

Mi bici es para mí una compañera fiel. No hago downhill. No corro en competencias, pero ando en bici. No necesito demostrarle a ningún hombre que puedo andar en bici. No necesito mostrar mis habilidades para ganarme su respeto. Me resisto a caer en su juego de tacharme de farandulera o falsa ciclista solamente por hacerme visible en la bicicleta. Me resisto a todos y todas aquellas que alguna vez me han llamado gringuera por tener amigos y amigas de otros países.

**NO QUIERO  
PONERME TACOS  
NI USAR CARTERAS.**  
Me resisto a todo.  
Y Me resisto en mi bici.  
Porque a pesar de todo,  
sigo siendo MUJER.



Educando quiteños y quiteñas diferentes. 2009.

## Even children can ride bicycles!

by Lowrah

I think I was about eight years old when I went over the handlebars pretty bad and I developed The Fear. I no longer had any interest in riding a bicycle and I didn't get on a bike again until I was an adult, almost out of college.

Plenty of people had tried to convince me over the years that I should ride a bike, that it was easy and safe. As much as I wanted to join in the fun, The Fear was strong. My senior year in college I borrowed a bike and had someone do the whole run along behind holding the seat thing while I wobbled down the sidewalk. It was awful. I was not having a good time and kept thinking, "People do this for FUN?"

If I'm nothing else, I am stubborn. Once I got it into my head that "Even children can ride bicycles, of course I can learn how!" there was no turning back. I borrowed a friend's bike, lowered the seat so that I could touch the ground, and pushed myself around the Cheapo parking lot in the middle of the night until I could balance enough to put my feet up on the pedals. Pretty soon I was miraculously riding my bike for 5 or 10 feet at a time! One of my most triumphant moments happened when I jumped on the bike and pedaled in a big circle around the lot. At the age of 22 I had finally learned how to ride a bicycle. Take that, Fear!

Learning how to pedal and stay upright was only the first hurdle. The Fear was still present. The only place that I would ride was the 5 blocks in between my apartment and campus. I had a helmet, a Schwinn Sprint that was too small for me, and a blinky light that I got for free somewhere, and I would do stupid things like weave in and out of parked cars, sometimes ride on the sidewalk and was generally an example of everything you should not do on a bicycle. It's not an excuse, but... I didn't know any better! Baby steps, right?

After I graduated I moved across the river. I kept hearing that it was fun to ride to new and different places. I was skeptical. It seemed like such a big, scary city full of big, noisy cars. Wasn't it just easier to stay afraid? I pushed my comfort level to go out for ice cream a few times, I wobbled around Lake Harriet, and I crept around our neighborhood. It started getting easier for me to figure out where I was, and it was getting less intimidating to ride in a bike lane on the street. But I never rode anywhere by myself and I was always allowing myself to be lead around.

Greenway is,” she said.

The event attracted riders from bike-advocacy organizations like the Grease Pit, a community bike shop in South Minneapolis, the nonprofit Sibley Bike Depot in St. Paul, and the collective Dames on Frames, which produces a feminist bike zine. Bicycle commuter and racer Lee Penn said she liked how the first-ever Women’s Wednesday brought together women from all these disparate but like-minded organizations.

Asked what she liked most about bike commuting, Penn couldn’t boil it down to just one point. Instead, she picked her top four.

“Control,” she said.

“Freedom,” she added, “and it’s a good way to wake up.” She paused, pondering the nature of her romance with all things two-wheeled.

“Even when you’re all stressed out, when you’re riding home, the troubles just kind of roll off your back with the wind,” she said. “I always feel better when I get home.”

This sticker, stuck to the fender of community organizer Lauren Fulner, speaks to the relaxing effects of bicycle commuting.



Karen Hollish is a freelance writer, editor and photographer who lives in Minneapolis.

## Pac-man on Bikes

By Erika Sass

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to combine your love of biking with your love of the 1980s video game Pac-man?

