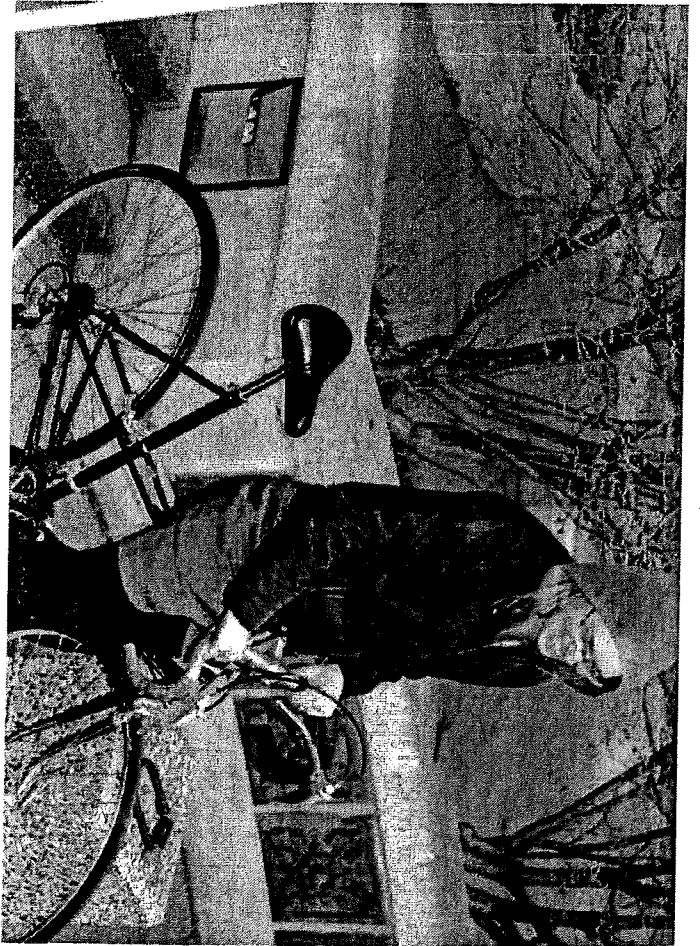
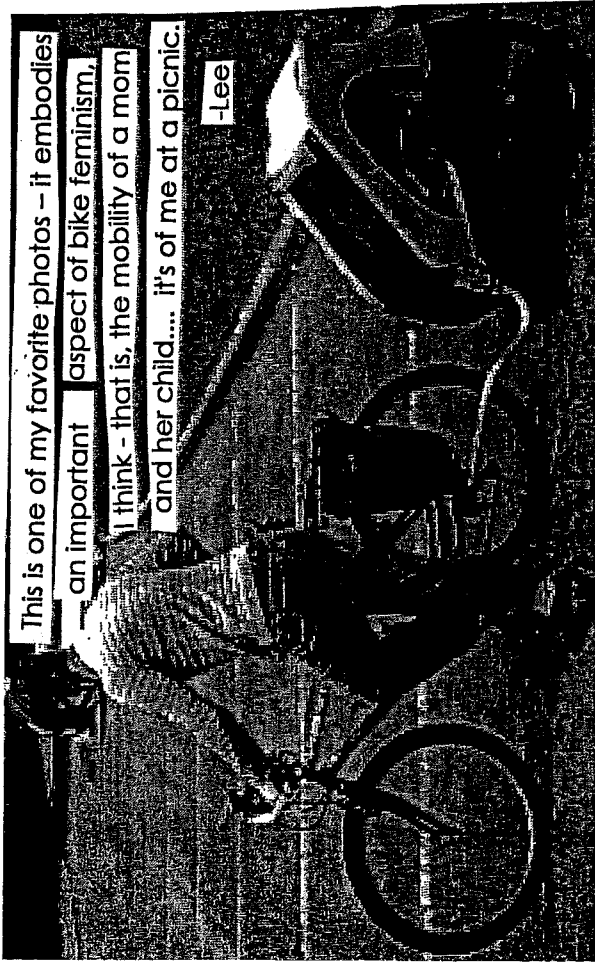


**Centerfold!**

Photos by Ruthie Hansen





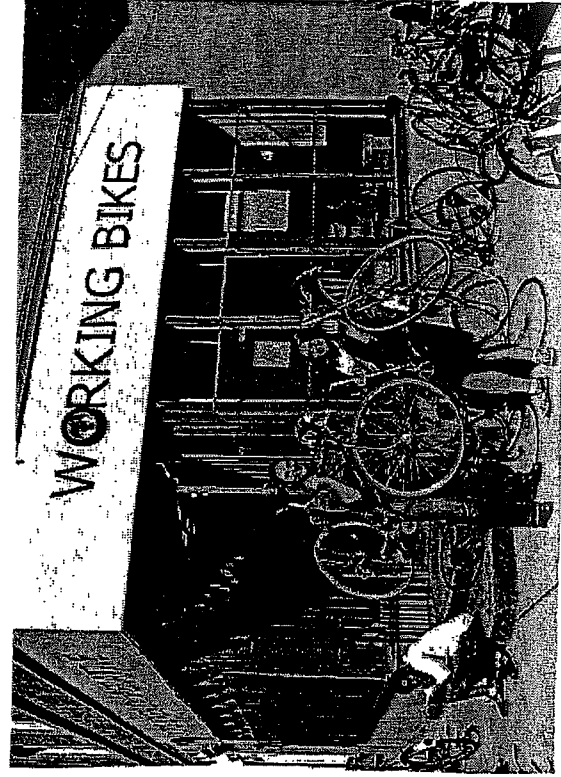
## Bike Commuting Tips and Tricks

By Lee Penn, a.k.a. biker\_lee

So, why bike? There are so many reasons - good reasons! With increasing pressures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and reduce our dependence on petroleum-based, biking represents a realistic and efficient alternative to car-based transportation. With increasing demands on our time, biking represents an excellent way to accomplish two important activities at once: exercise and transportation. With the large expense of owning and operating a car, biking represents an economic choice for transportation.

Interested? Intrigued? Here's my recipe for successful bike commuting - this is a compilation of advice from me and several people who do it regularly.

- 1) Above all else - start small and build up.
  - a. Ride one way to work, and catch a ride or bus home. Then, the next day, catch a ride or bus to work, and then ride home. Do this once a week for a while. Pretty soon, you might think about doing this most days!
  - b. If your local bus route has buses with bike racks, try it out. Bike-bus-bike!
  - c. If you can borrow or get a bike rack, try driving partway and biking partway.
- 2) Talk to other commuters!
  - a. Commuters know the good, the bad, and the ugly of bike commuting.
  - b. Commuters know which bike shops are friendly.



And... some tips as a mom who pulls her son all around the twin cities...including to preschool nearly every morning - all year round.

- 1) Used trailers are great! I got ours used... New ones can be really expensive, although a lot less expensive than driving everywhere. I recommend trailers that can be easily moved from bike to bike. That way, the trailer can be transferred from one bike to another without having to deal with extra hardware.
- 2) Food and drinks are great - use cups with lids or water bottles!
- 3) If you choose to stop somewhere (e.g., playground, library, grocery store), use two locks - one for your bike and one for the wheel of your trailer. Even at the playground, lock your rig. This is a deterrent to someone hopping on your bike and riding off.
- 4) Leave early enough so that you don't feel rushed.
- 5) Have some stuff for your passenger to do - maybe a tape player for music, some toys, some books, etc... My little dude loves to read books and eat food in the trailer. He also loves to sleep back there (he has a nice trailer-blanket). Oh, and one of his favorite activities is waving his green flag while we're riding.
- 6) Take advantage of the cargo room. For example, I usually have a change of clothes for my passenger and a dry shirt for me in the back.
- 7) Please consider helmets - for both you and your passenger(s).
- 8) RIDE!!!

**US:**

Using the proposed solutions that people listed, here are just a number of solutions to major problems that as a group we could work towards.

**Most people listed potential solutions to ROAD SAFETY (CARS):**

- Work to require driver's education to include more about cyclists' rights.
- Influence legislation by using cyclist fatality statistics to make using cell phones while driving illegal.
- Publicize cyclists' rights on posters, billboards, bus stop benches, on buses.
- Stage protests or events emphasizing cyclists' rights (things like Critical Mass).

**In response to the problem of BAD ROUTES:**

- We can network with existing organizations to emphasize the public need (example: a north-south bike lane in Saint Paul).
- We can develop surveys on how people drive in the city vs. how people bike.
- We can take action to chalk in bike lanes on existing roads and use media attention to get what we need.

**In response to the problem of IMAGE:**

- Women's rides.
- Women on posters for cycling events.
- Informing bicycle companies to make more stylish bikes/bike clothing for women.

**To alleviate concern over SKILL, CLEANLINESS, WEATHER, DISTANCE, HARRASSMENT:**

- Lead classes, festivals, forums, events on these issues.

**Also for CLEANLINESS:**

- Work to get bicycle stations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul for people to shower and prep for work by asking pre-existing gyms for special discounts for just this aspect of their clubs.
- Start new cycle stations that include repair, showers, and other information in order to foster the cycling community.

**For MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY and ACCESSIBILITY:**

- Become involved in organizations that work to provide affordable and friendly service for bicycles such as the Sibley Bike Depot in Downtown Saint Paul, or the Grease Pit in Minneapolis.
- Work to start new community shops in neighborhoods that really need them: Frogtown or Northeast Minneapolis. (It doesn't take much skill or experience just people willing to volunteer 5 hours a week).

**Thanks** to all the coffee-drinkers and workers at the shops, to Sarah and Ben for access to statistical software, to Claire for her brilliance, and PB for his support.

By Jason Tanzman

**The Place where Shadows Dream**

I raced against the sun's last legs as dusk drifted in over the Pacific Ocean. All day I hugged the cliff-side shoulder riding my bicycle southbound on Highway 101, watching the waves crash against the rocks lining the Oregon coast three hundred feet below me. The dying sun shed its rays upon my back, casting my shadow out across the road. My body was exhausted, over 80 miles from my starting point that morning; but with every degree the sun dipped into the horizon, my energy level was given a tiny boost. I sped through seven final miles of deserted highway working, racing, striving to reach my campground at Sunset Beach with the hope, the dream, of watching the sun make its final, crimson descent into tomorrow.

