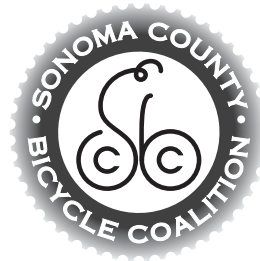


Bikesonoma



Newsletter of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

Issue 2

Fall 2001

promoting bicycling for transportation and recreation

Taking the Pulse of Bicycle Advocacy in Petaluma

Aaah Petaluma, beautiful old downtown, riverside shops, victorian houses, legends of Marxist chicken farmers and a the very active Petaluma Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) started in 1993. In this issue BikeSonoma interviews Committee members Patricia Tuttle Brown and Pamela Torliatt about the state of bike issues in Petaluma.

Patricia, what motivated you to get involved with bike issues?

I have been involved with BPAC since 1993 when it was first instituted. I bicycle often in town and believe that increasing the use of alternatives to driving cars is an important component to cleaner air, less consumption of precious planetary resources, and a healthier life-style. At the beginning I had no idea that the PBAC would evolve into the active, vibrant and inspiring Committee that it has. For example, our Committee is empowered through our Bicycle Plan to work closely with staff and to review all commercial and multi-family development projects as they first come through the City, implementing the policies and principles of the Bicycle Plan to include as "conditions of approval" such things as: Bicycle/pedestrian-friendly thinking in commercial buildings' design and usage (interior and exterior bicycle parking, provision of interior eating facilities to provide comfort for those who choose to not zoom out to lunch in their cars, provision of on-site benches in the landscaping for employee breaks/snacks, cut-throughs wherever necessary to improve neighborhood circulation, etc.) Inclusion of bicycle-thinking in all landscaping decisions, etc. Also, provision by business owners of a one-page "Incentives for

Employees and Customers to Walk/Bicycle/Transit to this Site", before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued as a simple way to get employers to think about this issue and communicate their thoughts to the City.

What are some of the top bike issues PBAC are currently working on?

One is connecting the new Lynch Creek Trail to other parts of the Community. In specific, we are hoping to use Redevelopment money to build a bridge to Payran Street, which will connect the Trail more directly to Downtown and we are hoping that the Johnson property (Oak Creek Apartments) on both sides of the Petaluma River will provide trails on both sides of the River.

As a parent what would you like to see happen that would make biking more viable for your kids?

Work with the schools to help them with their responsibility to encourage and facilitate bicycling to school, because schools are huge generators of car congestion twice a day in every part of town. Create more off-road bicycle paths and open up the ones already in existence such as the creek maintenance paths."

Pamela how did you get involved?

In 1996, I became the Council liaison to the PBAC. As an alumni of UC Santa Barbara I definitely had my introduction to how bikes can be a primary source of transportation.

How do you feel bicycling helps your community?

All citizens can use the infrastructure whether walking or riding bikes. It provides an opportunity for people to get outside and do something and communicate and interact with other people in the community. People are more aware of the

environment, we are all so cut off from everything when we drive our cars.

Patricia? As an acupuncturist who treats patients daily and has listened to many descriptions by my patients of their daily lives, I observe the struggle most people wage to get adequate exercise. Bicycling and walking to work/shop/play are excellent means by which to automatically boost bodily health—as long as one is not killed or maimed by unsafe routes which pit 4000 pound vehicles against the naked human frame. One of my patients was a burly fireman, who ruefully described his terror at being clipped by a car on his way to the firehouse, never to bicycle to work again. His workouts now are only at the gym.

Pam, are you feeling optimistic about the future of cycling in Petaluma? Yes, the PBAC is AWESOME! We have a REALLY dedicated group of citizens that serve on this committee that are willing to participate, be vocal and do homework.

Patricia? I believe that there are so many wonderful people in Petaluma working for "truth, beauty and justice" and that the issues that matter most for the health of the community and of the planet are going to move forward positively. Enhancing the opportunities, the aesthetic and the equity of monetary resources for bicycling and walking in and around Petaluma is merely one of those important issues, and there are increasing numbers of people speaking up about their personal reasons to support this and I believe that things are only going to improve.

SCBC CALENDAR

SCBC Board Meetings

4th Wednesday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Environmental Center, 404 Mendocino Avenue in downtown Santa Rosa. (open to the public)

International Walk to School Day on October 2nd

What should a child's map of the world look like? Should it be all stop lights and traffic, or can it include views of squirrels, local shop windows and neighborhood gardens?