Imagine being chased on your bicycle, your adrenaline is rushing as you hope to get to the sidewalk chalked power pellet before the ghost on your tail “eats” you. As you turn around, you see a grown man in a half banana costume smiling and pedaling by. Knowing it’s your last life and also your last power pellet you pedal as fast as you can over the power pellet and make a quick turn to go home base. With the ten second power pellet freedom, you dash ahead of the ghost. You hear some neighborhood kids shouting from their front lawn “pac-man went that way” and out of nowhere, another ghost sees you and turns around to join in the chase. With two ghosts on your tail, you pedal as fast as you can hoping you can make it back safely. Your heart is pounding and you can feel the ghosts getting closer and closer. You coast into the driveway just as two ghosts catch up to you. A smile comes over your face, you are exhausted but you won, barely.

When I was little and Pac-man was big, my brother and I and the neighborhood kids played “Pac-man on Bikes” which really was a very simple tag game. We would dart through alleys and hide behind garbage cans to avoid getting tagged.

About five years ago, I decided to build on this childhood chaotic tag game by formalizing rules, boundaries, and making costumes. What was originally thought of as a fun way to celebrate my birthday has now turned into an annual tradition.

### So, how do you set-up?

We use a playing field that is six by four city blocks. Before playing, someone creates boundaries and sidewalk chalks power pellets in the middle of the street at the correct

location. When people arrive, we review rules, the map, and take a bike tour of the boundaries and power pellets.

### **So, how do you play?**

Each round is about 10 minutes. We play multiple rounds in a day. Everyone chooses one of three roles: pac-man, ghost or fruit.

The goal of pac-man is to bike over all of the power pellets and return to our house without getting eaten more than three times.

Fruit wear a costume (pretzel, strawberry, banana, or orange) and ride in leisure through the course. The neighbors especially love waving to fruit.

The ghosts wear their regular clothes. The ghosts are everyone else. They try to “eat” pac-man. In order to “eat” pac-man, the ghost’s front bike wheel needs to overcome the back wheel of pac-man’s bike. You don’t touch anyone or anyone’s wheels. You can only “eat” pac-man from behind.

### **How do power pellets work?**

Pac-man’s goal is to bike over all of them and return to the house within the 10 minute time limit without getting eaten three times. If pac-man goes over a sidewalk chalked power pellet, pac-man has 15 seconds to eat any ghosts. If pac-man eats a ghost by their front wheel overcoming the ghost’s back wheel from behind, the ghost must return to the house. If pac-man gets eaten three times, pac-man must return to the house. The power pellets are unlimited. Pac-man can eat as many as they want, but they must eat each one at least once and return to the house within the time in order to “win.”

### **How does it end?**

After ten minutes, everyone returns to the house. Everyone takes a drink and snack break and then roles are redistributed and another round is played.



L’heureux said she read about the ride in the Star Tribune and immediately knew she wanted to go.

“I thought, ‘Oh my God, I’m going to do this; yes, yes, yes,’” she said. “Biking is my life. It sounds very dramatic, but it just is.”

Around 6 p.m. the festivities turned to the Greenway, where volunteers hosted an extended, four-hour version of their weekly Women on Wednesdays (WOW) safety patrol. Susan Priem started WOW this past April to promote safety and solidarity amongst female Greenway riders.

Discouraged by media reports of violence along the corridor, Priem said she wanted to show women that given proper precautions - such as always carrying a cell phone, turning around when something seems amiss and knowing the location of emergency lights and exits - the Greenway is a safe place to ride. On regular weeks the group patrols for nearly two hours, looking for signs of trouble along sections of the Greenway and Light Rail Trail. “The more eyes we have on the Greenway, the safer the

Lake Street. The ride started promptly, as many of the women had to get to work.

Their six-mile ride took them down the West River Parkway, over the Ford Parkway Bridge and along the East River Parkway. They checked out Jefferson Avenue, where there are plans to put in bike lanes, and returned to their starting point via Marshall Avenue and the Lake Street Bridge.