My riding partner Reid and I had split up that morning, so I was alone. We had been together on the road for over a month, and the daily strain of spending every waking hour together was wearing our relationship thin; as of late we had spent many evenings in near complete silence, retreating from our journals and books straight to bed with only a brief "goodnight." That morning, I awoke earlier than usual, around 7 am, with an itch to ride onward and enjoy the full course of the day. I desired to explore new depths of independence, to be free of the constraints bound up in a partnership that had slowly become infused with negative energy and tension. In that moment, I knew that I needed to ride on, alone.

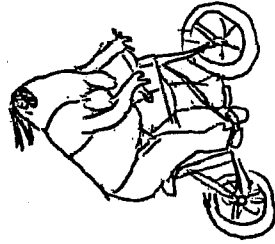
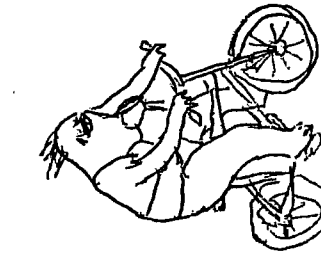
That morning, the path in front of me was endless, and I never looked back over my shoulder. I rode free of the frustration and constricting feeling that I had borne in my chest for over a week, daily burning a hole in the back of Reid's bicycle with passive-aggressive resentment. My butt grew roots into the saddle of my bicycle, and my feet burrowed into my pedals. My legs spun in circles with the steady, conscious pace of a metronome set on *andante*, embracing the contrasting feelings of moving while staying in exactly the same place. I scalded the coastal tailwinds, letting my hands off the bars and, sitting upright, I opened my chest to the sun, felt the seaside breeze engulf my entire body, and I soared.

I stopped for a rest in the late afternoon, as the sun was slowly beginning its downward descent. I leaned my bicycle, fully loaded to the hilt, against a bench and wandered into the state park. Just past a small park hut and bathroom outhouse, the land opened up into rolling sand dunes, dotted with patches of scrub bushes and short trees. I took off my shoes and dank, musty, sweaty socks, and buried my prune-feet deep in the

sand. The sand, slowly baking from the sun's rays all day, licked every ounce of wet mustiness from my feet. The grains of sand wiggled between my toes, cleansing my feet and my soul. I leaned against some scrubs and peeled an orange, savoring the sugary juiciness that would power my body the final miles of the evening.

The sun persevered, flaming golden-orange and pushing me onward. My shadow told me that it was getting late, as it slowly crept out onto the road and into oncoming traffic. Looking over my shoulder, I watched my shadow ride - graceful, elegant, elongated arms stretching onto the drop handlebars of my bicycle, with the legs and body stretching twelve feet tall and merging into a profound unity with the pavement as they lied horizontal together. My shadow never falters, never stops peddling, never squirms because it's ass hurts, never sweats, never has to blow it's nose. And I realized that I was slowly becoming my shadow, even as the ideal continuously recedes into the night like Gatsby's green light. I looked back over my shoulder momentarily, knowing that Reid would not find me tonight; as my shadow gradually faded into the darkness, I was truly alone. As I pushed the last two miles, exhausted, I understood what Dylan meant when he said that "the only thing I knew how to do, was to keep on keepin' on, like a bird that flew..."

As I reached my "destination," I dropped my bike on the ground just off the road, my front wheel upturned still spinning, and sat on a rock facing out on the Pacific Ocean. The waves rolled and crashed onto the shore, undulating and glimmering outward into infinity as they merged with the horizon. The sun drifted downward in an anticlimactic but beautiful sunset, leaving in its wake sheets of deep purple and orange drifting out across the sky as I scratched the day's events into my leather-bound journal. I wrote long letters to unknown readers inside cream-colored pages, never to be mailed. As the night sky enveloped the ocean, I pulled my sleeping bag out onto the beach, and fell asleep amid the gentle roaring and crashing of the waves.



## HOW TO GET MORE "DAMES ON FRAMES"

### YOU:

there are many ways that we believe that you can impact the women around you by example or by action.

**IMAGE:** After all these years, being on a bike is still a more desirable image for men than for women. For female commuters, the statistic drops from 39% deterred by image to 12%. Those who ride either love, or aren't phased by, their personal image. If you are a lady, get out there and ride. Flaunt that skirt and heels if you like or sport that spandex. Women need to be encouraged by seeing other women out there on the road. Men, tell those gals in your life that you think women with leg power rock. One guy said that he got an instant crush on a gal he saw carrying one bicycle over her shoulder while biking on another. Autonomy and independence are powerful images that we all should strive for.

**SKILL:** Added to the survey as an afterthought, at 63% of non-cycling women, skill is a major issue. When you look at bicycle commuters, the gap closes a bit, but there is still a difference: 24% of women vs. 15% of men. This is where being supportive to your female friends comes in. The only real way to build bicycling skill is to get out there and ride. Offer to ride with your friends, and listen to their concerns. Load your bikes on the bus or the back of a car and go out to a quiet area at first. Don't expect them to take a trip down Franklin Avenue right off the bat. As cute as their naiveté may be, don't chuckle at their cycling faux pas and don't be frustrated by their inexperience. You were new once too.

**FRIENDLINESS:** 18% of women who don't bike feel that bikers aren't friendly, compared to only 4% of men. So we need to be friendlier, right? Well, if you look at commuters, the numbers flip! 14% of male commuters cite friendliness as a problem, compared to only 7% of women. One woman wrote that the friendliness of other cyclists is the primary reason she bikes! So once women get drawn in, they seem to find a community with other cyclists. While as women we seem to be doing a good job in welcoming new cyclists, men may have a little more work to do. A male friend said that he was embarrassed to go on Critical Mass because his bike "wasn't cool enough." So, if you're a gent, act like one, and be aware that you don't need to have a bro-down to see who has the "best bike" or who rides the fastest.

**WEATHER:** Cited as the biggest deterrent for both experienced and inexperienced cyclists, many people wanted to change the weather. You may be surprised to know that you can influence how people experience the weather. Women are more affected by cold than men because their monthly loss of iron in the blood stream detracts from how their blood circulates. Taking dietary supplements of iron makes a significant difference (FYI - This is not a paid endorsement, just advice). Most people don't realize that the act of cycling keeps you warm in the winter, and that all you need is some good winter gear. Also, when people think winter, they think ice. Roads clear quickly in the Twin Cities, and are not as much of a problem. Riding with more traction on your tires and taking your weight off of the bars and putting it on your seat makes your ride more stable as well. The pride of riding all winter is well worth a little chill. And, as for rain, if you're concerned, get fenders, a raincoat, and rain pants. A rainy spring ride can be beautiful. So, let people know.

PEOPLE WHO BIKE "SLIM TO NONE" RANKED THE FOLLOWING AS MAJOR DEFERENTS  
(RATED 3-5)

EVERYONE	MEN	WOMEN
1 WEATHER (91.3%)	WEATHER (79.2%)	WEATHER (92.5%)
2 ROAD SAFETY (CARB) (84.1%)	ROAD SAFETY and DISTANCE (94.2%)	ROAD SAFETY (70%)
3 DISTANCE (82.5%)	THEFT (80%)	DISTANCE (87.5%)
4 BAD ROUTES, SKILL, and THEFT (Bad rt 50%)	BAD ROUTES (45.8%)	SKILL (82.5%)
5 CRIMINAL ATTACKS (32.8%)	BIKE AFFORDABILITY (33.3%)	BAD ROUTES (82.5%)
6 CLEANLINESS (28.7%)	SKILL (28.2%)	THEFT (50%)
7 BIKE AFFORDABILITY (28.1%)	CRIMINAL ATTACKS and CLEANLINESS (25%)	CRIMINAL ATTACKS and IMAGE (37.5%)
8 IMAGE and HARASSMENT (28.5%)	HARASSMENT and MAINTENANCE COSTS (20.5%)	CLEANLINESS (32.5%)
9 MAINTENANCE COSTS (25%)	IMAGE and MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY (8.3%)	HARASSMENT and MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY (30%)
10 MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY (21.9%)	FRIENDLINESS (4.2%)	MAINTENANCE COSTS (27.5%)
11 FRIENDLINESS (12.5%)		BIKE AFFORDABILITY (25%)
12		FRIENDLINESS (17.5%)

Much of what deters women (and men) from cycling can be alleviated by a change in mentality. People don't have to be in incredible shape in order to go incredible distances and traffic isn't as scary once understood. Changing a mentality isn't always easy, but one person at a time these changes can occur. Even asking people why they don't bike, or why they like to bike we're sure to get some people thinking if not actually on their bikes. With people comes power, and as a group there are many potential solutions and places to put our energy, skill, and resources. If no one attempts these things, no change will occur. Who better than us?

**OUR ORGANIZATION**  
The group that started as a Bike Feminism class is developing into an organization that needs more people to help try to understand and impact the experience of cycling not only for women, but for all people. We are interested in how to incorporate all marginalized people into the community of cyclists. We are not here shake our fingers, or merely point them at the problem. We desire to be a group for action and connection.

**YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY.**

What skills and resources you have are greatly needed and appreciated.  
What skills you desire we'd more than gladly teach you.

