

THE CueSheet July 2006

The newsletter for affiliated organizations of the League of American Bicyclists



Clubs on a Roll: How to Improve Bicycling in Your Community!

by Andy Clarke

North America's longest cable-stay bridge, in Charleston, SC has good bike access; cyclists in Olympia, WA, ride on streets with bike lanes and shoulders instead of two-way sidepaths; the Mayor of Louisville, KY, appears on national TV brandishing a cycling jersey, and his colleague in Vancouver, WA, commits to being a gold level bicycle friendly community; Ohio bicyclists are no longer required to ride "far enough to the right to allow passing by faster vehicles" ... and all because a handful of people in local bicycle clubs stood up to be counted!

I understand that people join bicycle clubs to ride and not to be advocates. That's why we have advocacy groups, after all! Yet as I've traveled around the country this spring and summer, I've been struck time and again by the positive impact clubs are having in their community — doing things that absolutely benefit club riders — without becoming critical mass instigators or slimy K Street lobbyists.

The Coastal Cyclists (www.coastalcyclists.org) in the Charleston area worked with local advocates to get a shared-use path on the \$515 million, 3.5 mile Cooper Rider Bridge. The path *continued on page 3*

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League Web Site Works for Clubs

The new www.bikeleague.org site makes it easy for cyclists to find their local club. After smoothing out all the kinks we can now focus on helping clubs utilize its full potential.

We're most excited about the *Find It!* feature. Visitors can easily find local cycling information - including your club! Just punch in your city, state or zip code and check off what you are looking for in our database of clubs, rides, BikeEd courses and more. Then hit submit. You can even search by distance to your house. In the blink of an eye visitors can get information about your club and the rides you host.

Another feature we included is the *Club Corner*. Here, you'll find everything you need to make the most of your affiliation with the League. This central location is where we post insurance information, waivers, Club Rep conference call details and past issues of the Cue Sheet! Most importantly, it's where you can log-in to update your site listing and post your rides.

Take a look and tell us what you think!



WELCOME Aboard

New League-Affiliated Clubs

6202 Cycling
Castle Rock, CO

Bike-walk Alliance of New Hampshire
Concord, NH

Blair Bike Club
Herman, NE

Capital Bike Racing Club
Albany, NY

Farm Team Cycling
Cambridge, NY

Gallatin Valley Bicycle Club
Bozeman, MT

Gallo Bicycling Club
Modesto, CA

Mad Cow Velo
Munnsville, NY

Mesilla Valley Bicycle Coalition
Las Cruces, NM

New River Valley Bicycle Association
Blacksburg, VA

Northeast Bicycle Club
Billerica, MA

Orange County Wheelmen
La Mirada, CA

Oregon Randonneurs
Newberg, OR

Otter Creek Cycling Club
Rutland, VT

Portland Velo
Newberg, OR

Sanibel Bicycle Club
Sanibel, FL

Squadra Ovest
Pacifica, CA

Club Spotlight: Helena Bicycle Club

Vital Statistics

Location: Helena, MT

Web Site: www.helenabicycleclub.org

Membership: 100

Around Since: 1980

League Affiliated Since: 1985

Year-round Riding: April through October and year-round with the right gear!

Ride Schedule: Weekly road and mountain bike rides April through October.

The Basics

This is a small club with a big time impact. The Helena Bicycle Club is enthusiastic about cycling whether it be as a mountain biker, commuter, road cyclist, bicycle advocate or bicycle racer. The Helena area has two cycling groups — the Great Divide Cycling Team and the Helena Bicycle Club. The club is the only recreational cycling club with an emphasis on recreation and fitness. Beginner cyclists are always welcome and their motto is “No One Is Ever Left Behind.” They’ve hosted the two-day Double Divide Ride, which crosses the Continental Divide, for twenty-plus years and their other popular ride is the One Helena Hundred which, this year, highlights the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Why They Aren't Your Average Club

We'd have to add another page to the Cue Sheet to cover all the ways the Helena Bicycle Club stands out. Last year they organized their first women's mountain bike clinic. The event proved so popular that there was a waiting list. This year they had 96 women show up despite a steady rain! Member Karen Thompson developed a 20-page guide

book for a historic bicycle tour through Helena. The club has also paid for Share the Road signs, bike racks and helmets for kids.

Focus: Community Growth Issues

In the last several years, Helena has seen more subdivisions and growth in the Helena valley. With this increase the club has become more involved in bicycle advocacy with members sitting

on various boards and committees. They provide letters of support to programs that will benefit the cycling community through construction of shared use paths, more signage and better access to public routes. They work with city, county and state personnel to develop better relationships with decision-makers on future transportation developments to ensure that cyclists' rights and needs are considered in engineering plans.



I Bike. I Vote.

You know how great bicycling is. We know how great bicycling is. But does your member of Congress know? Do your mayor and governor know? With elections coming up in November it's a good time to remind them.

Your club or advocacy organization's careful involvement in election campaigns gives you the chance to educate candidates on bicycling issues, get more involved in your community, and ultimately build a more bicycle-friendly America.