A handful of licensed cycling instructors, certified through the League of American Bicyclists, were interspersed throughout the group.

The ladies cruised along at a relaxed but respectable pace. Below, Rose Ryan (left) and Liliana Rivera enjoyed the ride and the morning's hospitable weather.



Rivera, an intern with the Twin Cities Bike Walk Ambassador Program, recently moved to the Twin Cities from Bogota, Colombia for graduate school. She said she is still learning how to ride her bicycle here, which feels much less crowded than her home city of nearly 10 million people.

Back at Dunn Brothers, the riders chatted over coffee and compared commuting notes. Rhonda Walker (next page) found a new friend in 61-year-old Jeanne L'heureux, a buff nurse who's been an avid cyclist since childhood.

## **So, what do you need to play?**

You will need sidewalk chalk, a map of the boundaries and power pellet locations, a list of the rules (optional but helpful for latecomers who have never played before), a yellow shirt or identifier for pac-man, fruit costumes (not necessary but seeing tandem bicycle fruit riders bring a ridiculously hilarious element of fun to the game), and water. Extra bikes and helmets are also useful. We like to serve dinner and have lots of snacks and drinks so hanging out is equally as important as playing. Some people only come to hang out, some play only a few rounds, while others play every single round.

## **Who can play?**

Mostly adults play on bicycles - competitive players and riders who enjoy leisurely wondering. We've had younger children play in trailers, tag-a-longs, and on xtracycles. Older children rode their own bikes on the sidewalk with the boundaries or in the street with an adult. Usually, there are about 20 people playing in each round. There can be more than one pac-man. Estimate about 1:10. If 20 people are playing, we will have two people be pac-man so they have a fair chance of being able to stay alive the whole ten minutes.

## **When can I play?**

You can set up a game with your friends in your neighborhood. Or, you can play with us. We play in South Minneapolis at the end of July. If you want to play next year, let me know and I'll send you an invitation.

## **Where can I get more information?**

Email me at [erikasass@gmail.com](mailto:erikasass@gmail.com). I can send you video links, photos and help you set up playing Pac-man on bikes in your neighborhood.

## BANG! BANG! That Awful Sound

By Lowrah

The last days of warm, beautiful autumn are turning like the leaves. In Minnesota fall turns to winter so suddenly that you have to seize every good day... and RIDE! I know I say this about every season, but fall really is my favorite time to ride! The air is chilly and keeps you cool on long rides, the fall colors make the most familiar roads look and feel completely different, and everything smells like autumn.

I set out from Powderhorn to a picnic at Snelling Lake this past Sunday. I loaded up my bike with a gallon of home-made vegan chai (Recipe follows!), a gallon of Moroccan mint tea (Recipe!) an apple crisp, and the usual junk in the trunk. I rolled along with sun shining, birds singing and my mind on picnics and chai tea. Everything was perfect. And then... BANG!

Flat tire less than 1/4 mile from the picnic. No biggie, right? I've got my patch kit, a pump, an extra tube, and there are a ton of people around if I run into trouble. The weather was gorgeous so I didn't mind taking my time to unload all of my heavy gear, turn my bike upside down, and remove the wheel.

This is about the time when I noticed that I didn't have a flat tire because of an inner tube fail, but my flat was caused by TIRE ANNIHILATION. There was a hole in my tire that I could shove my pinky through and my tube had breached through the hole and exploded. I used a dollah dollah bill y'all to boot the tire by folding it into quarters and placing it over the hole (I have used electrical tape, powerbar wrappers, condoms and pieces of inner tubes for tire boots and they've all worked out pretty well.), put my only extra tube in there, and pumped a little air into the tube to hold it all together. I put the wheel on, pumped my tire up, and put my cargo back on. With all that weight I could see the dollar bill starting to bulge out of the hole. Not good.