**Bike Fem Class Syllabus**

By Claire Stoscheck

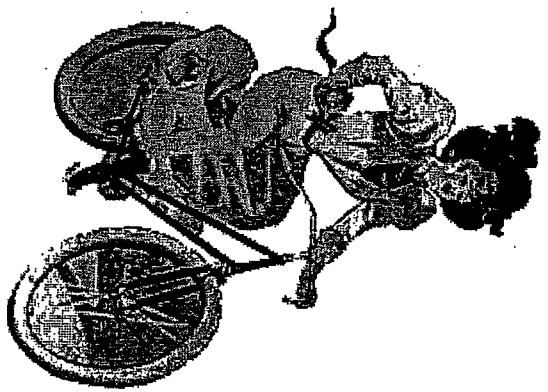
Below is the original course description, and a stripped-down syllabus of the Bike Feminism Experimental College (EXCO) class. To see the entire course packet, and if you'd like to use part or all of it to teach your own course, please see [http://mpkb.net/en/Macalester\\_Bike\\_Share](http://mpkb.net/en/Macalester_Bike_Share). -Claire Stoscheck

EXCO 2007 \*Proposed Syllabus;  
Subject to Change\*  
Bike Feminism: Theory,  
Community & Mechanical  
Exploration

Thursdays 7:30-9:30pm, Macalester  
Campus, Old Main 010 (Every other  
session in the basement of GDD)

Facilitated by:

- \*(Theory) Claire Stoscheck  
([cstoscheck@gmail.com](mailto:cstoscheck@gmail.com))
- \*(Mechanics) Cali  
[lirsa@lirs0004@umn.edu](mailto:lirsa@lirs0004@umn.edu)



Using a feminist lens which

recognizes the intersectionalities of oppressions, we will explore the historical context and contemporary state of gender within the bike movement. We will compare bike movements and cultures in cities worldwide with a particular focus on the local Twin Cities movement in order to gain the knowledge and tools we need to address the issue of gender and mobility. In addition, we will learn concrete mechanical and urban riding skills in order to be more self-sufficient and confident in our own abilities as bikers. Classes on theory will rotate with bike mechanic practicum. The theory classes will include movies, guest lecturers, discussions based on readings, and fieldtrips (bike rides) to local bike activism organizations and events. Mechanical classes will include the basic skills you need to maintain your bike. As a final product we will create a bike zine together as a class which we will distribute in the Twin Cities and beyond. Bring your own bike to work on to the labs, or work on an old bike to fix it up to support Mac Bikes community bike programs.

*Why this class?* The emerging transnational bike movement is fundamental in stemming the myriad of negative effects that cars cause such as global climate change, traffic congestion, smog, isolation, and sedentary life-styles, and also has the potential to be a more

accessible form of transportation for most people. However, one only needs to look to a city like Bogotá (where only about 1% of 1 million bicycle commuters are women) or to our own Twin Cities (where less than 1/3 of cyclists are women) to see that when women's mobility isn't being sufficiently addressed even within the alternative movement which subverts car culture. Without addressing this issue it will be impossible to change the dominant and individualistic car culture to become a bike and pedestrian culture—a culture that puts humans and quality of life for *all* first. If women aren't on bikes, this movement isn't going to move very fast or that far, and so the question becomes, how can we get more women—and other marginalized peoples—involved in biking? How can we ensure that the new alternative and “green” transportation movement is not another classist, racist and sexist movement disguised as radical because it’s “environmental”? How can we achieve “bike justice”? Starting from our own experience, collectively we can find a way to critically analyze this issue with a feminist lens in order to self-reflect on the movement in which we’re involved, to find some solutions, and to take action. We’re making this up as we go because feminist scholars haven’t analyzed transportation or biking very extensively & this is a cutting edge topic. This is an exciting opportunity to bring this issue to the table and to start the discussion about gender and biking.

*A Note on Pedagogy:* This class will be a collective where everyone will have the opportunity to bring their experience to the table and play a role in teaching others as well as learning from them. My role as facilitator is simply to bring the group together in a focused space to explore something together—I do not claim to be an expert on the subject. Instead I am facilitating this class with the hope to bring together people who are interested in this rather obscure but important issue in order to bring the topic to the table and perhaps build a community from which projects and initiatives focused on anti-oppression and bike-use can arise. We also may have an opportunity to contribute to cutting edge research on gender and bicycle use and to collaborate with a new working-group based in Santiago, Chile called “Women in Movement” whose goal is to study the theme of transportation and gender at a global level and to generate knowledge and strategies to promote bicycle use by women worldwide. In the case that there is some confusion based on the title of the class, I want to make it clear that **ALL GENDERS ARE WELCOME IN THIS CLASS.** You will leave this class with the basic mechanic skills you need to maintain your bicycle.

*Expect invitations to Critical Mass, snow bike rides, night bike rides, and many other bike rides and events! It is highly recommended that you attend at least a few of these.*

## THE PATH TO CHANGE: HOW TO GET MORE “DAMES ON FRAMES”

A study by Laila Davis and Cali Jirsa

It is so easy to lie with statistics, but for those who want to understand how to make the most effective change, they are a blue sky after a rainy ride. Since it has been found that in Minneapolis, at least, only 1/3 of cyclists are women, how better to find out why than to ask.

With only a week to publication, we took to the coffee shops of Minneapolis and Saint Paul to get bikers and non-bikers to complete our survey. From April 13-19, 2007 we surveyed at Hard Times, Espresso Royale - Dinkytown, Starlight Coffee, and 2nd Moon in Minneapolis and Coffee News, Cosmic Coffee, Mad Dog, and a B.E.A.S.T. (Bicycle Enthusiasts at St. Thomas) alleycat race in Saint Paul. We chose these locations for the ease of accessing people, at the risk of bias in age, income level, and ethnicity.

We asked 230 people to rank how much certain things deter them from biking, why they bike, and how they could change their major deterrents.

### BICYCLING SURVEY

HOW MUCH DO THE FOLLOWING DETER YOU FROM BICYCLING?

NOT AT ALL	QUITE A LOT			
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
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1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE COMPLETE BACK SIDE AS WELL

Overall, for men and women alike, the top deterrents (those listed as a 3 or higher) were the same: **1) Weather, 2) Distance, 3) Bad Routes, and 4) Road Safety (Cars).**

However, more women ranked these things as deterrents.

The percentages for all surveyed were as follows:

**Weather** 72% of men vs. 81% of women  
**Distance** 56% of men vs. 65% of women  
**Routes** 44% of men vs. 51% of women  
**Road safety** 43% of men vs. 60% of women

But for those who biked “Slim to none” ...

Women were **twice as likely** to say skill was a major deterrent, **63%** felt this way, in fact.

And women were **four times as likely** to find **IMAGE** to be a major deterrent, at 38%.

Women found **HARRASSMENT** more of an issue by 10 percentage points. (30% total)

Additionally, on the last Friday of every month they participate in Critical Mass, a global movement to reclaim the streets that is celebrated in major cities around the world. Stoscheck describes the ride as a "moving art party," full of enthusiastic bikers donning funky costumes. In a word, bicyclists are activists, and activists can learn a lot from bike enthusiasts.

For Stoscheck, combining work and play, exercise and transportation, justice, personal liberation, and the community biking has offered her have been life changing. While studying abroad in Ecuador, she was able to commute through unsafe neighborhoods at a rapid speed and, funded in part by Mac Bike's efforts, she led kids on bike rides to parks in their own city that they had never seen before due to their limited mobility. Stoscheck continues to forge ahead to new ground with her feminist bike philosophy. After studying abroad in Ecuador, Stoscheck said she was blown away by the biking infrastructure in Bogotá, Colombia, where one million people out of seven million commute daily by bike. Yet only a handful of those are women. Stoscheck said she was shocked at the lack of accessibility, opportunity, and acceptance granted to them in the bike culture.

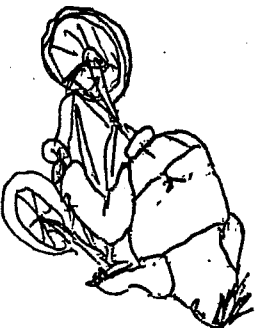
In response, Stoscheck decided to participate in EXCO, the Twin Cities' Experimental College ([www.excotc.org](http://www.excotc.org)), to address the problem. The topic of her class is Bike Feminism, a term of her own creation that suggests the desire for gender equality in simple, sustainable mobility. The class, composed primarily of non-Macalester students, looks at the cultural limitations that keep women from biking, such as the assumption that women know little about mechanics. She said her syllabus is constantly evolving, which she said she has found to be the most equal and effective way to explore and to learn.

The class reaches beyond the theoretical, emphasizing the importance of hands-on experience. Every other class is a lesson in bike mechanics, taught by local bike activist Calli Jirsa, which empowers women to learn the mechanics of their bikes and to be involved in the processes of maintenance and repair.

Additionally, the class hopes to publish a magazine at the end of the semester. They have invited Chris Wells, Professor of Environmental Studies and History, to speak about biking and transportation, and are in communication with a group of women in Santiago, Chile, whose mission is to promote the rights, opportunity, and accessibility of women in biking. Having been invited to a global conference in November in Santiago, Chile, Stoscheck said she hopes that bicycle feminism will become a global movement.

**Gender Differences In Bike (and Transit) Transportation:  
Some Planning Solutions\***  
Draft written March 24, 2007 by Claire Stoscheck

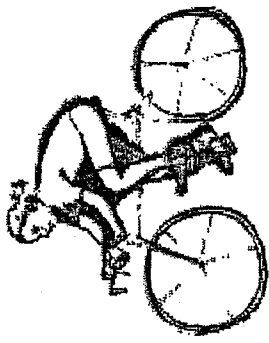
<b>Gender Differences which lead to gender inequality in bike transportation</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
Safety/harassment/sexual violence: women** are more often the victims of violence, especially sexual violence, and women and trans-gendered folks are more vulnerable than men while biking and while on trains or buses	-More/better lighting & call boxes on bike paths, lanes and boulevards; -anti-sexism trainings in transportation organizations and Cities; -hiring of more female transportation planners, designers, operators to help foster gender equity and a safe environment -More anti-harassment propaganda in transportation spaces (such as on buses) and in some cultural contexts All-Women train cars or buses might be necessary
Women have the gender-role*** of care-taker, women are more likely to be carrying large packages and have children in tow	-Make carriages, panniers and multi-person bicycles more available to be bought or rented (at economical prices); -wide bike lanes & bike boulevards that are safe and attractive to women biking with children and packages; -make transit spacious enough and convenient to embark and disembark for women with kids/packages
Gender roles of women as passive, weak, less aggressive, dainty makes women likely to have less confidence to bike on streets with a lot of car traffic, and makes it less accepted when they do	-Bike boulevards where bikes have right-of-way; -Weekly or bi-weekly city-wide bike rides where main streets are closed to motorized traffic to serve as a confidence builder for new (women) bikers (like Ciclopaseos in Quito, Ecuador)



## Bike Feminists

### Global revolution starts at Macalester

By Rose Patterson



The bicycle has the power to liberate.