Mark your calendars! A chance to rediscover the joys of human powered transport.

For more information log on to:

www.walktoschool-usa.org



Detail from an illustration in David Engwicht's book "Street Reclaiming" reviewed on page 5.

Bikesonoma

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Big Thanks to members: Oren Noah for securing our non-profit status. Chris Culver, Loretta Esparza, Linda Picton, Mike and Janice Eunice, Martin Clinton, Julie Skopal, Brian Wilson, Ted White, Arianne Sperry for tabling at public events. Joel Woodhull and Brian Wilson for website work.

If you did something good for us but we forgot to mention you, it doesn't mean we don't love you.

And... a Big Huge Thanks to the Santa Rosa Cycling Club for contributing \$2,000 to us in August! We will do great things for cyclists with this!

It's Back to School, but is it Bike to School?

This Fall, some back-to-schoolers will definitely not be bike-to-schoolers.

I confirmed recently that the Piner-Olivet School District (K thru 6th) in Santa Rosa actually has a policy that bars students from riding to school.

It reads: "The board of trustees does not support, encourage, or allow the use of bicycles by students to and from school due to safety concerns." I'm sure the intention of this policy is of course to protect children. However, what the policy symbolizes about our local community is in itself a tragedy. What could be a more disturbing sign than to think of a child's own community as unfit for cycling?

A series of studies done in the UK echoed this decline in youth biking. "In 1971, 88% of 9 year-olds were allowed to go to school unaccompanied. By 1990 this was just 27%." This information I read in a fascinating book called **Street Reclaiming** by Australian David Engwicht (reviewed on page 3). Engwicht says "The chauffeuring of children to school or to leisure places increases the levels of traffic... other parents respond to this by saying that the roads have become too dangerous ... they too begin to chauffeur their children. ...because there are fewer people walking or cycling on the streets, perceptions of danger increase." and so it goes, a vicious circle. Engwicht summarizes saying: "The act of chauffeuring children from one activity to another fractures the relationship children once established with the physical environment... resulting in

increasing feelings of insecurity and alienation". Not good, not good.

On the bright side, we have the Safe Routes to Schools Bill (SB10) as a possible remedy. This bill makes funding available in California communities for projects which enhance the potential for kids to safely walk or bike to school. Some of the funded projects include crosswalks, bike paths, bike lanes, traffic-calming, and educational programs. Our neighbors, the Marin County Bike Coalition tapped into the bill in its pilot year and managed to achieve a 57% increase in children biking and a 57% increase in children walking, a 64% increase in car pooling and a 29% decrease in the number of children arriving alone in their parent's cars. Through Walk and Bike to School Days, bicycle rodeos, safety training in the classroom, and contests such as the Frequent Rider Miles program they helped create enthusiasm and incentives.

The Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition hopes to do the same. Sonoma County is starting to go down that other road where more parents are chauffeuring their kids everywhere and less kids are walking. Let's change direction now!

Our kids deserve to be able to have safe routes to schools. By joining the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition you'll be helping give them get that chance. Of course, we're working for all bicyclists and some of our other great programs include creating a network of Share the Road signs, providing free Valet Bicycle Parking at public events, creating a County-

wide bike map and doing public outreach. So, please join us—our work is very important and our goals are achievable. We are one of the few local organizations that are taking on the challenge of actively promoting transportation alternatives.

Hopefully, the Safe Routes to Schools Bill SB10 will be reauthorized for the next three years but that is currently up to State Assembly and there is talk of reducing the bill to only one year instead of 3 years - so please call, fax or write your local representative before Sept 14th to give your support for a full three-year extension of this much needed program.

As the seasons turn, so may many more bicycle wheels!

Ted White

Executive Director

We Want You... to run for our Board of Directors

If you're a cyclist and passionately want to help promote utilitarian and recreational cycling in the county, please consider running for our board of directors. Elections will be held in November at our first annual membership meeting and party.

The Sonoma County Bike Coalition is a great group that is already showing its influence in making our county more livable and sustainable.