I made it to the picnic where I unloaded, asked everyone to drink every last drop of my cargo to lighten the load, and reinforced the boot. With electrical tape I stuck a piece of inner tube over the dollah bill to hopefully avoid blowing out my last

## Share the road - with women: Bike Walk Week devotes day to lady cyclists

by Karen Hollish, TC Daily Planet 06/10/2010 (reprinted with permission) Photos by Karen Hollish.



Rhonda Walker

Only a year ago, Rhonda Walker was a self-described depressed and overweight widow who never thought about riding a bike.

For her 50th birthday, she bought herself one. And now, before even 8 a.m. this past Wednesday, the 51-year-old had already pounded out six-plus miles as one of a group ride's most exuberant participants.

Walker, who lives in Minneapolis, joined close to two dozen kindred spirits for the inaugural Women's Wednesday ride, a new feature of the third annual Twin Cities Bike Walk Week. The morning ride, and a special-edition evening Greenway safety patrol, were intended to celebrate women who already commute by bicycle and encourage others to try it out, Amber Collett of Transit for Livable Communities said.

The 2009 Bike Walk Count found that only 23 percent of Twin Cities cyclists are women. Group rides like Wednesday's are one way cycling advocates hope to bring equity to the road. The morning's riders, many of whom wore red as a nod to promoting heart health, met at 7 a.m. at the Dunn Brothers at 4648 East

## YAKUÑAN, EL CAMINO DEL AGUA

Hola, mi nombre es Soledad, pertenezco al proyecto YAKUÑAN. Somos un grupo de 12 jóvenes ciclistas que hemos recorrido ya 5 países de Sudamérica, más de 8000km, en bicicleta con un mensaje muy importante: el de cuidar el agua y el ambiente.

En este grupo somos 7 mujeres y 5 hombres. Salimos el 17 de enero de la ciudad de Quito y llegamos a las Cataratas de Iguazú (nuestra meta) el 17 de julio de 2010.

La distancia recorrida no ha sido lo más duro, como lo ha sido la convivencia entre nosotros. A pesar de que fue poco tiempo el que viajamos, comparado con otros viajeros de años, hay muchas anécdotas que no olvidaremos, como tampoco olvidaremos cada lugar donde dormimos... parece fácil olvidar, pero en cada lugar hubo alguna historia o algo para recordar.

Durante el recorrido conocimos lugares y personas que viven muy diferente a nosotros en la ciudad, conocimos de cerca la pobreza, la necesidad, pero también la humildad y la solidaridad entre pueblos hermanos y entre seres humanos, además de innumerables historias de personas que conocimos por pocos minutos o por varios días.

Para los hombres y mujeres, jóvenes y viejos (aunque creo que nunca se es viejo para cumplir un sueño), que piensen hacer un viaje, yo no creo que nadie pueda decirles si hacerlo o no, cada uno tiene su propia experiencia sobre esto, lo único que puedo recomendar es que lo vivan ustedes mismos y si además pueden hacerlo por un motivo, por un ideal... es mucho mejor!.

Desde que salimos, siempre supimos que no iba a ser nada fácil, y con cada pedaleada en subida, las lluvias, el sol que nos quemaba, el cansancio.... Lo confirmamos. Sin embargo, a pesar de todo esto, la gente que conocimos, los amigos que hicimos, la comida y la música de cada lugar, su historia, todo lo vale y es por eso que yo digo, si me preguntan si lo vuelvo a hacer... MIL VECES!!

