

Coming Events

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FROSTBITE RIDES

* This winter is supposed to be milder than usual. So don't *
* let brisk air keep you from cycling. Every Sunday we meet *
* at a designated place and mutually decide the pace and des- *
* tination of the ride. There are no leaders and no arrows. *
* Instead, we offer you the chance to explore new places and *
* share in the camaraderie of winter cycling. Please bring *
* adequate clothing, tools, and a good set of maps. Remember, *
* all Frostbite Rides are "show-and-go". So please be on time, *
* or you may not find the main group. Have fun!

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JANUARY 23, TUESDAY, 7:30 P.M. - Club meeting at the Harvard Community Health Plan, 1611 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, between Inman and Harvard Squares. Debra Glassman will present a slide show and discussion about her experiences on Bikecentennial, the cross-country bicycle caravan with an emphasis on discovering rural America. Debra will join Mark Roseman in showing slides of their unusual Ireland bicycle trip. So if you're into Ireland or America of just plain biking, come on out. If you would like to have an informal dinner prior to the meeting, assemble in front of the HCHP at 6:30 p.m.

JANUARY 28, SUNDAY, 10:00 A.M. - Commemorate the first big snow storm of last year and thank your spokes that you ain't in Chicago. This show-and-go ride starts at the (in)famous Ed Trumbull Snowbank, Newton Corner, Washington Street and the Mass. Pike. It was at this snowbank that Ed led five snow-weary St. Bernards to safety after they had exhausted themselves delivering studded bike snow tires to stranded bicycle commuters. So happy to survive, these dogs no longer bark as a cyclist passes. Instead they yelp, "Bike! Bike!" The rest is history.

FEBRUARY 4, SUNDAY, 10:00 A.M. - Join the groundhog as he sheds his thermal wear to enjoy the sunshine. So ground your motor hog and get on that bike and ride,ride,ride! This show-and-go ride starts at Cleveland Circle, Beacon Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue, in Brookline.

FEBRUARY 6, TUESDAY, 7:30 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting at the Harvard Community Health Plan, 1611 Cambridge Street, Cambridge. Everyone is welcome to discuss the upcoming awards dinner, speaker series, club jersey, East Coast Bike Trail, LAW Legislative Fund, and rides schedule. Bring your suggestions and ideas.

FEBRUARY 11, SUNDAY, 10:00 A.M. - Celebrate the Presidents' birthdays with this show-and-go ride from Quincy, the city of Presidents. Meet at Hancock Street side of the Quincy Center M.B.T.A. station.

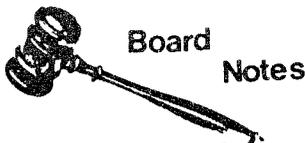
FEBRUARY 18, SUNDAY, 10:00 A.M. - Show-and-go ride at Cambridge Common, just north of Harvard Square. See if you can find the spot where George Washington assembled the troops.

FEBRUARY 20, TUESDAY, 7:30 P.M. - Club meeting at the Harvard Community Health Plan, 1611 Cambridge Street, Cambridge. Cycling demands that your body be in good shape and that you eat the right foods. But does this mean you should never eat junk foods? Come and hear Nancy Clark talk about Nutrition and Bicycling. Nancy is an avid cyclist and a nutritionist. She will give us some practical advice on taking care of our bodies. Many of you have expressed interest in this subject, so don't let this opportunity slip away. An informal dinner will be held beforehand. Meet in front of the HCHP at 6:30 and proceed to the S&S Deli in Inman Square.

FEBRUARY 25, SUNDAY, 10:00 A.M. - This is it: the end of February. Spring starts next week, Eastern Standard Bicycle Time. So let your neighbors know that YOU are a true cyclist. You're going to ride your bike in the depths of February and show the world that winter is a state of mind. Meet at VFW Parkway and Independence Drive, the old Westbrook Village Shopping Center, for this show-and-go ride to wherever.

MARCH 4, SUNDAY, 10:00 A.M. - Roar in like a feline and join us on a show-and-go ride starting from Watertown Square.

APRIL - Annual Awards Banquet at a friendly Chinese Restaurant in Lexington. Surprise speaker and door prizes galore. See next issue for more details. Probable cost: \$7:50 - \$8.00 per person.



Board Notes

The Jersey Committee presented its designs to the Board. The Board picked a red jersey with a blue and white vertical stripe on the front and the club logo on back. These jerseys will be available to the membership in a month. Various materials are available; cost will be \$20 - \$30.

The Social Committee is gearing up for the Awards Banquet. Bike shops will be solicited for door prizes. The Percy Anderson award winner will be chosen by a committee composed of past winners.

Members will be asked to contribute to the LAW Legislative Fund when they apply or renew.