If you ever doubt its historical and socio-political clout, simply remember the suffragette Susan B.

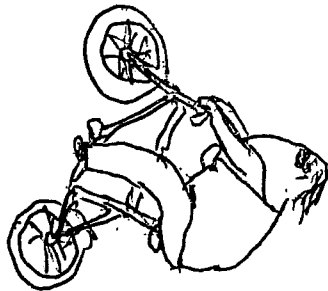
Anthony, who claimed that the bike helped to emancipate women: biking catalyzed the transition in women's apparel from skirts to bloomers while providing women with new methods of mobility. Today, the bike is a humble machine with great potential. Given the urgent need for alternative energy sources—and, as many would argue, an overhaul of values—the bike is a promising start in advancing radical causes locally and globally.

Claire Stoscheck '07 of Mac Bike acknowledged the many advantages biking offers. To begin with, she said the bike allows for freedom of mobility, something particularly relevant to college students, but a concept many take for granted. Biking also teaches riders to focus on the process rather than the end destination; it is not just a way to get from A to B but an experience unto itself. Bicyclists are constantly aware of their surroundings. Biking is also an incredible source of endorphins, it demands an intimacy with the road and with one's city, and it encourages personal connections with the community.

When Stoscheck arrived at Macalester in 2003, Mac Bike was in hibernation. She and her biking peers have since resuscitated the student organization. To promote accessibility, Mac Bike offers a Bike Share program through the Campus Center Info Desk. Members of the Macalester community can borrow a bike for free for up to three days, and the program serves as the model for similar bike share programs at St. Thomas and Hamline.

Mac Bike also holds an open shop every week where enthusiasts fix-up bikes and teach others about bicycle maintenance. The organization hosts annual bike tours to introduce first-years to the Twin Cities, and they sponsored a bike film festival on March 3. In the next few months, Mac Bike will collaborate with the Art Alliance for a celebration of the wholesomeness of biking and art, hit the road with St. Thomas bikers for an alley-cat race, and join MPIRG in hosting a critical caffeine bike ride.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Safe urban biking/biking confidence workshops offered for free or very cheap especially targeted at women and youth, and the creation of support groups</li> <li>-Bike Buddy programs to encourage new bikers</li> <li>-Education for girls (and boys) at a young age about the benefits of bike transportation; extensive curriculum in schools (elementary through high school)</li> <li>-Recycle-A-Bicycle and Earn-A-Bike programs at community bike shops to provide more low-income people with affordable bikes and bike maintenance services</li> <li>-Subsidize bikes and bike carriages for certain eligible groups of marginalized women (i.e. recent immigrants, torture or assault survivors, etc.)</li> <li>-More secure and free bike parking in diverse locations (not centered only in business districts, but also at locations women are likely to go such as schools, day-care, grocery stores, etc.)</li> <li>-Public/community bike shops with free mechanic classes, possibly some of them "Women and transgendered folks" only.</li> <li>-School bike mechanical curriculum that is sensitive to this cultural phenomenon (of women being less encouraged to do mechanical work)</li> <li>-Participatory planning processes, with a feminist approach in order to really include the marginalized voices in planning processes</li> <li>-Paradigm shift from car-centric to</li> </ul>
Women are generally poorer and therefore have less access to transportation	
Given gender-roles, women are expected to do both productive and reproductive work; therefore they commonly make chain trips (i.e. shopping to school, to work, to child-care, etc...)	
Women generally have less confidence in mechanics/self-maintenance of bicycles which prevents them from using a bike more often	
Planning is often (unconsciously) male-centric, and car-centric planning (which is very popular) tends to benefit men (who have more access to cars)	





As you can see, there are many more issues in this project that I could outline in a short article, but it is important for each and every one of us to get involved, tell our friends and neighbors and bring our important issues to the table to discuss and get on board with the project. Here are some ways to get involved and learn more about the issue:

**Metropolitan Council:** Arlene McCarthy, 651-602-1754, [Arlene.mccarthy@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Arlene.mccarthy@metc.state.mn.us)

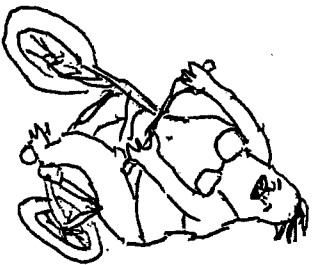
**Community Advisory Committee (made up of community representatives)**

meets every third Thursday of the month at 5:00 pm  
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CAC/CAMembers.htm>  
 Phone: 651-602-1140  
 Public Comment Line: 651-602-1500

**Metro Transit**  
 Mark Fuhrmann, 651-349-7513,  
[mark.fuhrmann@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:mark.fuhrmann@metc.state.mn.us)

**Central Corridor Project Manager: (Steve Morris)**  
 RCRA  
 Suite 6560 RCGC-West  
 50 West Kellogg Blvd.  
 St. Paul MN 55102  
 651-266-2784  
[Steve.Morris@ccorramsey.mn.us](mailto:Steve.Morris@ccorramsey.mn.us)

**The Central Corridor:** <http://www.centralcorridor.org/index.asp>  
**City of St. Paul website:** <http://www.stpaul.gov/initiatives/centralcorridor/>  
**Sources:**  
 The Central Corridor: <https://www.centralcorridor.org/index.asp>  
 City of St. Paul website:  
<http://www.stpaul.gov/initiatives/centralcorridor/>



Bike movements, bike shops, bike rides are typically male-dominated and can be very intimidating to women	non-motorized and transit-oriented planning is needed -A gender-equity approach to collecting data to determine planning, and to monitoring are also necessary in achieving gender-equity in transportation systems -bike movement organizers should be conscious of gender equity and integrate it into their tactics and strategies
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\*Note that each city is unique and no solution will fit all cities perfectly. These are general ideas that must be tailored to each unique context.  
 \*\*The author of this document recognizes that gender is a very complicated and diverse, and has chosen to use the term "men" and "women" for simplicity  
 \*\*\*Note also that this document does not support the promotion of these gender-roles, but rather a recognition that they exist and a demand that they be accounted for.

**New Language for Saint Paul Bike Plan:**  
 Only about one-third of all cyclists in Saint Paul are women, although they make up one half of the population. Specific actions need to be taken in order to encourage and enable more women to use the bicycle as a form of transportation. Gender equity must be taken into account in planning processes and implementation. Some gender equalizing tactics might include more safety lighting on bike paths, free "safe urban biking" workshops for new women riders, bike boulevards with bike right-of-way for women riders carrying children and packages, and much more. Please see matrix (above) for more detailed solutions.

**Non-Planning Solutions might include:**  
 \*A recognition of gender in NGO and grassroots movements' bike advocacy projects  
 \*Gender focused research  
 \*Conferences, events, grassroots groups that recognize the need to get more women and other marginalized people biking.



One of the things I wound up loving about being with a bike racer was learning how to bike, and how that really creates solitary time for you to reflect on things.  
 -Sheryl Crow

## Why I Bike to Work...

I like to ride my bike as much as I like to drive - psych waiting in traffic makes me crazy sitting in my car makes me lazy but biking past cars makes me laugh it's like I'm a movie and they're a photograph it gives me time to think about the day notice the neighbors, stop and say "hey" I'm able to get work out of my system between work and home biking's my transition I can bike and bike as far as I want to On pavement, grass wherever I need to The freedom I have makes me smile I feel so free, like a kid, juvenile Not a care in the world that biking can't fix It's a healthy, cheap way to get my kicks I feel healthier - so does my community The reasons are really elementary More pollution means much worse air Asthma, pollutants it's so unfair And wars won't start so I can ride But oil - that's a story the U.S. wants to hide if we all just drove a little bit less These are some things we wouldn't regret: breathing better, going faster and being healthy world peace could then be a priority I bike because it makes me feel great I can go when I want - I never have to wait For a friend, a parking spot, a ride, or the bus it's easy and there's no fuss I bike for fun, for me and for you It's really easy, you should bike more too!



Women! Are you interested in joining a group for bike rides and activism? Join the Sassette Bike Gang. Email [sassettebikegang@gmail.com](mailto:sassettebikegang@gmail.com) to join.



## **Something new is coming to town**

By Christina Heard

You may not realize, but there are going to be some drastic changes taking place on University Avenue, that no matter who you are, you will be influenced. What is this drastic change? Well, the Central Corridor project is coming to town for better or for worse.

The Central Corridor is an area roughly four blocks north and south of University Avenue, which begins near the State Capitol in downtown St. Paul. It is an eleven mile transit route which runs along University Avenue past the city limits through the University of Minnesota and ends in downtown Minneapolis. It has been proposed to build a light rail transit system along University Avenue, connecting the two downtowns.

There are many ways you can look at this issue. You may think it is good because you have seen how well received and useful the Hiawatha line is and apply the same reasoning, or you may live close to University Avenue in St. Paul and with the incoming development your rent is going to rise in efforts to renew the neighborhood and you will soon have to move from your beloved home. With this new transit project, Metro Transit will have to cut some bus lines in order to fund the project, and that bus by your house on the other side of town may no longer be there. Or instead of directing money towards the light rail, why doesn't Metro Transit improve all bus lines so that you do not have to wait an hour for a bus on a Sunday afternoon. There are many more questions such as will businesses along University will be affected during construction processes, will this affect property taxes, gentrification issues, displacement issues, and will it be accessible for everyone including people who are hearing-impaired, children, the elderly, and bicyclists?

This estimated \$930 million project began after years of discussions and community meetings, and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released April 2006 by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. On June 6, 2006 the Central Corridor Coordinating Committee voted that light rail be the locally preferred alternative for the Central Corridor. Currently community meetings are still occurring and many of the major decisions for the plan are taking place.

Alley cat races are quite different than road races or criteriums (think spandex, lots and lots of colorful spandex). These races typically have around a dozen or so stops, and tasks must be completed or information must be collected at each stop. At 5:45p, the manifest was distributed. There were fifteen stops. We had fifteen minutes to plan our route. At each stop, tasks had to be completed (e.g., obtain stamp and poker card or create a piece of art) or information collected (e.g., identify the flags at Shiner's hospital). I was pretty familiar with the locations of most stops and decided to plan the first five and see where we were at that point. I didn't know how my son would like it, you see. I definitely wanted to make the required art stops and hit Trotter's café...