How can you get involved? Good question. As an individual cyclist you can:

- REGISTER TO VOTE!!!

- Find out who are the pro-bicycling candidates.
- Volunteer for that candidate.
- Volunteer to register voters.
- Invite the candidates on a ride.
- Write letters to the editor about why cycling is important.
- VOTE!!

Getting the club involved in political campaigns can be a little frightening, especially if the club is registered as a 501(c)(3) organization. Here a few tips on what you *can't* do:

- Endorse candidates for public office.
- Make any campaign contributions.
- Make expenditures on behalf of candidates.



- Restrict rental of your mailing lists and facilities to certain candidates.
- Ask candidates to sign pledges on any issue (tacit endorsement).
- Publish or communicate anything that explicitly or implicitly favors or opposes a candidate.

For a preview of the 2006 mid-term elections and a more detailed look at how clubs can and can't get involved visit the advocacy section of our site at www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikeadvocacy.

Clubs on a Roll

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(Wonders Way) was officially opened May 17 and dedicated to Garrett Wonders, a local cyclist killed a couple of years ago by an errant driver. Without access to the bridge, bicycling between two halves of the community would be impossible — and club members say there are riders, runners and walkers on the path 24/7.

The Capital Cycling Club (www.capitalbicycleclub.org) in Olympia, WA, is still reaping the rewards of hosting the LAB national rally in 1991, reports long-time member Jim Lazar. Bringing hundreds of cyclists to town was the inspiration for getting rid of numerous two-way paths on one side of the street — and in the intervening 15 years the city has been persuaded to rebuild and resurface its streets with bike lanes,

shoulders and bike routes that helped get the city a Silver ranking Bicycle Friendly Community award.

Dennis Johnson, a member of the rapidly growing Vancouver Bicycle Club (www.vancouverbicycleclub.com), talked his city staff into applying for BFC status and was rewarded June 19 when the Mayor committed to getting the city from Bronze to Gold in the years ahead.

Similarly, the Louisville Bicycle Club (www.louisvillebicycleclub.org) got a shout out on MSNBC courtesy of their Mayor. He was being interviewed about Louisville's efforts to become more bicycle friendly and pulled out a bike club jersey at the end of the interview and thanked the club for their support.

In June, the Ohio Bicycle Federation (www.ohiobike.org) celebrated the signing into law of a bill that cleans up the state vehicle code and brings it into line with the national Uniform Vehicle Code. And while there's nothing revolutionary in the legislation, it wouldn't have happened without local cyclists and club leaders speaking up.

There's nothing partisan about any of these issues. Even getting involved in the upcoming elections in November can [and must] be done without picking sides and endorsing candidates or parties — see the article about the elections. You never know how bicycling and bicyclists might ultimately benefit from you or your club getting up and simply saying the word "bicycle."

Did You Know?

\$105 — The proposed maximum amount of money commuters could get each month for riding to work if the Bicycle Commuter Act passes Congress.

500,000 — The estimated number of daily bicycle commuters in the United States. (2000 Census)

\$78,000,000 — The amount the program would put back into cyclists pockets over five years.

Of the 87 million American cyclists...
82% ride for recreation
26% ride for fitness
10% ride for transportation
1% ride to race

Club Rep Conference Call

West Coasters Win

We have pushed back the time of the next Club Rep conference call to 8 p.m. EST to accommodate more participants. We've also added a second call (with the same agenda) on Saturday at 4 p.m. EST. So if you can't make the Wednesday call join us after your Saturday morning ride!

Safe Passing Laws

Florida recently passed legislation (H.B. 7079) saying that "the driver of a vehicle overtaking a bicycle or other non-motorized vehicle must pass the bicycle or other non-motorized vehicle at a safe distance of not less than three feet between the vehicle and the bicycle or other non-motorized vehicle." Arizona, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wisconsin also have similar laws on their books.

Dates to Remember:

July 26, 2006*

League Club Rep Conference Call

8 p.m. Eastern, 5 p.m. Pacific

641-297-4600 Access Code 537170#

July 29, 2006*

League Club Rep Conference Call

4 p.m. Eastern, 1 p.m. Pacific

319-632-1100 Access Code 639296#

**Both conference calls will cover the same agenda*

August 18, 2006

BFC Application Deadline

www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org

LCI Certification Seminars:

July 21-23 Athens, GA

Kristen Boudreau, boudreau@uga.edu

July 28-30 Louisville, KY

Barry Zalph, barry@bicyclingforlouisville.org

August 4-6 Chicago, IL

Nicole Kemerer, nicole@bikelib.org

August 11-13 San Luis Obispo, CA

Jean Anderson, slohpver@charter.net

October 6-8 New York, NY

Rich Conroy, richc@bikenewyork.org

October 13-15 Sacramento, CA

Owen Howlett, owen@safercyclingsac.org

November 3-5 Houston, TX

Regina Garcia, regina@nol.net

March 14-16, 2007

National Bike Summit, Washington, DC

CLUB REP update

You can now get your insurance certificates online from American Specialty. No more wasting precious days waiting for certificates! Visit www.amerspec.com/lab and see for yourself.

THE CueSheet

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