The East Coast Bike Trail will be marked by our club for a section north of Boston.

Travel by Bike

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Freewheeling Thoughts

Before I get into my mental meanderings for this month there was one outstanding omission from my discussion of successful programs in my January column. In addition to good publicity, a good rides program, social events, etc., I neglected to mention the attractiveness of the dealer discounts that were offered for the first time last year. We owe considerable gratitude to those dealers who have supported and cooperated in the discount program. Not only have they offered us a significant economic break, one that can easily pay back a significant portion of our dues, but more important for us as a club is the implicit recognition this support and sponsorship gives us. It wouldn't hurt to express our individual thanks to these dealers (listed on the back page) when we visit them.

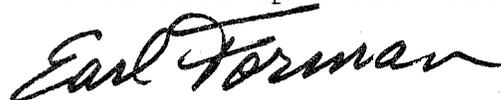
As I sit writing this it is the fourth sloppy Sunday in a row when I have been frustrated in my desire to get some riding in. I know that some of our members cycle in anything short of a blizzard, but after a couple of accidents on ice I've curtailed my winter cycling when the slippery stuff is around. So far this winter there hasn't even been any cross country skiing for partial compensation. So I've been forced to rely on some morning jogging (tough on these middleaged joints and tendons) and an occasional session on the rollers (considering the mind numbing state of the TV available while roller riding in the evenings you can tell how desperate for exercise I am). Among the thoughts that I occupy myself with during my jogging and roller sessions are plans and resolutions for the coming season.

First I'm hoping I can get back to some bike commuting. I think I've almost worked out a schedule that will allow me to use a bike at least three days a week. Commuting was one of my favorite cycling pleasures until my work assignments fowled things up. The incentive for bike commuting now are greater than ever. Not only is the day started with my favorite form of exercise but I get my day planned out on the way before I even get there, do my part to reduce air pollution and save money to boot. Given the state of the oil supply at this writing, bike commuting is becoming not only an economic windfall but almost a patriotic act. Some I know feel that the oil crunch is such that bike commuting will at last come into its own and that significant numbers of Americans will see the same light that we committed bikies have already seen. I'm becoming more pessimistic on that issue, particularly after seeing Greece this fall. There, a country that is just starting to come out of the economic doldrums, and with gas costing about 60 cents a liter (more than \$2.00 a gallon), is clearly being infected with the American disease - car craziness. Everyone in Greece who can possibly afford one is buying cars and burning up gas and polluting their cities by aimless driving. So I don't expect Americans to give up their cars for bikes or public transit unless forced to by rationing of gas or a major depression.

All this means is that the issue still is and will be if I am correct, the sensitization and education of the American motorist to the presence, needs and desirability of sharing the roadways with us, the committed bicyclists. Right now most car drivers view cyclists as a pain in the rear, someone using his roadway that forces him to slow down, be extra careful and in general disrupts his carefree driving. And some of us feed his irritation with erratic and irresponsible actions in traffic so that the car driver with his limited maneuverability can not anticipate our actions.

So my second resolution is to absorb and practise more of the techniques of John Forester's "Effective Cycling". They are based on an understanding and practise of the logic of the bicycle as a responsible and predictable vehicle in the traffic mix. Implicit is the need for the cyclist to make his intended maneuvers known in advance and also implicit is the need for cyclists to obey traffic rules and regulations. I'd like to see more cyclists resolve to ride more responsibly. It is my belief that the only way we can neutralize the "get em off the road" attitude that many car drivers have is to cycle responsibly and engage in the long slow but crucial effort to educate our motoring friends that when we bicycle we take up little road space, don't compete for parking space, reduce the demand and therefore price for gasoline and further don't add to the pollution of their breathing air.

My third resolution is just to do more riding. I'd like to explore more of the area and maybe map out some new rides or variations that we can all share on pleasanter future Sundays. So on this particular rainy, snowy Sunday I'll have to content myself with daydreaming about rides to come or better still, leave this paper and pencil and get to the solvent and grease and get those bearings done in anticipation. See you on the road.



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Gadgets

Innovations

Lighting Systems

Touring Items

Studded Snow Tires

Special Gearing Combinations

IF YOU HAVE ANY GOOD PRODUCTS, GADGETS, INNOVATIONS, OR CONCOCTIONS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH CRW MEMBERS, HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO REVEAL THEM!

W E W A N T Y O U R A R T I C L E S N O W !

HOW TRAFFIC LAWS AND POOR TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
CONTRIBUTE TO THE BICYCLIST AND MOTORIST
NIGHTMARE ON THE STREETS OF BOSTON

by John Springfield

Much has been written about the unsocialized way Boston drivers act when they get in or on their vehicles. I do not want to make excuses or condone this behaviour. But I maintain that there are official practices and laws that contribute to this unhealthy conduct of many Boston drivers.