6:00p - we're off! I was surprised that the race started on time - delighted, actually. My son was anxious to get started. We had the trailer open, and Tre (my five year old son) had his green flag a-wavin'. First, we went to the Dunn Brothers at Lake St. and W. River Road (yes, this is in Minneapolis - an odd choice of stop for a St. Paul race) to obtain the exact address, which cannot be obtained from the building's exterior nor from the employees. Then, we were off to the Shiners, where the lack of wind made it difficult to identify the Mexican flag (I really think it was indeed the Mexican flag). After Shiners, we went to Trotters, where we purchased an oatmeal raisen/craisen cookie (after a pretty long wait in line, sadly), and a very yummy cookie it was! Then, we picked up our poker card and stamp and continued on. Then, we started climbing Marshall in order to find out what a sign on a fence just south of the intersection of Marshall and Albert said.... Don't drive on the XXXX (grass). Yes, going east on Marshall qualifies as a climb when one is pulling an occupied trailer!

After this, the order of all the stops starts to get a little fuzzy. Honestly, I might not quite have the order of the first few stops quite right above. At one of the cafés, I did trade / share a little information with a few other bikers... I also consulted with someone as to where exactly a stop on St. Kate's campus was. In the end, we accomplished 11 of the 13 stops although we obtained information for all 13 stops. Overall, I had a super good time - I rode hard and got sweaty. Tre told me he loved the race and says he wants to do it again.

Sadly, I could not attend the post-race party as the five-year old has a bedtime that must be observed - or we pay the price the next day!

## The Top 11 Reasons To Ride a Bike

1. It's fun
    - a. I feel a sense of freedom I don't feel in a car, bus or walking
    - b. it is a stress relieving way to start or end the day
    - c. it makes me happy
  2. It's environmental
    - a. biking doesn't pollute
    - b. a four mile trip by bicycle keeps about 15 pounds of pollutants out of the air we breathe
    - c. motor vehicles give off more than half of all carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions in Minnesota.
    - d. bikes are quiet
  3. It's inexpensive
    - a. bicycling costs 1% as much as driving on an annual basis
    - b. cities and businesses pay \$50 per bike for a bike rack; \$2,200 to construct a single auto parking-lot space and \$12,500 to construct a single parking garage space.
    - c. Biking more and driving/busing less = more tax-free disposable income in your pocket.
    - d. I get my exercise by biking not by buying a gym membership
  4. It's easy
    - a. it's easier to stop and support a local business, explore a neighborhood or make multiple short errands
    - b. parking is free, easy to find, and close to your destination
    - c. 40% percent of all trips in U.S. are within two miles of home
    - d. you can put your bike on buses and the train
  5. It saves space
    - a. About 13 bikes can be parked in one car parking space
    - b. a 100-foot right of way (12 lanes) is required in order to serve 40,000 automobiles per hour; an 8-foot right of way (1 lane) is required to serve 40,000 bicycles per hour
- Pavement was invented for bicycles, not cars, and it is fun to use it for its original intent.

- a. bicycling is the most efficient form of transportation ever invented
- b. when you drive, 95% of the energy goes towards moving the CAR – not the cargo/passenger; when you bike about 80% of the energy goes towards moving the cargo/passenger on the bike
- c. trips under 3 miles in the city is faster than EVERY other possible method of transport: car, bus, walking.

7. It's healthy

- a. It's good for your heart (heart disease is the number 1 killer in the U.S. and biking is one of the top three exercises for improving cardiovascular fitness).
- b. it's impossible to get motion sick on a bike
- c. Motor vehicle emissions can contribute to breathing and heart problems along with an elevated risk of cancer.

10 years ago, doctors said it was unhealthy for women to ride bikes, can you believe the misogyny?

8. It's safe (when you wear your helmet)

- a. per mile, bicycling is safer than driving
- b. The benefits of cycling have been calculated to outweigh the risks by around 20:1
- c. I feel more safe biking than I do walking or waiting for the bus.

9. It builds community

- a. you can talk to other cyclists and pedestrians
- b. you can get to know how streets, neighborhoods and cities connect
- c. The more I bike, the less I pollute the air for my neighbors to breathe

10. It's respectable

- a. I get way more respect biking than driving or busing from my co-workers
- b. People think you're a super hero if you ride to work in the rain or snow

11. It's peaceful

- a. It's a fun activity to do with family, friends and children
- b. No wars have been started so I can bike more



Photo by levi mpis, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/levimpis/>

The Tax Man Cometh Alleycat Bike Race: A Race Report

By Lee Penn

Host: BEAST (Bike Enthusiasts at St. Thomas)

Date: Friday, April 13, 2007

Result: 44th out of around 60 entrants – not bad for a commuter bike with occupied trailer; winner of smelly markers for collaborative art by my son and me; and two pairs (jacks and fives), which were not good enough to beat three aces, unfortunately.

Ways to win: This race had three ways of "winning", two of which did not require sheer speed. So it wasn't all about competition. Mainly, the race was super fun!

Friday the thirteenth – what a great day for a race! I rode home from work and picked up my commuter bike, trailer, and son. He and I then rode to St. Thomas and registered for the race. This was my first ever alley cat race. The average bike was a fixie or single gear, and I was the only person who arrived with a child in a trailer. That was cool with me. I wasn't in it to win by way of speediness! On the way, I shed my outer layer because it was so delightfully warm and sunny! There was a wide range of racers, ranging from folks with their fixies to me with my trailer. I was NOT the only one in spandex, although we numbered few!

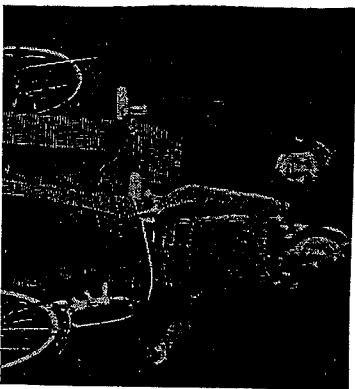
As the weather's gotten warmer and I've switched over to my more sensitive road bike, I've been thinking about how much I enjoy being able to feel my surroundings on a bicycle. And then I started thinking about all the ways our society insulates us from life. It's pretty clear that in a car you're insulated from cold, rain, and other cars, all good things to avoid, but you lose a lot as well. Fresh air, of course (though "fresh" is arguable if you're on the road with cars, I'll get to that later), but what about sound? I recently had to borrow a car to take my grandma someplace, and I was freaked out by having to change lanes without being able to hear if there was someone already in that lane. I like being able to hear snippets of conversation on the street and not-yet-visible concerts I could be attending. Then there's smell of course. You can get a good whiff of that great hardware store smell as you bike by Wehna Hardware, or cruise by the New French Bakery as slowly as possible, but I doubt those smells make it through the vents of your car.

I don't want to be insulated. We're insulated too much as it is. From the seasons with our cars and homes. From lifelong vitality with our retirement accounts. From disease and disaster with our insurance plans (or so we think). From the passage of time with our hyper schedules. And from life with our jobs that make us wake up despondent in the mornings.

Biking de-insulates you. In the good ways mentioned above, and in necessary ways. A cyclist once told me that while he was pulling his son in a bike trailer a guy in a car pulled over to express concern that the kid was inhaling too much exhaust, being down so close to the pavement. The cyclist pointed out that if his car wasn't creating that exhaust, his son wouldn't be breathing it. Cars insulate us from the immediate effects they're creating, but the pollution is going to get us in the long run. We should peel off some of the layers of insulation so that we're actually living in the environment we're creating. It looks different on the inside.

urn of the Century Bike Feminism Haiku:  
to more chaperones.

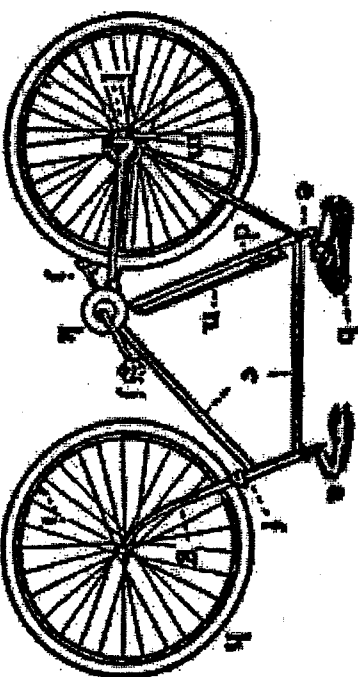
Women bike for social change;  
challenge clothes and roles.



## THE GREASE PIT:

Were you one of those people who took the bicycling survey and said that your top deterrents from bicycling were bicycle affordability or maintenance costs? Or did your bike get stolen and you're too frustrated to buy a new one? Stop by the Grease Pit! It's a collectively-run community bike shop where you can get a bike or fix the one you have for cheap to free. Recently moved to 1507 South 6th Street in Cedar-Riverside, it's right on the Hiawatha light rail bike trail at the Cedar-Riverside rail stop. Open 6-9pm Monday-Thursday and 3-6pm on weekends, they have tools you can use to fix your bike. They won't fix your bike for you, they'll teach you how to fix it yourself, which is oh-so-much better. Ask for cash donations or shop service in exchange for parts. Using the tools is free, although chipping in a few bucks towards rent is always appreciated. If you're starting from scratch (as in "bike-less"), they have used bikes they've fixed up that you starting at \$50, or you can go down in the basement, pick out a cute frame, and start putting one together yourself, just how you want it. If you want a totally free bike, build two and they keep one and you get the other as your very own. For more info, go to

[www.greasepitbikes.com](http://www.greasepitbikes.com)



## Bicycle.

a, handlebar; b, saddle; c, frame; d, front wheel; e, fork; f, front fender; g, front fork; h, front fender; i, front wheel; j, front fender; k, front fender; l, rear wheel; m, rear fender; n, rear fender; o, rear wheel; p, rear fender; q, rear fender; r, rear wheel; s, rear fender; t, rear wheel; u, rear fender; v, rear wheel; w, rear fender; x, rear wheel; y, rear fender; z, rear wheel.