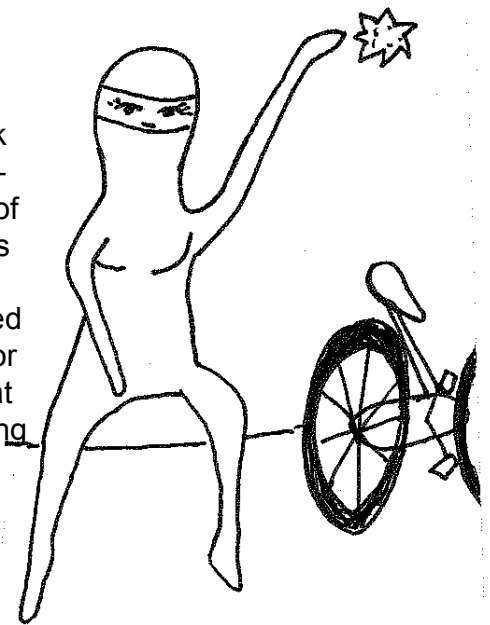
Para información del proyecto: [www.yakunan.com](http://www.yakunan.com) o [ms\\_hernandez\\_06@yahoo.com](mailto:ms_hernandez_06@yahoo.com)

spare tube. I was sweating whether or not I was going to make it to the nearest bike shop. Instead of rolling slowly and cautiously like a normal person would have, I decided to get as far as I could before the inevitable BANG!, so if you saw a flash or heard a sonic boom on Minnehaha last Sunday, that was me booking it toward New Tire Salvation. I made it without incident and ended up getting a new tire with reflective sidewalls- Upgrade! When I changed out the tires I looked at the dollar bill: a tiny hole had worn through, it was stretched and distorted from being pushed out of the hole, and the ink had gone all wonky and looked like a spiderweb centered over the little hole in the paper.

Now I know why everyone says use a dollah for a boot! Definitely worth \$1, and I even got my money back.

### *Yummy Vegan Chai*

In a plastic bag place 2-4 inches of ginger, sliced, 10 whole cloves, 6 cardamom pods, 2 cinnamon sticks, 1 1/2 teaspoons of whole black pepper and bruise with a rolling pin. Dump the contents of the bag into a pot with 6 cups of water. Bring to a boil, and with the lid partially uncovered lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Take off the heat and steep 6 bags of Darjeeling tea for 5 minutes. Remove the tea bags, place the pot back on the heat and add 1 1/2 cups of vanilla coconut milk (or soy or rice milk) and up to 1/4 cup of brown sugar. Stir until the sugar has dissolved, strain, and serve hot or let cool and serve over ice.





### **Moroccan Mint Tea with Mint Simple Syrup**

Go into your backyard with a pot and fill it up with mint. Wash the mint off and put it back in the pot, fill the pot with water, leaving some room at the top. Simmer for 10 minutes. Use a wooden spoon to crush the mint sprigs and to push the mint down every once in awhile. Take the pot off the stove and steep a couple of green tea bags for 2 minutes.

Remove the tea bags and add simple syrup to taste. (I like mine very sweet!) Strain, and serve hot or let cool and serve over ice.

### **Mint Simple Syrup**

In a small, heavy-bottom saucepan heat 1 cup of sugar and 1/2 cup of water to a boil. Immediately turn down the heat and simmer until sugar is completely dissolved. Pour hot sugar-water into a clean jar with 5-10 clean, dry mint sprigs. When the syrup cools you can either remove the sprigs or leave them there- try not to dump them into the tea you just strained!

Economics . . . Living Green . . . Middle Age . . .

I have not listed these issues in any order of importance, they are all very near to me. That is why I decided it was time for a change in my daily commute to work. I put the car aside - why do I wait for the weekend to enjoy a bike ride?

What a joy I have found in my bike that was just waiting for me, if I made the time. In this hurry up world of getting around, it feels so good to be traveling by bike; I can go at my own pace, it is my choice to make.

You see middle age came up quick, so now I am taking the time to reflect on my day and enjoy nature around me. I am saving a little green \$, living a little greener, and feeling good. I know rain will come and winter too, do I dare to keep at it? I really hope to!

So cars and bikes please share the road, as I go with care, there is a new biker commuter on the road.