First, I would like to point out that a bicycle is a vehicle in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Therefore, when I am talking about "drivers of vehicles", I am including drivers of bicycles. Boston bicycle drivers have to be considered along with the automobile drivers when analyzing the traffic. In general, drivers tend to be aggressive, selfish, discourteous, and narrow-minded. But why? Why is it that the same people can very different when not in traffic?

My theory is this: Boston street patterns, Mass. traffic laws, poor traffic engineering, and little enforcement virtually insure that drivers in Boston will be frustrated. This frustration leads to a highly competitive situation where everyone is out for himself, where it does not seem to pay to be courteous.

Let's look at the street patterns. Except for a small section of the Back Bay, there are no parallel streets with any kind of easy-to-remember naming conventions (numeric, alphabetic, etc). Sometimes non-connecting streets have the same name (Washington, Tremont, Boylston, etc.). Sometimes one street changes names for no apparent reason (Chestnut Hill becomes Market). And to compound the problem, many intersections are not marked. People give directions not by street names or route numbers, but by "squares" or "Star Markets" or other landmarks. So when the driver ends up in an unfamiliar part of town (and in Boston this is not hard to do), he is forced to keep only a passing interest in traffic while he is searching for a non-existent sign saying "Kenmore Square". The vehicle (car or bike) tends to wander and change speeds erratically.

But street patterns and names couldn't be enough to explain the confused driver. Traffic lights are probably THE most significant cause of confusion. Massachusetts is one of the few (maybe the only) states that dares give you a regular circular red light along side an assortment of green arrows. Legally this Christmas-like design means the driver can proceed in the direction of the green arrows; otherwise he must stop. Additionally, the green arrows do not guarantee you the right-of-way. One wonders how out-of-state drivers can realistically be expected to know this. And there ARE many non-Mass. drivers who use Boston roads. Mixed red and green lights cause some people to slam on their brakes, while others are seemingly running the "red" light. Since "red" lights can be run in some instances, its significance is reduced

in the eye of the driver. The brain does not automatically register a STOP when red lights appear.

But there is another problem with red lights: they last too long. One minute is too long to wait for a red light, especially if a major street is waiting for a side street. 30 second or 45 second lights make more sense. Also, there seem to be many unnecessary pedestrian lights in the middle of blocks. Most pedestrians walk any way they want with no regard for traffic rules. Drivers find themselves stopping at lights where they have to wait an excessively long period of time even though there is not cross traffic. Drivers tend to rush (dive?) for the next light in an attempt to beat the red so they won't have to wait. Sometimes they don't beat the red, but go through anyway to avoid waiting. As more drivers do it, the peer pressure to stop lessens. Indeed, one seems expected to run red lights.

Have you noticed how lane markings are ignored by many drivers? Drivers know that lanes are often too narrow for cars to safely drive next to each other, so cars take two lanes and bikes take a full lane to protect themselves. Then there is the old 3-for-2 trick -- suddenly 3 lanes become 2 lanes, with everyone scurrying to grab a lane. Bicycle drivers pray they won't find themselves forced into a parked car or the curb.

It wouldn't be too much of an exaggeration to say that Boston Police do not cite people for moving violations. They think their duty is to tow illegally-parked cars. Thus there is no legal sanction for running red lights, weaving in-and-out, or speeding. Car and bicycle drivers both know this.

So what do we do? Should we continue to let the law of the jungle rule our traffic habits? Is there anything that can be done to make driving a more cooperative and safe experience? I think so. It does not involve tearing down Boston and straightening the roads. Here are my suggestions:

- 1) Eliminate circular red lights that display with green arrows. If a left turn is to be restricted, use a green circular light with a small red arrow for left turns with a sign saying "left turn signal".
- 2) Eliminate stand-alone pedestrian walkways unless they can be demonstrated to be needed.
- 3) Reduce the waiting time for red lights to 30 or 45 seconds maximum for main streets.
- 4) Rename streets so there is never more than one street with the same name in a city.
- 5) Display street names at all intersections.
- 6) Display the U.S., Interstate, or Mass. route number more often so out-of-towners can guide themselves.