Interested? e-mail us: info@bikesonoma.org

or write

SCBC

P.O. Box 3088

Santa Rosa, CA 95402-3088

Mayor's Ride Yields Bike Path Improvements

On July 15th, Santa Rosa Mayor Mike Martini, Sonoma County Bike Coalition members and other local cyclists ventured out together for a beautiful 8 mile midsummer's ride through downtown and west Santa Rosa in what ride organizer Janice Eunice hopes will become an annual event. This urban pleasure cruise started at City Hall, extended west to sections of the Santa Rosa Creek Bike/Walking Path and ended up in Railroad Square. While riding parts of the creek path the group encountered some of the not-so-bike-friendly gates along the path. These annoying barriers require cyclists to get off and carry their bikes over or around the gate. After the ride, however, Mayor Martini, took action and has already had the gates at Pierson and at Fulton Streets fixed so that cyclists can now just ride right through the gate. Ride on, Mayor Martini! Thanks also to SCBC member Janice Eunice for making the ride happen and for helping facilitate the new and improved gates. Hopefully, by next issue we'll be telling you that the gate at Stony Point is fixed too!

Sonoma Valley Trails Committee Dreams Big, Takes Action

"We want to actively promote commuting and

local recreation trails, and would like to have a trail to every school if possible." said president, Dave Henderson in a recent interview. Henderson and his compadres at the Sonoma Valley Trail Committee have big plans for adding to existing bike and pedestrian paths in the Sonoma Valley which they hope will eventually form a 41 mile "community pathway for bicyclists, walkers, hikers and equestrians of all ages and physical conditions". The trail would begin at The San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge and ultimately reach Santa Rosa. The trail is being conceived of as 7 sections linking rural, urban and wilderness areas. Some sections would be very commute-oriented while others would be wonderfully escapist. Of course, the project is long term, but the SVTC's board of directors thinks that the desire and appreciation for such a network is growing and they should know since their group has been making tracks, so to speak, since 1981.

The group is also involved in creating several other trails but the 41 mile Sonoma Valley Trail will be their masterpiece. If you're interested in joining the SVTC or coming to any of their "informational-social" hikes such as the "Three Lakes" hike on Sonoma Mountain or the Sonoma Creek Watershed Hike contact SVTC president, Dave Henderson phone number 938-0106.

Media Review...

Street Reclaiming Creating Livable Streets and Vibrant Communities

by David Engwicht

A lot of books on urban planning can be pretty dry but this gem by Australian David Engwicht is fun and fascinating and it's got soul. Like many of us today, Engwicht believes we need less cars, and a return to a street life that is more interactive and creative. His eclectic book offers everything from architectural history of Venice and other old pedestrian-friendly cities to charts to help you reduce your car use. The book also has a wonderful variety of illustrations.

Here's an excerpt:
"The introduction of the car... converted the dual function of streets into a single function: that of movement. This is like taking the rooms in the house, removing all the furniture and declaring they are now a corridor



for movement. Converting the dual function of streets to a single function not only destroyed the spontaneous social, cultural and economic exchanges that once took place in the street, it eroded the home territory on which these exchanges could be transacted."

To order, contact:
Detour Publications
www.detourpublications.com

Detour Publications specializes in books and media supporting alternative transport, so check them out!

You can also order Street Reclaiming from your local bookstore.

SCBC Provides Valet Bike Parking at Windsor Town Green Opening

62 bicyclists took advantage of the free secure valet bicycle parking at the Windsor Town Green Celebration in June. It was fitting that the celebration of a new public plaza also encouraged the use of alternative transport, making the event even

more people-friendly. If you know of a local event that would benefit from our Valet Bike parking, or, would like to volunteer to help us park bikes, then contact us:
info@bikesonoma.org

Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

P. O. Box 3088
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www.bikesonoma.org

promoting the bicycle for transportation and recreation

e-mail address: info@bikesonoma.org

*Illustration from David Engwicht's book
"Street Reclaiming" reviewed on page 5.*



"The Walking School Bus gets kids to school safely while giving them exercise and building a stronger sense of community"



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e-mail: _____

Area of Expertise/Knowledge _____

Fund-Raising Special Projects: _____

Marketing Specialist _____

Organizational Structure Other: _____

Educational Workshops _____

Membership Level _____

\$15 STUDENT \$50 CONTRIBUTING \$500 CHAMPION

\$30 REGULAR \$100 SUPPORTING \$1,000 MILLENNIUM

\$40 FAMILY \$250 SUSTAINING \$_____ SPONSOR

**Make checks payable to
 Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition
 P. O. Box 3088
 Santa Rosa, CA 95402-3088**

SCBC membership contributions are tax-deductible

www.bikesonoma.org