~ Petal Power ~

artwork by Anna Bushee



## Parts go together in a corresponding system

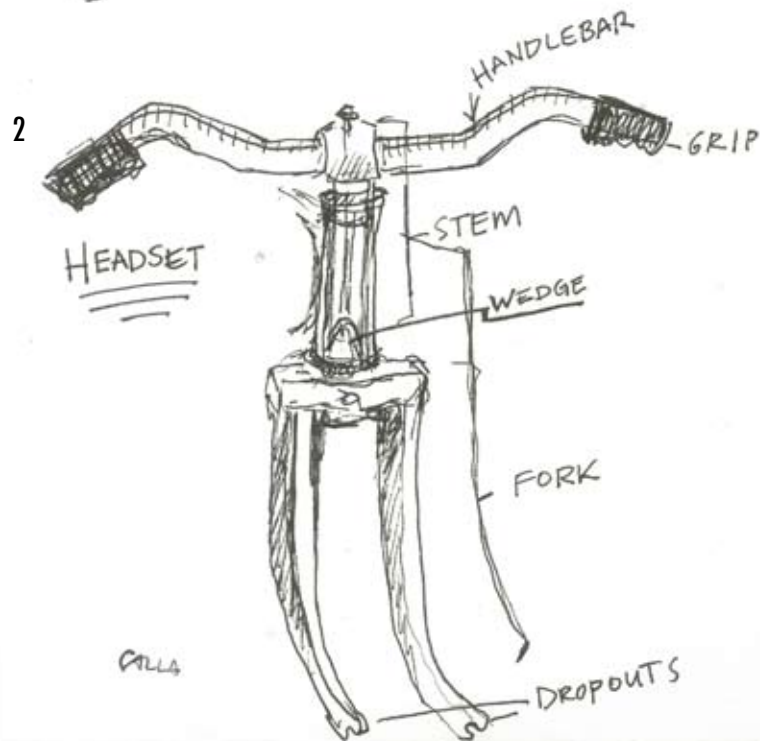
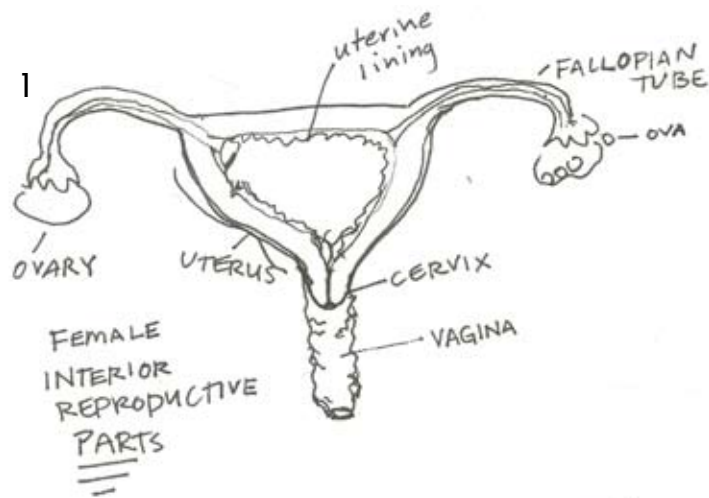


Figure 1. Female reproductive system  
Figure 2. Bicycle headset

Compiled from posts to a thread on the  
Minneapolis Bike Love website:  
Women/ Trans/ Femme (WTF) Forum: VAGINAS!

(you say vaginae, I say vaginas - what is a vagina anyway?  
This will be a discussion saved for another piece)

LOWRAH: Lady bits can be called naughty bits but they  
should never be called the painful bits.

Oh the journeys of me and my vagina (otherwise known as a  
"pocketbook"). We've learned to pee together, we've learned  
to bleed together, we've learned to screw together and  
we've learned to bike together.

Biker\_lee: So, let's talk about MENSTRUATION for a minute,  
or two or three.