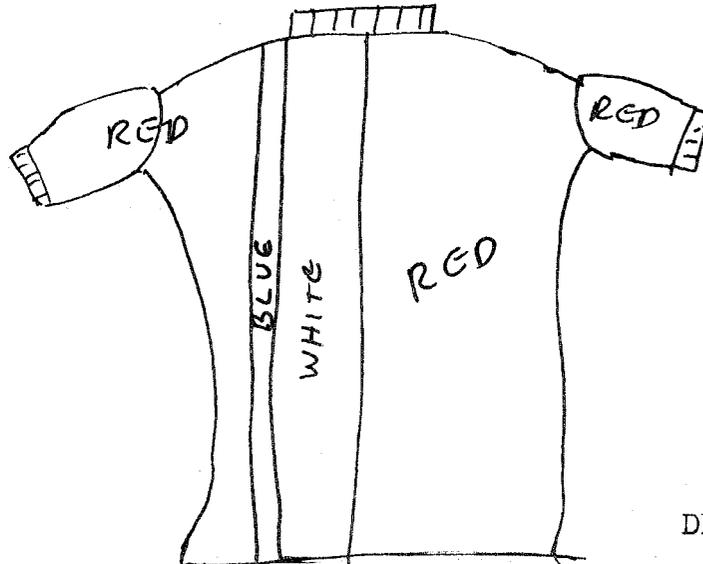
- 7) Use one uniform set of street signs - that is, get rid of MDC road markings.
- 8) If there is not enough room for two lanes, make it one lane.
- 9) Cite motorists and bicyclists for running red lights, stop signs, cutting off other drivers, and failure to yield right-of-way.

Again, I am not advocating non-compliance with the traffic rules. I am simply trying to explain a phenomenon that I have not seen any place else in this country. I feel that part of the blame that Boston drivers are so bad is that the Boston traffic rules and street design are bad. Cyclists get sucked up into a rats-in-a-maze situation that makes us take chances that could turn out to be fatal. You see, we don't have two tons of metal to protect us if our traffic violation causes an accident.

Think about it and write me your reactions.

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CLUB JERSEY DESIGN



Jerseys will be in

short or long sleeve
 wool or synthetic
 all sizes
 special cuts
 \$20 - 30

DETAILS NEXT MONTH!

THE EAST COAST BICYCLE TRAIL COMMITTEE WANTS YOU!

The CRW is committed to mark the portion of the route from Boston to Newburyport on a Saturday afternoon in the spring. We will probably spend the night in the Newburyport hostel. The committee already has helped the AYH mark the Cape Cod trail.

If you want to get in on the fun, call Richard Mazeikus (soon to be John Kane) at 396-2230.

FOR SALE - Teledyne Road Racing Bike, 23" frame. Full Campy Super Record, except for Shimano Dura-Ace headset. Components are like new. \$650 or best offer. Call Donald Burch in Hyannis, 1-775-1205.

WANTED - Volunteers to help mark the extension of the East Coast Bicycle Trail from Boston to Newburyport. Volunteers will probably spend a Saturday night in the Newburyport hostel after a day of marking the route. If you want to be a part of this North-Carolina-to-Maine bike trail, call Richard Mazeikus (John Kane) at 396-2230.

FREE - The Red Cross will offer a free course in first aid for CRW members if we can get enough people interested. This course could come in handy if you or your friends have an accident, or are caught unprepared for harsh weather. Call Al Basso, 666-8571.

FREE - Your CRW membership entitles you to free classified ads in the WHEELPEOPLE bulletin. Sell a bike, find a friend, connect with people of similar interests.

Members!

We now have about 227 memberships, comprising about 255 people. There now appears to be no slack period when it comes to new membership applications.

In the last year we have dropped off extra copies of WHEELPEOPLE and application forms at Boston-Cambridge bike shops. This strategy has apparently paid off. We are now in the process of printing 2000 more application forms in anticipation of spring rush.

Some of you move and do not notify us of your new address. Please keep us informed of changes. In fact, if there are any mistakes in your mailing label, or you do not receive your bulletin by the 1st of the month, contact Al Basso, 666-8571, Membership.

D I S C O U N T S

Your CRW membership card entitles you to discounts in some of the area bicycle shops. Be prepared to produce a valid membership card (signed and unexpired) and some other form of identification. Contact the individual shops for specifics on discounts:

The Bicycle Exchange, 3 Bow Street, Cambridge
The Bicycle Workshop, 233 Mass. Ave., Cambridge
Cycle Loft, 7 Muzzey Street, Lexington
Family Bicycle Center, 149A Belgrade Ave., Roslindale
Harris Cyclery, 1249 Washington, West Newton
International Bicycle Center, 70 Brighton Ave., Allston
Northeast Bicycles, 102 Broadway (Rte. 1), Saugus

What's Happening?

NEWS, LETTERS, ARTICLES, CLASSIFIEDS - Send to WHEELPEOPLE Editor, John Springfield, 10 Short St., Apt. 5, Brookline, MA 02146.
CLASSIFIED ADS - Free to members; 25¢ per word to non-members.

Material must be received by the 15th of month preceding issue.