## SIBLEY BIKE DEPOT

**Sibley Bike Depot** is a non-profit organization committed to building a state where biking and walking connects people and places.

**Recycling:** Reconditioning donated bikes for resale and reuse in our "earn-a-bike" program. Sibley offers discounted used parts and bicycles in exchange for a donation or shop service.

**Education:** Teaching adults and children safety, commuting, and bicycle repair skills.

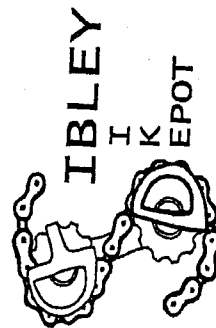
**Equality:** Promoting cycling to people of all ethnicities and genders. Everyone has the right to ride a bike. Women and people of color are encouraged to visit and volunteer at the shop.

**Advocacy:** Representing bicyclists' needs at government meetings. Our monthly newsletter keeps the public informed on critical issues affecting the non-motorized community.

**Art & Community:** Sponsoring bicycle art exhibits, film series, and group rides.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, all contributions are 100% tax deductible.

**Donations of time, skill, bicycles, parts, and money are always appreciated.**



### WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BIKE BUILDING, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR?

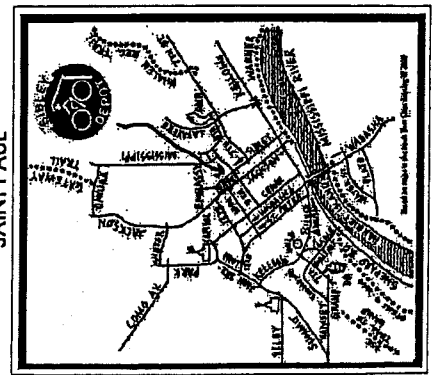
Volunteer in a laid back environment at Sibley Bike Depot

Call 651-222-2080 for more information  
(Experience is not necessary)

#### SHOP HOURS:

Monday	11:30-6:30
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	11:30-7:30
Thursday	Closed (appointment only)
Friday	11:30-4:30
Saturday	10:00-4:00
Sunday	Closed (10-2 Volunteers Only)

509 SIBLEY STREET  
SAINT PAUL



<http://www.bikeped.org>

## Bike to Work Week!

By Lee Penn

CARS should be the ALTERNATIVE form of transportation. For one week, that is just the ideal! National Bike-to-Work Week is May 14 -18, 2007.

The 2007 Twin Cities Bike/Walk to Work Day will take place on Friday, May 18th, 2007. This regional event encourages commuters to bike and walk to work. Two celebrations will be held from 6:30 am to 8:30 am, one in downtown Minneapolis and the other in downtown St. Paul. The Minneapolis event will be held on the Hennepin County Government Center Plaza, and the St. Paul event will be held in Rice Park. Upon arrival participants are greeted by a band, receive a free breakfast and promotional gifts, and are able to browse related goods and services at vendor booths.

Check out

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles/20070327volunteer.asp> for information about both celebrations and information about how you can get involved!

Ride your bike! A list and links to maps of potential group bike rides converging upon both events can be found at the above website. So far in Minneapolis, potential bike rides are beginning in the Cedar Riverside, East Harriet, Hiawatha, Keewaydin, Lind - Bohanan, Longfellow, Northeast Park, Northrop, and Sheidan neighborhoods. To see where additional rides are departing, including rides in St. Paul and several suburbs, visit the website above.

The above was adapted, with permission, from a posting by Shaun Murphy ([shaun.murphy@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:shaun.murphy@ci.minneapolis.mn.us)). Shaun is coordinating ride leaders to the Minneapolis event.

In addition, Alex Stokman ([alex@saintpaulparking.com](mailto:alex@saintpaulparking.com)) is coordinating ride leaders to the St. Paul event.

I attended the Minneapolis event in both 2005 and 2006 - with my son. He and I rode with a group to downtown Minneapolis using my commuter bike and trailer. We had a blast eating terrific food from local restaurants and went away with great swag both years. This year, we are leading a ride from the Longfellow neighborhood (W. River Road and 36th St, to be exact). What a great way to start our school- and workday!

April 29th was my first Ironman bike race ever. I am not a professional racer suited up in lycra and a fancy bike, but a woman who wanted to test my limits on how far I could bike. My friend Sara and I trained a bit, with one really long bike ride from Minneapolis to Oakdale, but she was far more prepared than I was. The day began at 6:30 a.m. When she picked me up and my first thoughts were I did not want to do this as I am the last thing from a morning person, but we got there around 8 a.m. in Lakeville after passing many cars with bikes on racks on them. My friend Cali had helped me fix my bike at the Grease Pit, which everyone should check out and support, especially women as I feel many of us are intimidated about mechanics and usually end up taking our bikes to bike shops just to let men fix them, when we should be learning for ourselves. So we get there and have to switch the front and rear tires on my bike which proves very difficult especially when the rear tube pops. Since we are doing the 100 mile race, it is recommended to start no later than 8 a.m., so Sara starts and I head off to search for a new tube. I end up getting one from Freewheel and while I am waiting to pay my \$6 I notice that every repair tent has exactly one woman and one man working. So awesome! Some men feel that women should not work on their bikes, cars etc. and loudly voice this sexism but I didn't hear any of this that day and it started my ride out on an even higher note. To push myself I didn't stop at any of the rest stops except the last one where I met up with my friend and we biked the last 17 miles together from Northfield back to Lakeville. I ended up adding an extra 17 miles to push myself and am so glad I did so. It was amazing to ride a lot by myself being grateful that as a woman I could ride by myself with no male escort, go as fast or slow as I wanted etc. I passed many men young and old and women too, and it felt great. I didn't have a fancy bike just a love for biking. I definitely felt a sense of accomplishment and pride and was even more lifted when I was hurting and my legs felt like they were on fire to see other women biking. I mean all types of women biking. Older, younger, fat, fit. It was awesome. There are many myths and barriers to biking and even though the majority of bikers were straight white guys with \$3,000 bikes to go on their \$40,000 SUVs, there were young people riding BMXs, women with child seats, unicyles and the best was this fat woman who made a shirt she was wearing that said, "you may be riding faster than me but my fat ass looks better on my bike than yours." It truly was amazing and I can't push enough to women to test stereotypes on bike repair, push the limits on what is the "cool image of cyclists" and take back your personal safety and

By Ruthie Hansen

## Bike Shorts Changed My Life

A friend asked me if I wear bike shorts. HELL NO! This ass? You'll see me climbing the Eiffel Tower in a Superman suit before you see me parading all over town in spandex that highlights every dimple on my cellulite and encases my thighs like two juicy sausages overflowing their skin-tight casings! Then I started biking more. Lots more. Several hours per day, more. And my butt started to hurt—not the way it hurts when I ride on an unfamiliar saddle or hop on my bike after a couple of months of not riding and I haven't built up my butt calluses yet. Just uncomfortable. Squashed. So, I decided to give bike shorts a try. I went on eBay and ordered a pair (new with tags, you sicko, not used. Used would be gross). And you know what? Bike shorts changed my life. A++++! Would buy again! I wear them (with no underwear) under a skirt, so I can get over the way they look and fully appreciate the way they FEEL. Which, if you haven't figured it out already, is GREAT. It feels like biking while sitting on a La-Z-Boy recliner. No longer do I have to pedal standing up as I coast down a particularly bumpy hill. No longer am I biking lopsided, positioning myself carefully an inch to one side of the seat to spare squashing my crotch. I can sit on my bike seat and be comfortable! Hallelujah! Furthermore, bike shorts solve another important world problem: plumber's butt. Does your ass crack show when you're leaning over on your drop bars hurtling through rush hour traffic? Are you constantly reaching back to try to tug your shirt down and your shorts up? Have you ever gotten a sunburn over a thin strip of your lower back where your shirt doesn't QUITE meet your pants? Me too!! Whoever designs bike shorts must be really smart, because they took all of these issues into account! Not only do my bike shorts pad my crotch and keep my ass from getting sore, they're cut really high in the back so they cover my crack and protect me from getting sunburned! If you don't already have some, I highly recommend them. Maybe bike shorts will change your life, too!



## I Bike to Feel Safe

By Ruthie Hansen

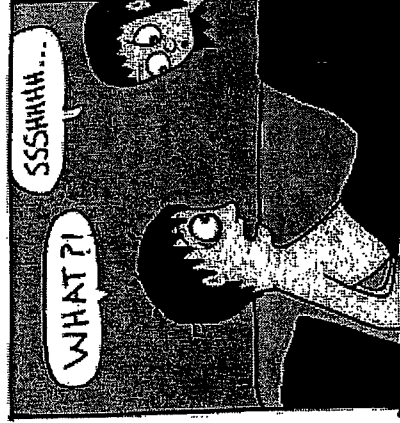
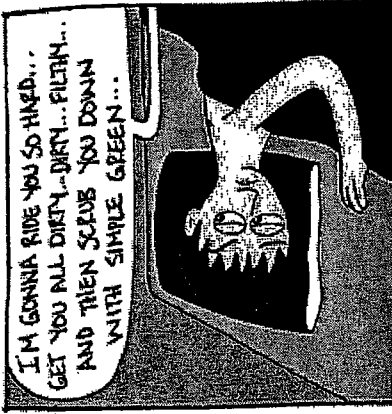
I became a bike commuter in college because I like to sleep as late as I possibly can in the morning, and I realized that I could bike the six blocks from my apartment to my college campus in ten minutes less than it would take me to walk that same distance. I bought a bike for \$40 from a Chinese grad student who was moving back to China. It was a silver mountain bike, and within a week it was stolen. Welcome to Chicago! Untazed, I bought another one. Then a month later, another. I guess I'm kind of a slow learner that way. It didn't happen all at once, but slowly over the course of a year or so, I started getting more and more attached to my bike. I liked that I could ride to a party, lock my bike outside, and then whenever I felt like leaving I could hop on my bike and take off. Picturing it right now I can feel the suppressed whoop of glee in the back of my throat—it's late, the city streets are empty, the alcohol in my blood makes me feel wild, and the bike makes me feel free. I like that I don't have to rely on a bus, wait for a friend to walk me home or some skeezy dude who offers to walk me back to my place. I'm not afraid to be out at night because the bike makes me too fast for muggers.