Moon cup, divacup, keeper! My discovery of the menstrea-  
tion cup was a transformative moment for me. I went from  
frequent accidents, terrible cramps, and a generally nega-  
tive attitude towards my period to no accidents, just sucky  
cramps, and an ambivalent attitude towards my period. There  
is a learning curve - it took me two cycles to learn how to  
position the cup correctly... But once I figured it out, I  
fell in love with it.



From The Museum of Menstruation

women today can buy the reusable The Keeper, sold since the late 1980s; the one-time use Instead (1-800-INSTEAD, or web site), which Ultrafem started selling in the fall of 1996 in the western part of the U.S.A.; the British Mooncup (web site); the Canadian DivaCup, made of silicone (web site); and the Finnish Lunette cup (web site). I'll add MUM pages for the latter four cups later.  
(with permission)

Biker\_Lee: I'll NEVER GO BACK to any other method.... never.

Lowrah: Funny you should mention the cup.  
Lowrah posts an anonymous story from the vault of Vaginal Pain: A lady I rode with was telling me that she was riding her bike around town for work, but the tip of the cup was sticking out a little too far and forward. She didn't have an opportunity to stop and adjust it because she was on the clock, so the thing rubbed her raw. Imagine, if you will, a tiny piece of rubber between your saddle and your clitoris. For hours. Friction, heat, soft tissues. OUCH! She said that she was walking bow-legged for a number of days, and that underwear was painful.

Don't let this happen to you!

Lowrah then writes:

1. If you can, stop some place and make sure you're not uncomfortable!
2. Guys adjust their junk in public all the time. Let this be license for you to reach your hand down your shorts and take care of your junk before you have a situation that requires ointment or a trip to the Dr.

I have quite a few more of these anecdotes. I think I'm going to dole them out over a few posts just to keep you all interested. ;]

Ummmhayley:

in the vein of protection on bikes, it should be noted that you can do a lot with your pelvic muscles. once, my diva-cup was poking me a lil (okay, not on a long ride, but it can be applied), and i did several sort of squeeze-all-my-muscles-down-there-in-an-upwards-direction, and was able to shift it up a bit. don't underestimate the power of your PC muscles!

i have crazy periods, so sometimes i wear cotton pads with

the cup, and let me tell you, holy shit that hurts on a bike. i don't know what it is, but i end up really sore after i bike with a cotton pad. divacup forever.

Biker\_Lee:

I cut that pokey thing really short - it can sometimes be a little tricky to grasp for removal, but I NEVER have the pokey / abrasion problem....

Riding with pad? blah.... hate it. I have used the cotton, re-useable ones with snaps - AWFUL. I have used the disposable adhesive ones - slightly less than awful... but still pretty awful.

Riding with tampon? blah... tampons make my cramps worse and don't keep me happy for nearly as long as the cup. Tampons also irritate my bits. And, I once had a string/abrasion problem that I hope NEVER to revisit.

OMGMRJ: 2. Guys adjust their junk in public all the time. I have no shame.

Awfly Wee Eli:

So very much enjoying this thread.

I use Glad Rags, FWIW. The Missus has a Diva Cup and seems to like it fine, but every time I try to use anything along those lines, I start feeling woozy. I guess I just really don't like cargo in the hold (this explains that whole lesbianism thingjobbie).

JenNastix:

I used the diva cup for YEARS and years. Fantastic. But, recently I got the Paraguard IUD as my chosen form of birthcontrol until the dood can get snipped, and I'm afraid to use the cup because of the slight suction on the cervix. I'd hate to have spent all this money just to have the thing sucked out. I asked my doctor about it, but she seemed unsure on whether or not it's safe. Anyone know?

Ummmhayley:

i have a paraguard IUD and i use the divacup still. i think the only real "suction" that happens is with the walls of your "bits," not like the entire internal organ. (if that makes sense.) i haven't had any problems, though, i really don't think it can get "sucked out" very easily (i mean think about how much it hurt goin' in... it's not just going to slip away unnoticed).