When I first moved to Chicago I was a little worried about muggers. I was afraid to walk alone at night. I double-checked that the door to my apartment was locked at all times. By my fifth year in the city, I had soaked up plenty of big city bravado, and I no longer worried about getting mugged. Of course it had to happen. It was a hot evening in August, a friend had invited me to a reading on the north side, and I took the bus up to meet her. Afterwards we sat on the curb outside the venue and ate pizza and drank root beer. It was a beautiful night. On my way back to my house I considered a few different routes. I could get off the train downtown and transfer to a bus, or I could stay on the train a little longer and catch a different bus in a somewhat rougher part of town. I hadn't decided what to do when the train rolled through downtown, so I stayed on and got off the red line train at Garfield... not exactly the safest spot in town. When I emerged onto the street my stomach sank—the bus stop was deserted, and I could see the back end of my bus receding into the distance. Shift. I crossed the deserted street to stand at the bus stop. The Garfield red line stop stands at the top of a freeway overpass. Even in the summer, the wind howling down the freeway makes it feel like the coldest place on earth. I was instantly afraid.

I tried to talk some sense into myself: How much time have you spent standing at this stupid overpass in the middle of the night over the past five years? You've spent hours standing in this frigid spot, watching the taillights of the cars below flow together into a thick red stream of light. It sort of worked. Two young black guys rode by on bikes. Good for them, I thought. How nice to see inner city youth embracing the wonderful technology of the bicycle! They turned a wide arc through the empty street and rode over to me. "I said hi," one of them spat.

## Bike Time

By Julia Wertz (fartparty.com)



What the guys at the bike shop don't tell you:

Hey ladies... do you get a rash when you bike in the hot summer days? I did and my male doctor told me, "don't bike when it's hot out." Then, my female doctor told me, "use corn starch and get some bike shorts if you need to." Corn starch works great - sprinkle it on right before you ride and you'll be good to go.



In my architecture thesis, I explored how buildings can better engage streets and facilitate their social role. But design can only take us so far. In the end, a social street can only emerge through changed behavior.

I challenge you to redefine the street through your actions. Park your car. Bike and walk through the streets. Talk with the people you encounter. Pull your grill out of the backyard and onto the front stoop for a barbecue. Have a picnic on a boulevard. Host a block-party. With every step and pedal and conversation you take into the street, you are helping to reclaim our primary public space.



I like to hang out with my friends,  
ride my bike, dance, act stupid,  
sleep in and maybe read.  
—Rebecca Miller



"Hi!" I said back. The two kids whispered between each other. I could feel my wallet pressing against my leg through the pocket of my jeans. I became hyper aware of my messenger bag, and the brand new camera I had stashed in there. I felt stupid for standing alone in the ghetto at one in the morning with a thousand dollars worth of electronics on me. I felt guilty for assuming that these cute black teenagers were probably going to rob me. I wondered why they were waiting for the bus with me if they had bikes to ride around on. They stopped whispering and wheeled over to me, standing over their frames.

"Okay," said the bigger one, "here's what's going to happen. You're going to give us all your money, and we're not going to hurt you." My heart started racing.

"I don't have any money," I replied apologetically.

They looked at each other, uncertain. "You must have some money!" I pulled my wallet out of my pocket and flipped through it for them. Library card, student ID, drivers' license, credit card, receipts, a coupon...

"Do you want my cell phone?" I held out my phone on my open palm.

"Pff! No!" they weren't impressed with the phone. "Look in your pockets." They seemed to be getting more demanding. I hadn't screamed. I glanced around for help—a person, a cop car, a taxi, anyone. The street was vacant. Freeway traffic throbbed beneath us. I reached into the front pocket of my jeans and drew out a crumpled up receipt from the pizza restaurant I had been at earlier that day. There were a few dollars folded up with it.

"Here," I handed it over. They looked disgusted, but they took the money anyway and biked away.

"Have a nice day!" I shouted to their backs. Come back anytime! I instantly felt thrilled—I still had my camera! And angry—what gives them the right? And vulnerable—I have no rights here. Anyone can come up to me and ask me for anything and I have to give it, because I am standing here waiting for the bus and I cannot move. There is nowhere for me to go and nothing for me to do but continue to wait, standing passively at this bus stop feeling scared and helpless and immobile and pissed off. I waited another thirty minutes before the bus lumbered up and carried me home. I have never wanted my bike so badly in my life.

As muggings go it was really a delightful one—nobody was hurt, they didn't take my wallet or cell phone so I didn't have any paperwork to do afterwards. I lost very little cash. I did lose my sense of safety and my willingness to rely on public transportation to get my around. My attackers had the upper hand in every way. They were two. I was alone in their turf. More than that, they had **bikes!** They had the ability to move around and come and go as they pleased. Without my bike I was rooted in place, vulnerable. My bike isn't just my transportation, it's my independence. My safety. And ultimately, my freedom.

## Redefining Street

By Emily Wergin

What is a Street? What does it look like? What is it used for?

I'm really asking you these questions. Here is some space. Write your thoughts before you continue reading.

I began asking friends, family and classmates to define "street" as part of my architecture thesis. I am a biker, a pedestrian, and a bus rider. (Ok, and yes, I am also a frequent moocher-of-rides from my friends and family.) Through traversing Minneapolis' streets without a car, I have grown to feel that the street has potential to be so much more than it currently is.

While everyone I have talked with has a unique perspective on the concept "street," most focus on the street's role in facilitating transportation. When people talk about transportation, most of them talk about cars.

The street is . . .

"a passage for movement,"

"a way for people to get places,"

"a thoroughfare for transportation," and

"a spot for traffic to flow between closely spaced buildings."

"Street, by definition, implies cars."

However, some interviews have supported my perspective that the street should be something more than just infrastructure for traffic. Consider the definition one of my law-school friends proposed:

The street is "a public space . . . used for transport (car, bike, etc.) or to have a party on."

The street's role as a public social space is too often overlooked. As the primary public space in any city, the street's social role is as important as its role in the transportation system. Through our dependence on the automobile for movement, we have allowed that social role to be undermined.

## Bike Resources & Links:

Bike Feminist Organizations/Projects/Supporters:

Macletas in Santiago, Chile: [www.macleta.cl](http://www.macleta.cl)

Cycling Sisters in Chicago: <http://cyclingsisters.org/>

Plan B <http://bikeproject.org/>

Times-Up <http://times-up.org/index.php?page=bike-co-op>

Wombats <http://www.wombats.org/>

Article on women and bikes- Pudukkottai India:

[http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5564&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

[URL\\_ID=5564&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5564&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

Local Groups/Shops Working on Increasing Access to Bikes:

Sibley Bike Depot: [www.bikeped.org](http://www.bikeped.org)

The Grease Pit: <http://home.mn.rr.com/collectivecycle/>

Groups encouraging women to race and other women specific bike sites:

<http://www.velobella.org/>

<http://www.mwcmr.blogspot.com/>

[www.hubbikecoop.org](http://www.hubbikecoop.org)

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

Local Info./Advocacy Groups:

<http://www.mplsbikelove.com/forum/>

<http://twincitiesbike.org/>

Wellstone International High School Bike Club:

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/05/17/bikeschool/>

Other Important Links:

[www.bikebike.org](http://www.bikebike.org)

[www.bicas.org](http://www.bicas.org)

<http://www.transalt.org/info/toolsforlife/48resources.html>

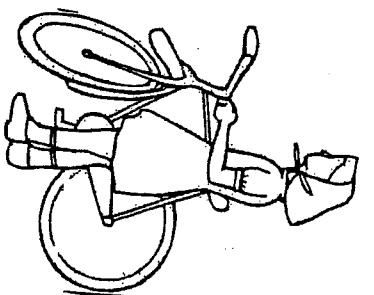
Women, Public Space and Bicycles:

[http://www.biciaccion.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=88&Itemid=0](http://www.biciaccion.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=88&Itemid=0)

[http://www.biciaccion.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=64&Itemid=0](http://www.biciaccion.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=64&Itemid=0)

Have More Important Bike Justice Links? Let me know please!  
[costoscheck@gmail.com](mailto:costoscheck@gmail.com)

bike shops here are hyper-masculine and often unfriendly toward people of other genders—I decided to facilitate an EXCO (Twin Cities' Experimental College [www.excotc.org](http://www.excotc.org)) class on it in order to learn from cyclists around the cities and also share what information I had gathered in my own research. I wanted to take a feminist lens (meaning a critical analysis of power and a desire to fight **all** forms of oppression) to this movement which I hold so dear to my heart. I asked Cail Jirsa to co-facilitate with me and to lead the mechanical aspect of the class so that we wouldn't just be sitting around talking about these issues, but actually doing things with our hands to empower ourselves as well. She graciously accepted the invitation. And so we began this journey of figuring this dilemma out, and we asked a lot of questions. What's the historical context of this gender inequality in biking? How is city design and planning gendered? Why do less women bike than men? How do various identities—not just gender, but race, class, ability, etc...—affect one's access or ability to bike safely? How does the alternative transportation and bike movement sometimes replicate systems of oppression or perpetuate privilege for the already privileged? Is the new environmental movement elitist—is the bike movement elitist? Are there any people of color leading the movement in the Twin Cities? If not, why and what needs to change? Through our own experiences, and through both quantitative and qualitative research we've found, we've come up with a lot of answers, and some of those are reflected in this zine, and hopefully will continue to be reflected in more zines and other publications to come. I had the idea to produce a zine as a class or collective because it would be away for the whole group to come around a creative project together in order to share our own experiences and research on the topic of feminism, equality, access and justice in the bike world. I hope that this zine will get some of these issues on the table so that we can start recognizing them as problems, and then start to move to action and find solutions. The bike movement is incredibly important in this historical moment of global climate change and increased pollution and congestion in cities, and it's so important that we in the movement check ourselves and our privilege constantly so as to not perpetuate inequalities and ecological harm that we are claiming we oppose. I am so happy that this group, which started as a more traditional "class", is taking form now as a collective of critical and passionate bike activists, and I am so excited for the work yet to come! Thanks to everyone who participated in this class—you've taught me so much, and thanks to YOU, for reading this! Please contact



**What is EXCO?**  
This zine is a class-selected final project for our Spring 2007 Bicycle Feminism class offered through EXCO:

Begun in the Spring of 2006 by Maccalister students as an alternative to the inequalities and injustices of higher education, EXCO strives to offer the Maccalister and surrounding community the opportunity to teach or learn in a space open to alternative education and all kinds of knowledge, including and beyond academic knowledge. Everyone can teach or take a class, and all classes are free. Learn how to take classes and teach classes at [www.excotc.org](http://www.excotc.org)



"Let's have a minute's silence for all those Americans who are currently sitting in traffic on the way to the gym to ride a stationary bicycle."

-Congressman Earl Blumenauer

## **Bike Feminism: Welcome to the Zine!** By Claire Stoscheck

### **Contributors**

**Ruthie Hansen** is a teacher, cyclist, and lover of all things cute and tiny. She'd like to ride bikes with you—how about it?  
ruthie@uchicago.edu

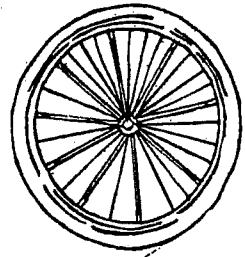
**Erika Sass** bikes for transportation, the environment, fun and justice. erikasass@gmail.com

**Breana Blalock** is really into biking and stuff. Her next tattoo will be a bike tattoo, for sure. Even getting run over by a car isn't enough to keep Breana off her bike—she's hard core like that.  
breanab@helloworld.com

**Lee Penn** is a bike commuter of nearly twenty years and a bike racer. She transports herself and her son wherever they need to go by bike. She sees bikes as a path to fitness and endurance, a teaching tool to promote an active and healthy lifestyle, a means of freedom from the high cost of car-ownership, and a way to significantly reduce one's individual carbon footprint.  
leepenn@hotmail.com

**Claire Stoscheck** is a bike feminist activist questioning a lot of things and trying to find ways to realize bike justice (and environmental justice) in our world.  
cstoscheck@gmail.com

**Emily Wergin** started biking so that she could save money when she went back to school. Because she has grown to love the city as experienced from her bicycle, she will continue biking after she graduates next month.  
wergi006@umn.edu



'Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving'

-Albert Einstein

I had been biking hardcore for four years, done a 1,000 mile tour and organized with my college's bike organization for a while when I went to Quito, Ecuador for study abroad. There I had an internship with Biciaccion (Bike Action) and started really getting involved in bike activism. I started noticing... as time went on... that I was one of the only women biking in Quito. Most of the women in the Biciaccion office wore heels and skirts to work and never biked. I noticed I was able to go on bike rides in the park at night with 'the guys' because I was an extranajera (foreigner)—from another culture, and therefore it was acceptable for me to do so. I noticed that although I saw some women biking when the city closed down all the streets for Ciclopaseo every 14 days, I almost never saw women biking in the trafficked streets for daily transportation, and when I did, they were often foreigners. I guess the trend didn't really hit me until I went to Bogotá, Colombia with some co-workers from Biciaccion to learn about and film the amazing bike movement there. Bogotá has some of the most incredible bicycle infrastructure in the entire world. Off-street bike paths connected by pedestrian bridges cover the vast majority of the city, and connect working class neighborhoods to working centers. It's a cyclist-infrastructure-geek's fantasy, and it's benefiting the working class as well as the upper classes. So, the safe space to ride apart from traffic to nearly anywhere city is there—everyone should be riding bikes to get to work, right? Well... from what I could see in my four days biking the Bogotá bike paths/lanes was that only a handful of women bike there. There are about 7 million residents in Bogotá, and about one million of them commute daily by bicycle. That's a huge amount. But I would venture to guess that only between 1 to 2 percent of those bicycle commuters are women. Why is this? What's going on here? Isn't this a...huge problem? If so, why is no one talking about it? These are the ideas that started going through my head... and when the seed was planted for the idea: we need some bici feminismo, I thought, some bike feminism, to start addressing the issue of gender as it relates to bike-use. Since then, the role gender plays in alternative transportation movements in general and the bike movement in specific has been on my mind... but I didn't know much about it, and wanted to learn more. So when I got back to the Twin Cities, and started learning more about the local bike situation and movement—like the fact that only 1/3 of local bike commuters are women, and that the

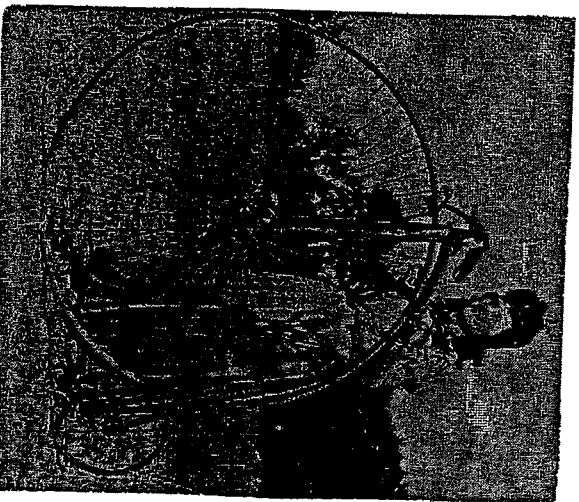
**Call Jirsa** is super into bikes. She likes riding them, building them, fixing them, teaching people about them, thinking about them, dreaming about them....

**Christina Heard** loves her bike. She has a nice smile and is a real nice girl.  
steens6510@yahoo.com

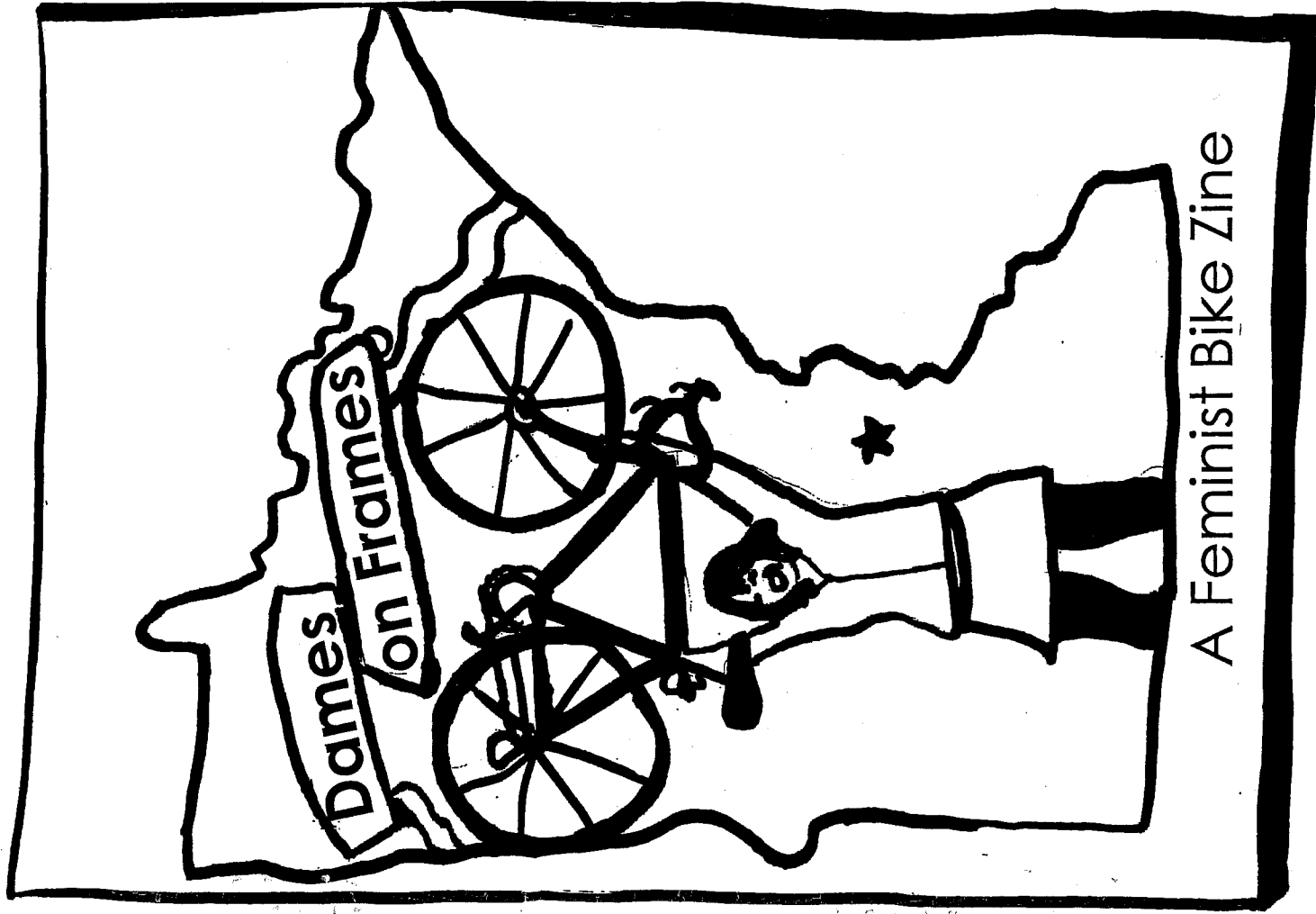
**Lalla** likes local music, neighborhood meetings, and free food. She didn't learn to ride a bike until she was 20, and just built her first road bike at the Grease Pit.

**Jason Tanzman** likes riding and fixing bikes. He has a beard and a ponytail.  
jtanzman@riseup.net

**Luke Holden** likes riding his bike and drawing stuff. Check out [detroittailinformation.com](http://detroittailinformation.com) for more of Luke's drawings and to order copies of his zines.  
farbutt2001@yahoo.com



"Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race."  
—H. G. Wells



Join us!  
Let's ride bikes!  
Contribute something to the next zine!  
[damesonframes@gmail.com](mailto:damesonframes@gmail.com)

2007

